

NEWS RELEASE

# Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 27, 2015

For More Information, contact:

Mike Lewis (334) 353-2199

Joy Patterson (334) 242-7491

Page 1 of 1

## **AG STRANGE, MORGAN COUNTY DA ANNOUNCE CONVICTIONS FOR MULTIPLE SEX CRIMES, BURGLARIES IN COLD CASES FROM 1985, 1986**

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Luther Strange and Morgan County District Attorney Scott Anderson today announced convictions against a man currently incarcerated in state prison for multiple sex crimes and burglaries in cold cases dating back to 1985 and 1986. David Leon Garth, 46, was found guilty by a jury in Morgan County Circuit Court following a trial that began on Monday. Sentencing is set for October 27, when he faces a maximum penalty of life imprisonment for each of the class A felonies for which he was convicted.

Specifically, Garth was convicted of three counts of first-degree rape and three counts of first-degree burglary for crimes that occurred between November 1985 and May 1986, two at West Court apartments and one at an apartment on Canal Street in Decatur.

The cases involved three victims who were raped in a violent assault during a burglary while Garth was armed with a knife. In two of the cases, the rapes occurred at the victims' homes, and therefore the rape victims were also the victims of the burglaries for which Garth was convicted. In another case, the rape occurred at a home where the victim was babysitting, and so the burglary victim in that case was the resident of that home.

When the crimes were committed nearly 30 years ago, DNA technology did not exist to match evidence from the rape kits to an offender. The Attorney General's Cold Case Unit was able to use modern DNA technology in its new investigation, leading to Garth's indictment on August 3, 2012.

"I am pleased that, with these convictions, we deliver a measure of justice for the victims of these horrendous crimes," said Attorney General Strange. "I am proud of what our Cold Case Unit has been able to achieve, working with local law enforcement and prosecutors."

The case was investigated by the Attorney General's Cold Case Unit and prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Jerry Knight of the Morgan County District Attorney's Office. Attorney General Strange and District Attorney Anderson thanked the Decatur Police Department for its valuable assistance. The Attorney General's Cold Case Unit is a project conducted in partnership with the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences, to investigate violent crimes that previously had been closed due to lack of investigative leads. This program is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice.

--30---

