



# WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Conserving the Peace Through Values Driven Service  
Sheriff Pat Garrett

## Press Release

### UPDATE: Hicks Sentenced in Lori Billingsley 1982 Homicide

July 13, 2015—This morning, Judge Thomas Kohl sentenced Kenneth Lee Hicks to life in prison for the 1982 homicide of Lori Billingsley in Aloha. This is believed to be the oldest case prosecuted in Washington County.

The trial began on June 16, 2015 and concluded on July 2, 2015 with a verdict of guilty on two counts of Aggravated Murder after five hours of jury deliberation. Senior Deputy District Attorney Bracken McKey and Deputy District Attorney Jason Weiner prosecuted the case.

#### ORIGINAL RELEASE BELOW:

February 28, 2013—Washington Sheriff's Detectives arrested a man and charged him with the 1982 homicide of 17-year-old, Lori Billingsley.

Washington County Sheriff's Detectives arrested Kenneth Lee Hicks, 49, from Saint Helens. He was charged with the 1982 murder of Lori Billingsley.

On October 10, 1982, Lori Billingsley's body was found in a drainage ditch on SW Miller Hill Road south of SW Farmington Road in the community of Aloha. It was determined that Ms. Billingsley was sexually assaulted and murdered.



**Kenneth Hicks after Sentencing (July 13, 2015)**

Washington County Detectives tenaciously worked the case for over a year until all leads were exhausted. Kenneth Hicks (19 at the time) was identified as a potential suspect but

there was not enough evidence to charge him with the murder. Sheriff's Detective Jim Welch was the lead investigator assigned to the case in 1982. Detective Welch (deceased) completed a very comprehensive investigation that would prove to be invaluable to investigators decades later. While there was evidence collected, Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) testing did not yet exist.

In the early 1990's, DNA was beginning to be recognized as a valuable investigative tool to aid in the identification and elimination of subjects connected to a crime. In 1991, Sheriff's Detectives submitted evidence from the Billingsley homicide to the Oregon State Police (OSP) Crime Lab for DNA analysis. No profile was identified.

In 2010, DNA technology had advanced to allow testing of small or degraded samples of evidence that were previously unable to be tested. In 2010, Sheriff's Detectives again submitted evidence from the Billingsley homicide to the OSP Crime Lab for DNA analysis. A DNA profile was identified but didn't match any people currently in the DNA database.

In April of 2010, Detective Mike O'Connell retired from the Washington County Sheriff's Office after 30 years of service. Detective O'Connell served in the Investigations Division for 23 years before his retirement. Detective O'Connell began as a Washington County Deputy Sheriff two years prior to the Billingsley homicide. In December 2010, Detective O'Connell returned part time to the Sheriff's Office dedicated to solving cold cases. He began working the Billingsley homicide, supported by the Sheriff's Violent Crimes Unit.

Detective O'Connell served a search warrant to seize Kenneth Hicks's DNA. Kenneth Hick's DNA sample was sent to the OSP Crime Lab. The DNA profile from the Billingsley homicide was a positive match for Kenneth Hicks's DNA profile.

On February 26, 2013 a Washington County Grand Jury indicted Kenneth Hicks with two counts of Aggravated Murder. District Attorney Robert Hermann was assigned to the original case in 1982 and is currently prosecuting the case on behalf of Washington County.

On February 27, 2013, at about 4:15 a.m., Kenneth Hicks was arrested and lodged in the Washington County Jail. He is held without bail and charged with two counts of Aggravated Murder.

Detectives are seeking the public's help regarding this case. If you have any information, please call the Washington County Sheriff's Office at (503) 846-2500.