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DNA Test Results Clear Steven Phillips of 1982 Sexual Assault and Burglary
Phillips poised to be Dallas County's 14th wrongfully-convicted person

(DALLAS – September 17, 2007) – Today, the Dallas County District Attorney's Office is officially announcing that Steven Phillips, 49, did not commit the 1982 sexual assault and burglary of a woman according to recently released DNA test results. Phillips, who in 1983 and 1984, respectively, was tried and convicted of aggravated sexual assault and burglary in separate trials where juries found him guilty and sentenced him to 30 years in each case, has spent most of the last 25 years in prison. Mr. Phillips also pled guilty to other charges after he was convicted of the two above-mentioned felony offenses. As a result of the DNA evidence, it is probable Mr. Phillips will become Dallas County's 14th wrongfully-convicted individual whose exoneration will depend upon the outcome of a favorable findings hearing and approval from the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

“Now that we know Steven Phillips was not the man who committed these crimes 25 years ago, our focus is to seek true justice for the victim by trying to identify the actual perpetrator,” said Dallas County District Attorney Craig Watkins. “It is bittersweet to have modern technology to test preserved DNA samples because, while it may clear a wrongfully-convicted person's name and give that person his life back, it presents a new challenge of locating and prosecuting the right person for the crime, but we're up to the challenge.”

Steven Phillips is the first person cleared by DNA testing ordered by District Attorney Craig Watkins since he took office in January of this year. A previous request by Phillips for a DNA test was opposed by the previous District Attorney's Office administration.

The DNA collected from the sexual assault kit swabs in this victim's case came back to someone other than Phillips and someone other than the victim's spouse, which was consistent with

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Phillips' claim that he was innocent of the charges. The Department of Public Safety in Austin, Texas, is going to run the DNA profile of the unknown donor on the national CODIS data base to check for a match to try and determine the actual attacker.

In addition to the sexual assault and burglary charges, Phillips also pled guilty to eight other unrelated cases that were at the time believed by authorities to be connected to the same offender. Those incidents all occurred between April 22 and May 15 of 1982, and took place in Dallas, Garland and Carrollton. At this time, it is not certain whether Mr. Phillips will be cleared on all charges, as the Conviction Integrity Unit at the Dallas County District Attorney's Office is still investigating the effect, if any, Phillips' DNA results will have on the other cases.

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