



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

SACRAMENTO COUNTY

JAN SCULLY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

CYNTHIA G. BESEMER
CHIEF DEPUTY

For Immediate Release
August 28, 2007

Contact: Lana Wyant
(916)874-5907

CASE OF INTEREST

**LIFE SENTENCE IN 1972 COLD CASE MURDER OF
12 YEAR OLD SACRAMENTO GIRL**

District Attorney Jan Scully announced today that James Calvin Gaines was sentenced to life in prison by the Hon. Lloyd Connelly for the murder of 12-year old Shannon Ritter in 1972.

James Calvin Gaines was considered a suspect back in 1972 when Shannon Ritter was strangled and drowned at the apartment where she was babysitting four young children. Gaines was briefly arrested and released when detectives concluded that they did not have sufficient evidence to take the matter to trial. The case went cold soon thereafter.

The investigation into the murder of Shannon Ritter was re-opened in 2006 by the Sacramento Sheriff's Department as an "old and cold" case. Detectives Jim Barnes and Angie Kirby located and re-interviewed numerous witnesses to the case, and re-examined all of the physical evidence. One of the items of evidence they re-examined was a cigarette butt found inches from Shannon's shoes. This item was submitted to the District Attorney's Laboratory of Forensic Services, where Criminalist Deven Johnson determined that James Calvin Gaines was the source of DNA found on it.

The defendant was arrested at his residence in Florida in August 2006 and brought to Sacramento for trial. A jury convicted him of first degree murder on June 20, 2007. The murder of Shannon Ritter is the oldest cold case prosecuted in Sacramento County to date.

###