

Dept. of Justice: AG Kaul highlights DOJ's unresolved case work

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MADISON, Wis. – Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul is today highlighting the critical work performed by Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) special agents and Division of Forensic Sciences (DFS) scientists who are requested by dedicated local law enforcement agencies to partner on the review and investigations to solve old, unresolved cases. A subset of DCI agents are tasked with reviewing these unresolved cases in collaboration with local law enforcement and have been able to solve decades-old cases, making communities safer and bringing closure to grieving families across Wisconsin.

“DOJ’s Division of Criminal Investigation has helped get justice in long-unsolved cases, bringing important resolution for family, friends, and communities,” said AG Kaul. “Thank you to the DCI agents and other law enforcement officers who investigated these cases.”

For example, recently, [John A. Sarver was convicted and sentenced](#) to life in prison in connection with the November 26, 1984, murder of Eleanore Roberts of Saratoga, Wisconsin. The 38-year investigation, conducted jointly with DCI and the Wood County Sheriff’s Office was never “cold” because law enforcement continued to work the case. Sarver’s DNA was found on evidence and presented at trial by a DFS DNA analyst, leading to the conviction. The case was prosecuted by Wisconsin DOJ Division of Legal Services (DLS) attorneys Nathan Adamson and Adrienne Blais.

“We have been very fortunate to have a strong working relationship with DCI throughout the past years,” said Wood County Sheriff Shawn Becker. “The Eleanore Roberts case is no exception to this. Our departments have worked collaboratively throughout the years since this tragedy was reported to our department in 1984. Neither Department ever gave up and continued to work together including past

and current investigators. This was true law enforcement teamwork at its best combining the efforts. Furthermore, we need to thank the Attorney General's Office for prosecuting the case. They were an extremely important part in seeing this case through. The Roberts family finally got the justice they deserved."

The [conviction and life sentence of Richard Gale Pierce](#) is another recent example of an unresolved case solved by DCI and the Sturgeon Bay Police Department. In this case, special agents, along with local law enforcement, worked for 47 years to solve the disappearance of Carol Pierce. To date, this remains the longest bodiless homicide case, between disappearance and conviction, in United States history.

"The assistance of DCI in this investigation cannot be overstated," said Door County District Attorney Colleen Nordin. "It was not until DCI agents were involved that we were able to develop a case that could finally be charged and successfully prosecuted after 47 years."

"DCI's assistance in trial was also essential," said Outagamie Assistant District Attorney Nicholas Grode. "All of the agents were willing to go the extra mile to ensure Carol Jean finally received justice after so many years, and Special Agent Yerges' expertise made him an invaluable part of our trial team."

"Partnering with DCI on the Carol Jean Pierce no-body homicide investigation for years was of enormous assistance to the Sturgeon Bay Police Department and more importantly, to the Sturgeon Bay community," said retired Sturgeon Bay Police Chief Arleigh Porter. "DCI's experience and expertise were vital for advancing justice for Carol Jean and her family members. The resources that DCI dedicated to the investigation was critical for solving the case."

About the Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI)

DCI is responsible for investigating crimes that are statewide in nature or importance. DCI special agents and criminal analysts work closely with local, county, tribal, state and federal officials to investigate and prosecute crimes involving homicide, arson, financial crimes, illegal gaming, multi-jurisdictional crimes, drug trafficking, computer crimes, homeland security, public integrity, elder financial abuse, and government corruption as well as crimes against children. The division also performs special investigations requested by the Governor or the Legislature and provides extensive training to local, state, tribal and federal officers on current issues in law enforcement.

DCI has a long history of protecting the public and ensuring justice is done. While the incredible work of DCI agents often goes unsung, a few recent cases where DCI was the lead agency, or a significant contributor, include:

- The [sentencing](#) of John Sarver for the 1984 murder of Eleanor Roberts.
- The Lake Winnebago Area Metropolitan Enforcement Group – Drug Unit [recovery](#) of approximately 12 pounds of fentanyl pills.
- The [conviction](#) of a Beloit man for human trafficking, among other offenses.
- [Charges](#) filed against two men for first degree intentional homicide in Dodgeville, WI.
- Federal [charges](#) filed against 26 individuals for trafficking heroin, cocaine and fentanyl from Puerto Rico to Milwaukee.
- Many [officer involved critical incidents](#) across the state to help agencies comply with [Stat. 175.47](#), which requires an outside agency to investigate officer involved deaths.

To assist in investigating crime, Wisconsin DOJ requests adding 19 special agent and criminal analyst positions in the next biennial budget, to bolster the services DCI provides. These agents will focus on many of DCI's investigative priorities, including homicide, narcotics, internet crimes against children (ICAC), drug and human trafficking, arson, unresolved cases, white collar crime, elder financial abuse and more. Wisconsin DOJ's full request can be found [here](#).

View the press release [here](#).