

St. Helens Man Arrested for Aggravated Murder



COLD CASE INVESTIGATIONS

Washington County Sheriff's Detectives have arrested Kenneth Lee Hicks, age 49 of St. Helens for a brutal murder that happened more than 30 years ago. He is alleged to have caused the death of Lori Billingsley, a 17-year-old Aloha High School student. Her body was found in a ditch on Miller Hill Road in Aloha on October 10, 1982. She had been beaten, strangled, stabbed, and sexually assaulted.



LORI GAYLE BILLINGSLEY

Detectives at the time worked the case tenaciously and identified Hicks as a suspect early in the investigation. However, there was not enough evidence to charge him with the murder. Hicks was an acquaintance of Ms. Billingsley and lived in the same apartment complex. At the time of the crime he was 19.

The case was revisited in the early 1990s when DNA was beginning to be recognized as a valuable investigative tool to identify or eliminate subjects connected to a crime. The Billingsley evidence was submitted in 1991 to the Oregon State Police Crime Lab, but the results did not yield a DNA profile.

DNA technology advanced over the years to allow testing of small or degraded samples of evidence that were previously unable to be processed. In 2010, detectives resubmitted the Billingsley evidence and it revealed a DNA profile that could be compared to other profiles. However, it did not match any of the people in the DNA database at the time. Detectives pursued a search warrant and collected DNA from Mr. Hicks and sent it to the crime lab for comparison to evidence in the Billingsley case. It was a match!

On February 26, 2013, a Washington County Grand Jury indicted Kenneth Hicks with two counts of Aggravated Murder. He was arrested on February 27 without incident and is now lodged in the Washington County Jail. The case will be prosecuted by District Attorney Robert Hermann, who was assigned to this homicide investigation back in 1982.

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.

More information [on this case](#) is available on the Sheriff's [Cold Case Investigations](#) website.

