

DNA Legislation Case Summaries

People v. Richard Hirschfield

On December 20, 1980, 18-year-old UC Davis couple John Riggins and Sabrina Gonsalves were kidnapped while on their way to a party for Sabrina's older sister. The teens had been missing for 36 hours when police located Riggins' family van abandoned 30 miles east of Davis in Sacramento County. The bodies were found soon after in a nearby ravine. Sabrina had been sexually assaulted, and John's injuries appeared to be sustained while trying to defend her.

More than 20 years later and after an attempted prosecution of four other defendants who were exonerated with DNA, DNA evidence collected from the Riggins' van received a hit to career sexual predator Richard Hirschfield.

In November 2012, a jury convicted Hirschfield of the double murder with special circumstance allegations of multiple murders, murder during the course of kidnapping and murder during the course of a sexual assault.

**John Riggins' parents, Dr. Richard Riggins and Kate Riggins, speaking and in attendance*

People v. Donald Carter

On May 23, 1989, a Meals on Wheels delivery volunteer contacted police expressing concern that 80-year-old Sophia McAllister's delivery from the day before remained on the porch, untouched. Sophia was found raped and beaten in her home, and the residence torn apart. Despite investigators running hundreds of fingerprints found at the scene and interviewing 20 to 30 people in hopes of identifying a suspect, the case went cold and remained unsolved for two decades.

In 2009, DNA evidence from the crime scene was matched to Donald Carter when he was arrested on drug charges and swabbed for DNA.

In September 2010, a jury convicted Carter of first-degree murder with special circumstances involving rape, burglary and robbery. Without the collection of Carter's DNA from his drug offense, this case would not have been solved.

**Sophia McAllister's grandson, Mark Jasper, in attendance*