



FAITH JOHNSON
CRIMINAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY
DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS

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Contact: Kimberlee Leach
Director of Communications
Dallas County District Attorney's Office
214-653-3756 (office)
Kimberlee.leach@DallasCounty.org

**For Immediate Release: Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Officially Sets Aside
Murder Conviction of Steven Mark Chaney**

(Dallas, Texas) – On Wednesday, December 19, 2018 the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals officially set aside the murder conviction of Steven Mark Chaney who spent 25 years in prison. The court determined that he was entitled to relief on the basis of actual innocence, scientific advancements related to bite mark evidence, as well as due process violations as it relates to the presentation of false evidence and *Brady* violations.

Chaney's conviction was primarily based on a bite mark comparison that has since been discredited and determined to be faulty scientific evidence. Prosecutors and investigators with the Conviction Integrity Unit of the Dallas District Attorney's Office worked countless hours to search for the truth in this case, which ultimately led them to clear his name. "This is a joyous day for Steven Chaney and his family, which was a long time coming," said Conviction Integrity Chief Cynthia Garza. "It demonstrates why the Conviction Integrity Unit is so vital. We work very hard to investigate claims of actual innocence, to determine whether new evidence gives rise to the conclusion that a convicted defendant was not the person who committed the offense," she added.

On June 20, 1987, the bodies of John and Sally Sweek were found stabbed to death in their apartment. Police also found what they believed to be a human bite mark on John's left forearm. Chaney was tried twice with the first trial ending in a mistrial. Part of the State's case included testimony from two forensic odontologists that a mark found on John's left forearm was a human bite mark made by Chaney— claiming, "there was only a one in a million chance that it belonged to someone other than Chaney."

In its ruling, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals wrote, "When weighing Chaney's newly discovered evidence against the State's trial evidence, we concluded that Chaney has shown by clear and convincing evidence that 'no reasonable juror would have convicted him in light of the new evidence.' Chaney has proven that he is actually innocent."

The Public Integrity Unit would like to acknowledge the Innocence Project for their collaborative efforts in this case.