

MESSAGE FROM PROSECUTOR SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

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Jury Recommends Life without parole for man who brutally raped and murdered elderly woman

(Akron, March 4, 2011) ... Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh announced that a jury recommended that Devon Owens, 38, of Akron, be sentenced to Life without Parole for the Aggravated Murder and Rape of 73-year-old Clara Wilfong, of Akron. The jury returned their recommendation last evening after a mitigation hearing was held.

The jury found him guilty on February 14, 2011 and could have recommended that Owens be sentenced to the death penalty. Judge Judith Hunter will sentence Owens on April 10. The judge can reduce his sentence to Life Imprisonment with parole eligibility after 25 or 30 full years but cannot impose a more severe sentence than what the jury recommended.

Owens was convicted of Aggravated Murder with a death specification, two counts of Rape, and Aggravated Burglary.

On May 29, 2011, family members found Owens shirtless in Ms. Wilfong's bedroom. Owens jumped out a second story window and fled. Ms. Wilfong was found dead in her bedroom and had been raped and strangled. Owens fled to California but returned to Warren, Ohio, where some of his family lives. Based on a composite description, Owens was named a suspect early in the case. The Akron Police interviewed Owens and obtained his DNA swab, which matched DNA found on the victim.