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Summit County Jury Finds Jackson Township Man Guilty in Cold Case Murders

AKRON, Ohio (Thursday, March 16, 2023) – Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh announced today that a Summit County jury found Gustave Sapharas, 78, of Jackson Township, guilty in the murders of two women, one in 1970 and the other in 1975.

Jurors found Sapharas guilty of the following charges:

- Aggravated Murder (Loretta Jean Davis)
- Murder (Loretta Jean Davis)
- Murder In the First Degree (Abduction Resulting in Death) Involving an Abduction (Karen Bentz)
- Murder In the Second Degree (Karen Bentz)
- Maiming or Disfiguring Another (Karen Bentz)

Sapharas was arrested and indicted in 2019 in the cold case murders but was charged under what Ohio law was when the crimes were committed.

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18-year-old Karen Bentz of Akron was last seen alive at about 11pm on Tuesday, April 28th, 1970 in Akron, Ohio. Her body was discovered on the morning of April 29th on the side of Indian Hills Drive in Tallmadge. Karen had been stabbed multiple times and was strangled.

20-year-old Loretta Jean Davis of Brimfield was last seen alive about 2am on Sunday, September 28, 1975 in Tallmadge, Ohio. Her body was discovered later that day on the side of Congress Lake Road in Portage County. Loretta had been stabbed.

Summit County Common Pleas Court Judge Alison Breaux is scheduled to sentence Sapharas on Wednesday April 5, 2023.