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### **CONVICTION VACATED IN 1980 MURDER**

(Chicago, IL) – Calling new DNA results “extraordinarily compelling” evidence that “casts doubt on his involvement in the victim’s death,” Circuit Court Judge Alfredo Maldonado vacated the 1980 murder and attempt rape conviction of Daniel Andersen. Mr. Andersen (54), who was arrested in 1980 and spent 27-1/2 years in prison until his release in 2007, has continued to fight to clear his name in the eight years since his release. Today’s ruling overturning his conviction represents a huge step toward doing so.

Mr. Andersen’s conviction stemmed from the homicide of Cathy Trunko, a young woman from the Back of the Yards neighborhood who was found stabbed to death on the 4900 block of South Paulina Street on January 19, 1980. Two days later, on January 21, 1980, an 8.5 inch knife was found about a block from the scene. Pre-trial serology testing of the knife showed areas of blood that matched the victim’s blood type. On January 25, 1980, after more than 16 hours in custody that followed a night of no sleep and heavy drinking, 19-year-old Andersen reportedly confessed to the violent attempt rape and murder. Mr. Andersen’s confession indicated the knife was the murder weapon.

The new DNA results concerned retesting of the blade and the hilt of that knife, which three decades later still showed the presence of blood. Advanced DNA testing proved that the DNA on those portions of the knife excluded the victim Ms. Trunko. Mr. Andersen was also excluded by DNA tests. Additional results showed that the victim had two male profiles underneath her fingernails. DNA testing excluded on those profiles also excluded Mr. Andersen.

Mr. Andersen wept loudly with joy as Judge Maldonado issued his ruling. Despite being out of prison for eight years, Mr. Andersen has had to continue to register as a sex offender. His lengthy prison sentence and murder and sex offense on his background greatly inhibited his ability to find employment, housing, and move on with his life.

Mr. Andersen is represented by Megan Crane, Laura Nirider, and Steve Drizin, attorneys from Northwestern University School of Law’s Center on Wrongful Conviction of Youth, and Joshua Tepfer of the Exoneration Project.