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## **NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **DCI and Sturgeon Bay Police Make Arrest in 43 Year Old Cold Case**

CHEBOYGAN, Mich. – On Thursday, October 11, agents from the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Division of Criminal Investigation and the Sturgeon Bay Police Department made an arrest for the alleged murder of Carol Jean Pierce, who was reported missing in September 1975. Law enforcement arrested Carol's husband, Richard Gale Pierce, in his hometown of Cheboygan, Michigan.

"Three generations of law enforcement have worked to close this case," said Attorney General Brad Schimel. "Today, we were able to make major progress in finding the answer to Carol Jean's disappearance. Though many of Carol Jean's family and friends are no longer alive, justice must still be provided for the late Carol Jean and those loved ones who still wonder what happened so many years ago."

"After over four decades of investigation, Sturgeon Bay Police Department recognizes the Fillion family has endured 43 years of anguish for the loss of their sister," said Sturgeon Bay Police Chief Arleigh Porter. "With no answers as to 'why' for years, perhaps some 'answers' will begin to be offered to the Fillion family members. While the pursuit of justice is often difficult, and in this case long overdue, investigators never gave up and hope to bring to light answers to family members on Carol Jean's behalf."

The criminal complaint alleges that Carol Jean Pierce, at age 35, was murdered by her then-husband, Richard Pierce on or about September 5, 1975. Richard previously stated to law enforcement that he saw Carol Jean on the morning of September 8, 1975. Richard stated that when he returned home that same afternoon, Carol Jean was gone. The complaint alleges Richard was the last person to see Carol Jean Pierce alive, had motive and opportunity to end her life, and benefitted from her demise in numerous ways, which included a pension unencumbered by a wife; most of the

important belongings of their marriage; land and a home in Michigan; a new girlfriend weeks after Carol Jean's disappearance, as well as the benefit of Carol Jean's silence.

Richard Gale Pierce currently is being held at Cheboygan County Jail (Michigan) until his return to Wisconsin.

This case was investigated by the Sturgeon Bay Police Department and DCI, with assistance from Michigan State Police and Cheboygan County Sheriff's Office. It is being prosecuted by the Door County District Attorney's Office. This case was additionally reviewed by the Wisconsin Cold Case Review Team of the Wisconsin Association of Homicide Investigators.

A suspect is innocent until proven guilty. A copy of the criminal complaint is attached.