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PRESS RELEASE

Edwardsville—Madison County State's Attorney Thomas D. Gibbons filed First Degree murder charges today in the murder of Alton resident Sandra L. Wood, 73.

Charges were filed against Perry L. Henderson (d.o.b. 1/5/60) following an investigation by the Alton Police Department and the Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis. On Friday afternoon, police in Alton were called to Wood's home located in the 1700 block of Central Avenue when friends became concerned after she failed to show up for a funeral. Her partially clothed body was found in her bedroom. Additionally, several personal items, including her 1995 Toyota Corolla were missing. Her car was recovered a short time later near her home in Alton.

Investigators with Alton and the Major Case Squad determined that Wood died as a result of asphyxiation and was also sexually assaulted.

The defendant is a convicted felon and a registered sex-offender and has served time in the Illinois Department of Corrections. He was released in February 2010 and has been living in Alton. Police received information which led them to the recovery of some of her stolen property, including a flat screen TV. Additionally, evidence was found at the scene connecting Henderson to the crime. Henderson was taken into custody Sunday morning. The investigation has not uncovered any evidence that Wood knew Henderson prior to the incident.

Gibbons commended the outstanding work of the Alton Police Department and the Major Case Squad in solving the crime so quickly. "This was an especially brutal crime that was committed against one of our senior citizens. Because of this deplorable crime, Sandra Wood has been taken from her family, her friends and the community. My office stands ready to prosecute the defendant to the fullest extent possible. We will be reviewing the case thoroughly and will consider all sentencing options, including the death penalty."

Henderson has been charged with two counts of First Degree Murder and five counts of felony First Degree Murder. Each murder charge carries a penalty of 20-60 years in prison. He was also charged with five felonies: Aggravated Criminal Sexual Assault and Home Invasion which are both Class X felonies (6-30 years); two counts of Residential Burglary, a Class 1 felony (4-15 years) and Robbery, a Class 2 felony (3-7 years).

The defendant will be transferred to the Madison County Jail in Edwardsville where he will be held without bond.

These charges, as well as the statements made herein, are based upon probable cause. The defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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