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Suspect Indicted In Morgan Murder Case Former Co-Worker Is Charged

By ROBERT KOENIG

A Madison County grand jury indicted James Arthur Adams, a former VISTA worker, in the 1970 murder of Nancy Dean Morgan during Monday's meeting in Marshall. Adams was indicted on charges of first degree murder, common law rape and obstructing justice in connection with the June 17, 1970 murder of Miss Morgan.

Neither District Attorney James Rusher or Madison County Sheriff would comment on Adams' whereabouts. Both men said that he is no longer living in North Carolina, but that his location is known. Sheriff Ponder said he has spoken with the suspect during the past week. Ponder said he expects to arrest some time this week, possibly as early as today.

Nancy Dean Morgan was a 24-year old Volunteer In Service To America (VISTA) worker assigned to Madison County at the time of her death. Her nude body was found bound in the back seat of a government-owned car at a secluded pulloff near Hot Springs on June 17, 1970. Autopsy results indicated that she died of strangulation and that she had been sexually molested. She was believed to have died two days before her body was discovered.

Investigators from both the Federal and State Bureaus of Investigation assisted local authorities in investigating the murder in 1970 and questioned Adams, Morgan's VISTA co-worker at the time of her death.

Adams told investigators at the time that Morgan left his home in the Bluff section at 3:30 a.m. on Monday, June 15. Adams told investigators that Morgan left to return to her home in Shelton Laurel. The 24-year old Louisiana native's body was discovered two days later by James Roger Lewis.

The 14-year investigation leading up to Monday's indictment spanned the terms of three Madison County sheriffs - Roy Roberts, Dedrick Brown and E. Y. Ponder. Discussing the case Monday, Sheriff Ponder said, "What we have done today is the result of a lot of effort since the time of the crime. Hardly a week has gone by in the past 12 years that I didn't receive some information on the case. With the erosion of time, a man that was in a position to know what happened has come forward."

Ponder declined to identify the witness, saying only that the man's testimony was the key to obtaining the indictments handed down by the grand jury.

'Insufficient Evidence' Found DA's Report Clears Ponder

By ROBERT KOENIG

North Carolina Department of Transportation board member Zeno Ponder has been cleared of wrongdoing in connection with his purchase of a 19.5-acre parcel of land along the right-of-way of the new Marshall-to-Spring Creek highway.

District Attorney James T. Rusher announced the decision clearing Ponder last Thursday in Marshall. Rusher and Wake County DA Randolph Riley were appointed by Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr. to investigate the 1982 land purchase in June of this year. On June 26, the district attorneys called for an investigation by the State Bureau of Investigation.

In a statement presented to the press on Thursday, Rusher and Riley said: "It is mutually concluded, as a result of the investigation, and after consultation with each other, that there exists insufficient evidence to prove beyond a

reasonable doubt that Mr. Zeno Ponder has violated the North Carolina Criminal Law."

The investigation centered around Ponder's purchase of a 19.5-acre tract on land on May 15, 1982. On July 8, 1982, the state DOT board, of which Ponder is a member, approved a project to construct a new road linking Spring Creek and Marshall. Ponder has deeded a 2.5-acre section of the property to the state for the construction of the new road.

In defending his decision to purchase the land, Ponder said he bought the property in order to insure that the road would be built. At the time of the purchase, Ponder said, he feared that someone else might purchase the land and prevent the road's construction.

On Monday, Ponder told The News Record that he has no regrets concerning the land purchase. "If I was confronted with the same choices again, I

would do it again the same way. I was only working around whether Ponder profited illegally from his position with Speaker of the House Liston Ramsey and Gov. Bob Scott some 14 years ago to build a road from Spring Creek to Marshall so that children won't have to ride a school bus for four hours a day."

When the investigation was first announced, Ponder said that his political enemies were behind the investigation. Ponder took a leave of absence from his DOT board post while the investigation was being conducted. After conferring with aides to Gov. James B. Hunt on Monday, Ponder said that he will resume his duties as a board member immediately. He told The Record, "I'm looking forward to returning to the board with the governor's support. I intend to continue to do the very best job I can for the people of the district I represent."

While the investigation into the land purchase centered around whether Ponder profited illegally from his position with Speaker of the House Liston Ramsey and Gov. Bob Scott some 14 years ago to build a road from Spring Creek to Marshall so that children won't have to ride a school bus for four hours a day. Ponder said on Monday that he has lost money as a result of the purchase. The loss, estimated at \$3,000, resulted from the gift of a 2.5-acre portion of the property. In addition to the property donated to the state for the project, Ponder said, a six-acre portion of the property will be isolated by the road's construction.

Ponder praised both Rusher and Riley for the thoroughness of the investigation, saying, "It's almost inconceivable that members of both parties could conduct an investigation such as this and come out with anything but a compromise. I think both men (Rusher and Riley) did what they thought was right. This matter has been examined as thoroughly as possible and I commend them for a fine job."



92-YEAR OLD OSCAR ANDERSON OF PAINT FORK maintains flowers at the Walker Branch road sign outside his home. Anderson also tends to flowers at the Paint Fork Baptist Church.

Greater Ivy Wins County Beautification Contest

By ROBERT KOENIG
The Greater Ivy Community Development Club was selected as the winner of the Madison County Community Beautification contest. The club will represent Madison County in the final round of judging to be held throughout the 17 counties of Western North Carolina later this month. The annual contest is co-sponsored by the Western North Carolina Development Association and the N.C. Agricultural Extension Service.

Final judging in the contest will be held Aug. 28 through 30. Awards totalling \$2,000 will be presented on Sept. 11 in ceremonies at the Governor's Western Residence in Asheville.

You won't find Greater Ivy on any map. It's not a small town, but an organization of 22 small communities on the tributaries of California Creek, Middle Fork, Paint Fork and Holcombe Branch which feed into the Ivy River. The Greater Ivy Community Development Club was organized in 1975 and has dominated beautification contests in the county ever since. The club was named the county's beautification winner in 1975, 1976, 1977 and 1979 and also won the national Keep America Beautiful Contest in 1980.

This year's victory was a complete community effort according to beautification chairmann Faye Boone, The



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Joe Griffey Is Named Marshall Police Chief

Joe Worley Griffey was named the chief of Marshall police Friday morning at a special called meeting of the town's Board of Aldermen. Griffey was nominated for the position by Marshall Mayor Betty Wild. The appointment

was made on a unanimous vote of the aldermen. Griffey is a Marshall native and formerly served as a

patrolman with both the Marshall and Hot Springs police.

Griffey was sworn in as the new police chief immediately following the Friday morning meeting and began work Friday afternoon. He will be paid \$920 a month to supervise the town's two police officers.

Mayor Wild told the new police chief, "You're going to be responsible for the police department, the upkeep of the

vehicles and making sure they (the town's police officers) are where they belong."

Griffey told the aldermen that he favors keeping the police cars within the town limits. The officers have been taking the cars home when off-duty in an attempt to prevent vandalism to the town's police cars.

Wild told Griffey, "That's up to you. You're calling the

shots. The board won't interfere with you. It's your job to straighten out what we have."

In other matters considered at the Friday session, the town voted to rent a building on Island Rd. owned by Buddy Buckner to store the town's vehicles and equipment. The building will be rented for \$125 per month.

Lunsford Guilty On Simple Assault Charge

By ROBERT KOENIG
Marshall alderman Sammy Lunsford was found guilty of a misdemeanor charge of simple assault in Madison County District Court Friday afternoon. Lunsford was originally charged with felonious assault with a deadly weapon and carrying a concealed weapon. District Court Judge Phillip Gino dismissed the concealed weapon charge at the conclusion of the state's evidence.

Marshall police officer Chris Bowman testified during the Friday trial. Bowman told the court that he was assaulted by Lunsford on the night of June

26 following a softball game on Biannergassett Island. The officer told the court that he (Bowman) had interceded in a fight between Chris Lunsford, the alderman's son, and Dean Treadway that broke out at the end of a softball game. Bowman was at the game as a member of the "chillies" softball team.

Bowman told the court that Lunsford came through a crowd at the game waving a gun. The officer told the court, "I didn't know what he was going to do. He (Lunsford) ran up and hit me on the head."

The officer said he could not

identify the gun used in the attack. He said that following the initial attack, Lunsford then hit him again and told him not to hit his son.

The officer said he received a gash on the forehead that required treatment at Memorial Marine Hospital in Asheville.

Lunsford's representation by state attorney Terry Lewis, however, was dropping the charges against his son. Bowman told the court that he was going to do his job and that he was not going to let Lunsford off the hook.

Editor's Note:

In a front page story in last week's issue, we incorrectly reported that the Marshall Board of Aldermen would hold a special meeting on Aug. 18 at 8 a.m. The meeting in question was held on Friday, Aug. 17 at 8 a.m.

A last-minute change in schedule as we were to print resulted in our reporting the incorrect date of the meeting. We apologize for the error.