



Attorney General Jon Bruning

News Release

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John Oldson Sentenced Life-to-Life in Prison for 1989 Cathy Beard Murder

LINCOLN – Attorney General Jon Bruning today announced John Oldson, 47, was sentenced life-to-life in prison for the 1989 death of Cathy Beard. He was convicted of second degree murder on February 8, 2013. The sentence requires Oldson to serve no less than life imprisonment.

“After more than 20 years of deception and misdirection, this man has been brought to justice for murdering Cathy Beard,” said Bruning. “Today’s sentence stands as a testament to the dogged efforts of Nebraska law enforcement.”

Cathy Beard was last seen leaving the Some Place Else Tavern in Ord with John Oldson, on May 31, 1989. The skeletal remains of the 31-year-old waitress were found in a rural Valley County pasture three years later.

At trial, forensic pathologist Dr. Matthias Okoye explained that a team of forensic experts were on hand during the examination of Beard’s remains in 1992. After the examination, he ruled the death a homicide and determined the cause to be blunt force trauma to the head and trunk. He said stab wounds to the rib and vertebrae would have contributed to her death.

More than 40 witnesses testified during the two-week trial. The jury returned with the conviction after nearly seven hours of deliberation.

Assistant Attorneys General Corey O’Brien and Matt Lierman handled the case in cooperation with Valley County Attorney Glenn Clark. Investigative support was provided by investigators Pat Mason and Bill Black of the Attorney General’s Office, Jay Morrow of the Nebraska State Patrol and Valley County Sheriff Casey Hurlburt.