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PRESS RELEASE

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DRUNK DRIVER DENIED PAROLE

A drunk driver who was sentenced to life imprisonment for killing an entire family in 1998 was denied release after her first attempt to gain parole last week. District Attorney Mike Ramsey announced that Marta Ann Ulen, 54, was denied parole on November 10, 2009 after she appeared before the state parole board. Ramsey said his office also appeared by video link to oppose Ulen's attempt to gain parole. The parole board ruled Ulen must serve at least another four years in state prison before becoming eligible to seek parole again.

On a rainy, early evening January 2, 1998, numerous witnesses observed Ulen driving erratically on Highway 99 and 149. On Highway 149, Ulen allowed her car to drift over into the oncoming traffic lane on multiple occasions, causing other drivers to take evasive action to avoid a collision. Ulen thereafter attempted to pass a vehicle with a trailer and caused a head-on collision with an oncoming car containing a family of four.

It was estimated Ulen was traveling at 72 mph prior to impact and no evidence of braking could be found. Allen Taylor, 36, the driver, and Kathy Harriman, 35, and her ten- and three-year-old children perished at the scene. An open bottle of vodka was found in Ulen's car and her blood alcohol content was later determined to be .23%, almost three times the legal limit.

At the time of the collision, Ulen's driver's license was suspended and she was on probation due having been convicted of her third DUI violation. Ulen was convicted on August 27, 1998 of Gross Vehicular Manslaughter While Intoxicated and she was sentenced to fifteen years to life.

Ramsey noted that Ulen was sentenced under an older version of the penal code that allowed her to seek parole after 10 years. Ramsey said he objected to her parole attempt based on the enormity of her crime which took four lives based upon her choice to drink and drive.