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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

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People v. Don Smith, 2022 CF 375

On February 9, 2023, seventy-six (76) year old Don Smith, formerly of Ridge Farm, Illinois, was sentenced to forty-five (45) years in the Illinois Department of Corrections for the offense of First Degree Murder. Truth in sentencing applies, and, therefore, Smith must serve 100% of the sentence, and his incarceration shall be followed by three (3) years of Mandatory Supervised Release (*i.e.*, Parole).

The Honorable Derek Girton entered the sentence that was agreed to by the Prosecution and the defense. During the plea, the Court heard evidence establishing that on July 25, 2022, Smith called 9-1-1 and relayed to the dispatcher his name, his address, and that he had just shot and killed his seventy-seven (77) year old wife, Norma Smith, at their family home. The dispatcher wisely kept Smith on the line until law enforcement officers arrived at the crime scene. Smith was placed under arrest, the home was searched, and Deputies with the Vermilion County Sheriff's Department located the murder weapon, a 9mm Smith & Wesson handgun, alongside the victim. Investigators with the Sheriff's Department subsequently interviewed Smith, who provided a full confession to the murder of his wife. Thereafter, a postmortem examination revealed the victim suffered a single gunshot wound to her head. Prior to this offense, Smith had no contact whatsoever with law enforcement.

During the sentencing hearing, Smith informed the Court that he murdered his wife because he believed she was stealing money from him to go on a trip with another individual. He did not elaborate further. The hearing was attended by a family member of the victim, who, after the proceedings, thanked the Deputy Sheriffs involved in the case, who also were present, for their excellent investigation into the victim's tragic death. The family member also thanked the Prosecution's handling of the matter, most notably the Advocates from the Vermilion County State's Attorney's Office – Victims Advocacy Program.