



# Maricopa County Attorney

BILL MONTGOMERY  
301 WEST JEFFERSON STREET • PHOENIX, AZ 85003  
(602) 506-3411 • TDD (602) 506-4352 • FAX (602) 506-8102  
WWW.MARICOPACOUNTYATTORNEY.ORG

## NEWS RELEASE

### MEDIA CONTACT

Jerry Cobb  
Public Information Officer  
Cobbj@mcao.maricopa.gov  
(602) 506-3170 (office)  
(602) 400-5664 (cell)

### William Macumber Pleads No Contest to 1962 Double Murder

PHOENIX, AZ (November 7, 2012) - Convicted murderer William Wayne Macumber (D.O.B. 8/31/35) entered a plea of no contest today to two counts of second degree murder for the 1962 killings of Joyce Sterrenberg and her fiancé Timothy McKillop. After accepting the plea, Judge Bruce Cohen imposed a stipulated sentence of two concurrent prison terms totaling more than 37 years of time served.

“Today’s plea agreement is a consequence of an unusual and unfortunate set of circumstances. With the passage of 50 years since the commission of the murders the defendant was twice found guilty of, the State does not have the physical evidence or witness testimony essential for earning a third set of convictions if forced to retry this case,” said Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery. “Had this evidence not been destroyed or lost, I have no doubt the State would have prevailed for a third time in convicting him for the senseless taking of two young and innocent lives,” he added.

On the evening of May 23, 1962, Joyce Sterrenberg and Timothy McKillop left Sterrenberg’s parents’ home in her car. The next day their bodies were found near her car in what at the time was a desert area near the intersection of Bell and Scottsdale Roads. Both had been shot twice in the head. The Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office investigated the case for more than a decade without success. In 1974, Macumber’s wife told detectives that Macumber had confessed to committing the murders to her. He was arrested in August of that year and admitted to telling his wife that he killed the couple. An analysis of his finger and palm prints matched a palm print lifted from Sterrenberg’s car. Macumber’s .45 automatic pistol was determined to be the murder weapon based on a match with three of four cartridge cases found at the scene.

In 1975, a jury found Macumber guilty of two counts of first degree murder and he was sentenced to two concurrent life sentences. After successfully appealing his convictions, Macumber was retried in 1977 and again found guilty and sentenced to two life terms. The following year the Arizona Supreme Court affirmed Macumber’s convictions and sentences. Beginning 12 years after his second conviction, Macumber petitioned unsuccessfully for clemency four times – denied on three occasions by the Board of Executive Clemency and once by the Governor.

In 2011, Macumber petitioned the Court for post-conviction relief and an evidentiary hearing was scheduled. In the course of preparing for the hearing, the State learned from the Superior Court Clerk's office that the original physical evidence in the case -- including Macumber's weapon, the matching shell casings from the scene and Macumber's palm print lifted from the victims' vehicle -- was missing and possibly destroyed due to protocols for evidence retention. Unable to retry the case without the necessary evidence, the State agreed to enter into a plea agreement in which Macumber acknowledged the factual basis for the case against him. The State made no concessions as to the merits of any of the issues in Macumber's petition for post-conviction relief.

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