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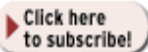
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Local expert on DNA hired by defense in 1975 homicide

Professor who worked on O.J. Simpson case will help Donald Sigsbee's lawyers.

January 06, 2004

By **Jim O'Hara**
Staff writer

A local biology professor who has worked for the defense in the O.J. Simpson and Scott Peterson murder cases in California has signed on to assist the defense in the local murder case against Donald Sigsbee.

William Shields, of the State University College of Environmental Science and Forestry, has been hired as the defense's DNA expert in the Sigsbee case, according to defense lawyer Stefano Cambareri.

Sigsbee, 68, of Madison, is charged with killing Morrisville State College student Regina Reynolds, 19, in 1975. He was linked to the homicide last year by DNA testing.

His case originally had been scheduled to go to trial Monday before Onondaga County Judge Anthony Aloï. But the case had previously been postponed until March to accommodate Shields' schedule as Shields currently is out of the country.

The trial is set to begin March 22.

Cambareri and Assistant District Attorney Beth Van Doren were in court Monday to report to Aloï on where things stand with the case.

Cambareri said he had received the results of the prosecution's most

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recent DNA testing done on a saliva sample Aloï ordered Sigsbee to give in October. The prosecution wanted that sample to compare with a saliva sample obtained from a drink straw police recovered after Sigsbee threw it in the trash at a fast-food restaurant in February.

That initial DNA testing on the discarded straw linked Sigsbee to Reynolds' death and resulted in his arrest in March. He is facing two counts of second-degree murder, accusing him of intentionally killing Reynolds by stabbing her in the chest and of killing her during a rape.

Cambareri also told Aloï that he had also received a report of prosecution DNA testing on a hair sample and that additional hair samples may still await testing.

Outside court, Cambareri declined to comment on the DNA tests or their results.

But he said he expected to be addressing those issues with Shields when Shields returns to the United States from Australia around the middle of the month.

Cambareri said Shields does not take every case he's consulted about, but had agreed to assist in the Sigsbee case.

In 1994, Shields worked for the Simpson defense team as a consultant on DNA tests of blood found at the scene of the murder of the ex-football star's wife, Nicole Brown Simpson.

In November, Shields testified as a defense witness for Scott Peterson, who is charged in California with murdering his wife, Laci, and the couple's unborn son, Conner. An FBI analysis determined a hair found on Peterson's fishing boat probably belonged to his wife, whose body was found on the shore of San Francisco Bay in April.

But Shields testified at a preliminary hearing that the hair could have been contaminated by police officers or lab workers.

Shields has often criticized DNA statistical claims, challenging the sufficiency of the testing done by crime lab technicians and suggesting the banding patterns formed during testing are much more common than prosecution witnesses contend.

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