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OFFICE OF
STATE ATTORNEY
FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA

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PRESS RELEASE

Bill Eddins, State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit, announced today that a Petition has been filed requesting a coroner's inquest concerning the death of Victor Stoen. Pursuant to Florida law, a coroner's inquest is a public proceeding before a County Court Judge to determine whether there is probable cause to believe that a death was a result of a criminal act, criminal negligence, or foul play. A copy of the Petition requesting the inquest is attached.

On October 2, 2009, Victor Stoen was riding his bicycle on Cervantes Street when he was struck by a patrol vehicle driven by Pensacola Police Officer, Jerald Ard.

For further information, please contact State Attorney Bill Eddins at 595-4761.

IN THE COUNTY COURT IN AND FOR ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

IN RE: INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF VICTOR STEEN

CASE NO.: _____

DIVISION: _____

William Eddins, State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit of Florida, petitions the Court for an inquest pursuant to Chapter 936, Florida Statutes, concerning the death of Victor Steen, and in support of said petition states:

- 1) On October 3, 2009, at approximately 1:50 am, Mr. Victor Steen was struck and killed by a patrol vehicle driven by Pensacola Police Officer Jerald Ard. The incident and circumstances surrounding Mr. Steen's death have been investigated by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and an investigative summary has been prepared by Special Agent Eli Lawson.
- 2) According to the FDLE investigative summary, Officer Jerald Ard with the Pensacola Police Department was on routine patrol in a marked vehicle when he saw an individual with a bike near some construction equipment. This construction equipment was located near "U" Street and Cervantes Street, in the Brownsville area.
- 3) Officer Ard circled the block and saw an individual, later identified as Mr. Victor Steen, riding a bicycle on Cervantes Street. Officer Ard attempted to conduct a traffic stop but Mr. Steen failed to stop. During the course of the pursuit Officer Ard activated his blue lights, verbally commanded Mr. Steen to stop, and fired his taser from his patrol car.
- 4) Mr. Steen turned his bicycle off of a sidewalk and entered the parking lot area of a vacant building located at 2400 West Cervantes Street. Officer Ard was still in pursuit of Mr. Steen and turned into the same parking lot. After turning into the parking lot, Officer Ard struck Mr. Steen who was no longer on the bicycle. Following impact, Mr. Steen was dragged underneath Officer Ard's patrol car for approximately 35 feet before coming to a stop on a landscaped parking island. Officer Ard called for emergency services, who arrived and pronounced Mr. Steen deceased.
- 5) Section 936.003, Florida Statutes, provides in part as follows:

"The state attorney may petition the county court in the county in which the body was found to hold an inquest into any death for which an examination, investigation, or autopsy is required to be performed by the medical examiner pursuant to the provisions of s. 406.11 when there is a question of the involvement of a criminal act, criminal negligence, or foul play in the death. The county court judge

presiding at the inquest shall be deemed coroner only insofar as she or he is empowered to thus preside."

"After the evidence has been presented, the court shall deliver a verdict stating whether or not there exists probable cause to believe that the death was the result of a criminal act, criminal negligence, or foul play. The verdict shall also state the name of the person or persons believed to be responsible for the death, if reasonably known."

- 6) Questions of a criminal act, criminal negligence, or foul play associated with the death of Mr. Victor Steen have been raised in the local media and the general public.

WHEREFORE, because of these facts and due to the great concern by the community that the full and complete circumstances surrounding the death of Mr. Victor Steen be fully disclosed, the petitioner hereby requests that this court schedule a time and place for an inquest into the death of Mr. Victor Steen and conduct a full and complete inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr. Victor Steen, and upon conclusion of such inquiry, deliver its verdict stating whether or not there exists probable cause to believe that his death was the result of a criminal act, criminal negligence, or foul play.

Respectfully Submitted,



WILLIAM EDDINS
STATE ATTORNEY
FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT