

Press Release
March 3 2004

Nationwide Campaign Launched For Legislation To Protect Consumers

Orlando, FL. March 3: On the day that a rapist and murderer was sentenced to **life imprisonment without parole**, the family of the murdered victim launched a nationwide campaign to try to protect other consumers.

Sue Weaver was raped and murdered in her Orange County home by Jeffrey Hefling, an air conditioning duct cleaner employed by a sub-contractor for the department store chain Burdines, owned by Federated Department Stores.

Sue Weaver was murdered because she unknowingly let a man into her home who was a convicted rapist but had been employed without any background check.

The estate of Sue Weaver has already settled its claim against Burdines and the sub-contractor, for \$9 million and proceeds from that settlement are being used to launch a national consumer awareness campaign and to lobby for effective consumer protection legislation.

On August 27, 2001, Sue Weaver was raped and murdered in her home in the Dr. Phillip's area of South Orange County. In an attempt to cover up the crime and destroy DNA evidence, the murderer set fire to her body and her home.

Six months earlier Sue decided to have her air conditioning ducts cleaned. Wanting a company she could rely on, she went to Burdines who advertised residential cleaning services throughout Florida. Burdines outsourced some of this work to a sub-contractor, although invoices carried the "Burdines" name and checks were made payable to Burdines.

On February 20, 2001, the sub-contractor sent two of its employees, James Perrigo and Jeffrey Hefling to Sue Weaver's home to perform air duct cleaning services. The men arrived at her home wearing uniforms with the Burdines' logo. On August 27, 2001, Jeffrey Hefling returned to Sue Weaver's home and murdered her.

While Sue Weaver's murder was a tragedy, it was not an isolated incident. Consumers continue to be sexually and physically assaulted and murdered by people who are sent into their homes with criminal records for sexual and violent crimes.

Hefling had two previous convictions for rape and was released in 1998 after serving 12 years of a thirty-year sentence. Last week in Sanford, he pleaded guilty to the 1994 rape of a Winter Springs woman. He was convicted because of DNA evidence recovered from the Sue Weaver crime scene.

The Sue Weaver Cause (Consumer Awareness of Unsafe Service Employment) has been established to alert the public to the threat to consumers' safety because of inadequate or non-existent background checks on people being employed to go into private homes. It is also pressing for legislation to require companies that send employees into homes to conduct background checks before hiring these employees or agents.

Lucia Bone, Sue's sister, who has set up the non-profit organization, says: "It is absurd that a person with multiple convictions for serious sexual assaults should be employed as a home repairman, yet it happens all the time. If companies were required to conduct pre-employment background checks, these people would not be permitted to go into people's home and Sue might still be alive today," she adds.

Supporting the Sue Weaver Cause and potential legislation is the Orlando law firm of Overchuck, Denault and De Marco, which represented the Estate of Sue Weaver in its case against Burdines and others.

Senior partner John Overchuck said: "This lawsuit will have been successful if it results in legislation that prohibits sexual predators from invading the homes of our loved ones. The victory in the Sue Weaver case would be that there would never be another case like it."

Ends

For more information contact:

Cindy Raffles, Overchuck, Denault & De Marco 407.872.6222

Don Philpott, Mediawise Communications, 407.862.5477