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***COMMUNITY PARTNER IN JUSTICE NOTIFICATION***

**Brooklyn DA Ken Thompson Vacates 19<sup>th</sup> Wrongful Conviction**

Brooklyn District Attorney Ken Thompson today announced that following a thorough and fair investigation by his Conviction Review Unit, he will move to vacate the murder conviction of Andre Hatchett, 49, who was wrongfully convicted at a jury trial in 1991 of the murder of Neda Mae Carter in a Bedford Stuyvesant park. Hatchett has been in prison unjustly for 24 years, and his exoneration was endorsed by an independent review panel of legal experts.

DA Thompson's Conviction Review Unit found that Hatchett's defense attorney was not provided with certain important information that could have been used to defend Hatchett at trial. Specifically, it was never disclosed that the sole witness who testified against Hatchett positively identified another suspect as the killer before accusing Hatchett. That same witness also falsely testified that he did not smoke crack cocaine but told the police that he had smoked crack on the night that he said he saw the murder being committed, and this information was not turned over to the defense. Additionally, the medical examiner testified at trial that the blows to the victim's head required a significant degree of physical force, that there was a violent struggle and that the victim's body was dragged and arranged in a certain position with her head propped up against a tree. This would have required the killer to use brute force and have enough strength to commit the murder in this particularly heinous manner. Hatchett, however, had been shot in his neck and one of his legs six months before the murder, causing him to use two crutches to get around and significantly weakening his voice, but his attorney inexplicably failed to bring out his medical condition at trial.

DA Thompson said, "After a thorough and fair review of the case by my Conviction Review Unit, I've concluded that, in the interest of justice, Andre Hatchett's murder conviction should not stand and that he should be released from custody immediately."