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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Date: September 8, 2009

Re: THOMAS COKE PAROLE DENIAL

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Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Thomas Coke, age 50, formerly of Modesto, was found unsuitable for parole at a September 8, 2009 hearing of the State Board of Prison Hearings at Folsom State Prison. Senior Deputy District Attorney Doug Maner opposed Coke's parole and requested continued confinement based on lack of rehabilitation, poor parole plans and significant disciplinary history while incarcerated. The Board of Prison Hearings agreed and denied parole for 3 years. The inmate was convicted of First degree Murder with the use of a firearm in 1978, and was sentenced to life in prison. This was his 11th parole hearing.

On December 20, 1977, Coke stated, "His day has come, I'm going to kill that boy", shortly before firing one shot from a .303 rifle into James Walton's chest killing him instantly. The shooting was apparently motivated by jealousy over a former girlfriend who had befriended the victim. Shortly after the killing, Coke bragged that he "would be a young man when he got out of prison." He has now been incarcerated for this crime for 32 years. Coke had been smoking PCP before this killing. He later blamed his brother for the murder.

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