

# Jackie Lacey

District Attorney  
<http://da.lacounty.gov>



NEWS RELEASE

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## **Architect Pleads in Firefighter's Death**

An architect who designed and oversaw construction of a luxury home in the Hollywood Hills where a veteran firefighter perished in a blaze nearly three years ago pleaded no contest today and was immediately sentenced, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Gerhard Albert Becker, 49, pleaded no contest to one count of involuntary manslaughter involving a Feb. 16, 2011, blaze that claimed the life of Los Angeles firefighter Glenn Allen, 61. The firefighter of more than 36 years was killed when a burning ceiling fell on him after firefighters responded to an alarm.

The victim's widow, Melanie Allen, told the judge that their lives were "ripped to shreds" when her husband was killed.

Superior Court Judge Robert Perry sentenced Becker to three years probation and ordered him to complete one year in county jail as part of his probation. Judge Perry said he believed city Building & Safety inspectors should have discovered problems in construction prior to allowing the home in the 1500 block of Viewsite Drive to be occupied.

Deputy District Attorney Sean Carney of the Target Crimes Division, who prosecuted the case, opposed the low sentence. He said that Becker, not Building & Safety, was responsible for building the multi-level home. He said Becker willfully ignored building codes and the manufacturer's warnings not to install an outdoor fireplace inside the home.

Carney also argued that since Becker is a German national who will be deported immediately after he serves his jail sentence, there was no way to monitor his time on probation.

Los Angeles City Fire Department's arson investigators worked closely with detectives from the Los Angeles Police Department's Robbery-Homicide Division to investigate the case.

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### **About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office**

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Annually, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](http://da.lacounty.gov) prosecutes more than 60,000 felonies and 140,000 misdemeanor crimes.