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NEWS RELEASE

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**Jury Recommends Death Penalty for Santa Monica Man
Who Murdered Two Women**

A jury today recommended the death penalty for a 43-year-old man who killed two women and tried to murder a female neighbor over a seven-year period, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office announced.

A six-man, six-woman panel deliberated for several hours before determining that Michael Gargiulo (dob 2/15/76) should be sentenced to death. Gargiulo is scheduled to be sentenced on Feb. 28 in Department 106 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center.

In August, jurors found the defendant guilty of two counts of first-degree murder with the special circumstance allegations of multiple murders and lying in wait. He also was convicted of one count of willful, deliberate and premeditated attempted murder and attempted escape.

Deputy District Attorneys Daniel Akemon and Garrett Dameron prosecuted the case.

In February 2001, Gargiulo broke into the Hollywood Hills home of 22-year-old Ashley Ellerin and fatally stabbed her.

Gargiulo murdered and mutilated his 32-year-old neighbor Maria Bruno while she was asleep in December 2005. Both had lived in an apartment complex in El Monte, prosecutors said.

In 2008, the defendant attacked Michelle Murphy, 26, in her Santa Monica home and stabbed her. She fought off Gargiulo who was her neighbor and was cut during the struggle.

DNA evidence and details of that attack connected him to all three crimes, prosecutors said.

Gargiulo also has been charged in the 1993 slaying of Tricia Pacaccio, 18, in the Chicago area. Prosecutors were able to present details about the murder as supporting evidence during the trial.

Case SA068002 was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the El Monte, Los Angeles and Santa Monica police departments.

[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 protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.