THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

San Diego Police Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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POLICE INVESTIGATE 2003 ASSAULT CASE AS A MURDER

San Diego Police Department Homicide Unit detectives are investigating the murder of a man in the Stockton area. He was the victim of an assault in 2003, but died of his injuries earlier this week.

On August 3, 2003, Willie Cottingham was found lying on the ground in the north alley of 3100 Island Avenue by officers responding to a fight call. He was semi-conscious from a head injury. Officers determined that a few minutes earlier he had been involved in an incident in the same alley in which he stabbed a male in the face. Cottingham was transported to a local hospital, but did not recover from his injuries. He lapsed into a coma which lasted for the next 3 ½ years.

Cottingham succumbed to his injuries on January 30, 2007. An autopsy conducted on January 31 determined that Cottingham died as a result of injuries from being hit in the head with a blunt object.

Investigators from the San Diego Police Department's Central Division conducted the initial investigation of the 2003 assault, but no suspect was arrested. With Cottingham's death on January 30, the case was transferred to the Homicide Unit and will be investigated as a murder. He was 66 years old at the time of his death.

Anyone with information about this incident is encouraged to call the Homicide Unit at (619) 531-2293 or Crime Stoppers at (888) 580-TIPS

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