

# Woman awarded \$115,000 in sex abuse case

**She sued Dimmit man who seduced her as a teen a few years ago.**

BY JOHN MACCORMACK  
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A Dimmit County jury has awarded more than \$100,000 to a young woman who was seduced three years ago as a teenager by a man who judged her band contest.

John F. Ralston, 54, of Carrizo Springs, was already a registered sex offender in Texas, having pleaded guilty last year to

statutory rape in the same matter.

The civil case against Ralston was filed by a female identified in court papers only as DJA. In the lawsuit, she said she contracted herpes and another sexually transmitted disease from Ralston when she was 16 and that she suffered emotionally from the experience.

"This case was never about the money. It was about DJA wanting to make sure it didn't happen to any other girls," said her lawyer, Alex Katzman of San Antonio.

Besides \$100,000 in compensa-

tory damages, the jury awarded DJA \$15,000 in punitive damages in a verdict reached last week.

Ralston's lawyer, Alfredo Padilla of Carrizo Springs, said the jury gave the plaintiff far less than she wanted.

"They were asking for \$750,000 plus punitive damages," he said.

Testimony at the trial suggested that Ralston had a similar relationship with an underage girl a decade earlier.

"The father of another young girl testified that Ralston apparently had a sexual relationship with his daughter, and that on her 17th birthday, she moved in

with Ralston," Katzman said.

In Ralston's testimony, he acknowledged the relationship with DJA but little else.

"He blamed the parents, saying they should have known what was going on," Katzman said.

DJA testified that she met Ralston in August 2006 after singing in a battle of the bands event in Carrizo Springs. She said Ralston, who was a judge, offered to help her with her music.

"He was a typical sexual predator. He ingratiated himself with the family to gain access to the child," Katzman said.

He said the girl had never had a boyfriend before becoming involved with Ralston.

When she told her mother some months later, her mother went to police, leading to Ralston's indictment and conviction.

Katzman said DJA, now 19, is still struggling with the experience.

"She's been very depressed. She's trying to get her life back on track. She hopes to go to college some day," he said.

"After the trial, I told her I was proud of her for having the guts to come forward," he said.



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Simona Davis, widow of Officer Robert Davis, attends a ceremony for fallen officers at the police academy. Her husband died after being struck by another officer's car.

## SAPD honors its fallen officers

**Latest on the list was killed in December crash.**

BY ROBERT CROWE  
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While attending Tuesday's memorial service for fallen San Antonio police officers, Mayor-elect Julián Castro was struck by the number of local officers killed in the line of duty.

Forty-nine have been killed since 1857.

"To see this list is really humbling," Castro said in an interview after the service. "This is humbling and makes me very proud of the sacrifices they have made for our city."

The San Antonio Police Department honored the memory of the 49 men and women with a rifle volley, helicopter flyover, bagpipes and music by the Gillette Elementary School choir.

Across the country, similar memorial services are taking place as part of National Police Week. The University of Texas at San Antonio Downtown Campus plans to hold its ceremony at 5 p.m. Friday at Bill Miller Plaza.

Robert Davis was the last SAPD officer killed in the line of duty. The 26-year-old former Marine died Dec. 1.

"These fallen peace officers took seriously the vow to serve and protect, and for that we owe them our deepest gratitude," said Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, the keynote speaker.

Abbott told the crowd that SAPD holds a special place in his heart because his sister and other family members live

**“To see this list is really humbling.”**

**JULIÁN CASTRO**  
mayor-elect

here.

"They gave everything to protect San Antonio," he said of the fallen officers.

Davis had been clearing flares from a West Side traffic accident scene when his colleague, Officer David Seaton, drove through an intersection at a speed between 98 and 102 mph before striking another vehicle and pinning Davis beneath the patrol car. Seaton, 43, has been suspended indefinitely, and the Police Department has recommended manslaughter charges be filed. The recommendation has been forwarded to a grand jury, and a decision might be made next month, according to prosecutors.

Davis' wife, Simona, sat among other grief-stricken widows and wept quietly as another officer read aloud names of each fallen officer. She placed a pin with Davis' name onto a flag with names of the other fallen San Antonio officers.

"It doesn't get any easier," said Grace Lopez, the wife of Officer Valentine Lopez Jr.

Her husband died in 2006 after long-term health problems due to injuries he suffered when a gunman shot him in the abdomen in 1977.

"It's really difficult because my husband died during memorial week," Lopez said.

## Texas Open pulls in \$8 million for kids

BY RICHARD OLIVER  
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The Valero Texas Open likely has kept alive one of the most impressive winning streaks on the PGA Tour.

By raising \$8 million in charity funds in the face of intimidating economic hurdles, the historic tournament is almost assured of retaining its position as one of the top altruistic events on the schedule.

"I can't think of a better accolade to have on the tour," Rich Marcogliese, executive vice president of

Valero Energy Corp., said Tuesday in officially announcing the figure at the pairings party for the Oak Farms Dairy Pro-Am.

The Open, a fixture on the PGA Tour since 1922, has been among the top five on the men's tour in charity fundraising for five straight years. It was in the top two among all tournaments in 2007 and 2008.

The funds are raised annually through sponsorships sold during the Open and the Valero Benefit for Children Golf Classic. This year's Texas Open will be

held Thursday through Sunday at the Resort Course at La Cantera, with the Golf Classic set for Monday at 10 area courses.

The \$8 million raised since the last Texas Open, held in October, will be donated to children's charities selected by Valero employees at the 16 refineries and one credit card center where the company does business, along with its San Antonio headquarters.

Since taking over as title sponsor beginning with the 2002 tournament, Valero has raised an average of

\$5.5 million annually through the event for charity.

"We thought that this would be an average year, with about that amount," Valero spokesman Bill Day said Tuesday. "But it turned out we went way above average."

The number was reached despite a severe economic downturn and the transition of the Texas Open to a spring date for the first time in more than three decades. That left organizers only eight months to work on fundraising efforts.

### NEWS ROUNDUP

#### SAN ANTONIO Officials ID body found at plant

A man found dead last week in a storage container at a recycling plant has been identified as Kris Roth.

The body of the 39-year-old was found at the Newell Recycling Plant south of downtown May 4. Police believed his death could have been a suicide but the Bexar County medical examiner's office has not ruled on the cause of death.

The medical examiner's office said Roth had a Georgia driver's license.

#### Domestic dispute suspected in arson

A mobile home was damaged in a fire deliberately set early Tuesday on the Northwest Side, authorities said.

No one was injured in the blaze, which was set about 7 a.m., fire officials said.

Robert Elizondo, district chief for the San Antonio Fire Department, said the occupant of the home near Shaenfield Road and Loop 1604 escaped unharmed.

Arson detectives are investigating the cause of the fire, but authorities suspect it may be related to a domestic argument.

#### 2 held in carjacking at outlet mall

A San Antonio woman's car was stolen at gunpoint from the Prime Outlet Mall in San Marcos on Monday afternoon, leading to a high-speed chase on Texas 21 and two arrests.

Trinidad Olivares Jr., 19, of Buda, and Jackelyn Barajas, 24, of San Marcos, were being held in Hays County Jail. Olivares is being held in lieu of \$700,000 bond on charges of aggravated robbery and evading arrest. Barajas' bond was set at \$20,000 on a theft charge.

Police said Olivares pointed a gun at the 37-year-old motorist and demanded the keys to her 2003 Chevrolet Tahoe. The woman got out of the truck uninjured with her son.

Officers pursued the vehicle and forced it off the road to make the arrests.

#### Fraud on elderly to be discussed

The state's Adult Protective Services division will host a weekly presentation to educate the public on elder fraud each Wednesday in May, which is Elder Abuse Prevention Month.



LARRY KOLVOORD/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**BIDDING FAREWELL:** Bud Shrake's granddaughter Heather Shrake is hugged by a well-wisher at the best-selling author's graveside service Tuesday at the Texas State Cemetery in Austin. Shrake died of lung cancer last week at 77.

The first presentation will be from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. today at the Claude W. Black Community Center at 2805 E. Commerce St.

#### Business conference for women set

The Women Empowered Conference, a free one-day motivational event for women who want to enter college, return to work or start a business, will be from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday at San Antonio College's McAlister Auditorium at 1330 San Pedro Ave.

The conference provides women with success strategies to enhance educational and business opportunities. There will also be a home-buyer fair. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. The event will be free to the public, but seating will be limited.

For more information, call (210) 486-0455 or visit [www.accd.edu/sac/wc/hnm/weconference.htm](http://www.accd.edu/sac/wc/hnm/weconference.htm).

#### TEXAS Motorist is impaled in deadly crash

A 41-year-old man was killed in a one-car crash Friday night in Seguin, authorities said.

The victim was identified as Kevin Corcoran of Se-

found her body under a nearby boat dock.

#### Senate replaces fee at strip clubs

AUSTIN — The Texas Senate voted Tuesday to repeal a \$5-per-person admission fee on strip clubs, part of which went to a fund to help sex assault victims, and agreed to replace it with a new tax on sexually oriented business.

The bill now goes to Gov. Rick Perry.

A judge's ruling that the strip club admission fee was unconstitutional is under appeal.

The new tax would total 10 percent of gross admissions receipts at adult businesses that charge an admission fee. But some advocates for victims say the businesses would not be required to charge admission and could sharply reduce the money collected.

#### Change to tobacco tax advances

AUSTIN — The Texas House has approved changing a tax on smokeless tobacco to fund a loan repayment program for doctors working in underserved areas.

Such tobacco currently is taxed as a percent of the list price of each container. The bill approved 82-59 by lawmakers Tuesday would instead tax products according to weight at \$1.22 per ounce.

Doctors who work in underserved areas for at least a year can apply for help repaying their medical school loans. Additional funds raised from the tax change would go to the repayment program.

The measure faces a final vote in the House before it heads to the Senate.

#### Student voter bill approved in House

AUSTIN — Texas House members narrowly approved legislation Tuesday that would allow high school principals to appoint four deputy registrars to help 18-year-old students register to vote.

The measure, which requires Senate approval, passed 75-71. Only one Democrat voted against the bill. Only two Republicans supported it.

Republicans expressed concern that registering students could turn partisan. Texas ranks behind 41 other states when it comes to registering 18-to-24-year-olds.

— From staff and wire reports

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