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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Attorney Monique Worrell's Statement on the Passing of Ms. Joanna Gomes

Victims of domestic violence are urged to contact Harbor House or the National Domestic Violence Hotline for confidential 24-hour assistance

ORANGE COUNTY, FL (January 6, 2023) — We are deeply saddened to learn of the tragic passing of Ms. Joanna Gomes. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family, especially her children.

Unfortunately, Ms. Gomes was no stranger to our office. She was recently named as a victim in a Domestic Violence Aggravated Battery case involving Mr. Pierre Remy Floriant as the defendant. Our office spoke with Ms. Gomes on several occasions during the investigation of this case. Initially, she expressed the desire to pursue criminal charges against Mr. Floriant.

However, as of December 15th, 2022, she expressed to our office that she had moved out of state, she was not in fear of him crossing state lines to contact her, and that she wished to drop charges. However, our office continued to investigate this case for prosecution.

Unfortunately, we ultimately came to the conclusion that there was insufficient evidence for the State to move forward with criminal charges and prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This incident is beyond tragic. For this family, for our community, and for our office. On average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men.

We know that the best way to support victims and survivors of domestic violence is to hold their abusers accountable, and we understand that doing so includes considering lethality factors and public safety concerns, as well as identifying repeat offenders to ensure that the appropriate penalties are imposed.

To every survivor, remember that domestic violence is never your fault. As a human being, you have value, worth and purpose in life. Whether physical, verbal, emotional or even financial - abuse is never okay. We stand in solidarity with survivors of domestic violence, and anyone currently impacted. Know that you are not alone and that there are advocates in our community standing ready to help every step of the way.

Our hope is that by supporting survivors of domestic violence, and by holding abusers accountable, we can help bring safety, empowerment, and healing to our community. The office is committed to working collaboratively with community and law enforcement partners to end domestic violence in our circuit.

To every community member: educating ourselves, supporting a loved one who is being abused, speaking up and being an engaged bystander, are all ways each of us can make an impact. Open dialogue can help end the stigma and shame often felt by domestic violence survivors. Together, we can end domestic violence in our community.

Seek Justice. Love Mercy. Walk Humbly.

Victims of domestic violence are urged to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline for confidential assistance from trained advocates at 1-800-799-7233. Locally, you can contact Harbor House 24 hours a day at 407-886-2856. Most importantly, if you are involved in a relationship with someone who is violent, utilize these resources to get out today.

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The Office of the State Attorney for the Ninth Judicial Circuit is represented by The Honorable Monique H. Worrell and serves Orange and Osceola counties in Central Florida. A culturally diverse community, the area is home to nearly 1.4 million residents and is a vacation destination for millions each year. Our office is committed to making Orlando and the surrounding area a vibrant and safe place to live, work and play.

For general media inquiries, please contact: PIO@sao9.org.

For media records request, please contact: mediarecordsrequest@sao9.org.

For specific media inquiries pertaining to State Attorney Monique Worrell, please contact Keisha Mulfort at kmulfort@sao9.org.

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