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Article published Tuesday, February 7, 2006

Witnesses revealed for homicide trial Priest's case includes forensic experts

A nationally known forensic expert and a forensic anthropologist who inspired the FOX television show Bones are among the witnesses who could testify in the homicide trial of the Rev. Gerald Robinson.

With the trial nearly two months away, prosecutors and defense attorneys yesterday revealed in court documents the names of more than 100 potential witnesses, giving the two sides notice about who may appear as witnesses.

Father Robinson, 67, is accused in the 1980 slaying of Sister Margaret Ann Pahl.

The murder, which occurred in the chapel at the former Mercy Hospital near downtown Toledo, has attracted national attention.

The prosecution list of witnesses includes renowned forensic expert Henry Lee, who has assisted police around the country in more than 6,000 investigations and has testified in several high-profile cases, including the O.J. Simpson murder trial in 1995.

In December, 2004, Mr. Lee visited Toledo and examined evidence in the case. He visited the sacristy where the 71-year-old nun was stabbed and he studied the letter opener believed to be the murder weapon.

She is the best-selling author of four mystery novels, and Bones, an investigative drama on the FOX network, is based on the characters and criminal investigations in her books.

Additional witnesses include other forensic experts, retired police officers who were involved in the original investigation, state Bureau of Identification and Investigation specialists, clerics, and nuns who are members of Sister Margaret Ann's order, including her own sister, Sister Laura Marie Pahl.

The prosecution's list of 96 witnesses also includes Sister Ann-Marie Borgess, a Notre Dame nun who has accused a former priest of sexually assaulting her when she was a young girl at St. Pius X Church in West Toledo. She has spoken in support of victims of priest abuse.

The defrocked priest, Chet Warren, who was never charged, also is among the people who was identified by prosecutors as a possible witness.

The list filed by Father Robinson's attorneys contained fewer names, and more than a dozen of the witnesses were also identified as prosecution witnesses.

L.J. Dragovic, Oakland County, Michigan medical examiner, is listed among the defense witnesses.

Judge Thomas Osowik ordered the attorneys to file the witness lists during a hearing Friday on unrelated pending motions in the case. He gave them until yesterday to file the information.

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