



# Department of Justice

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## MAN GETS 20-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE FOR DISTRIBUTING HEROIN THAT CAUSED DEATH OF WOMAN

Madison, Wis. - John W. Vaudreuil, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Richard E. Crayton, 45, Forest Park, Ill., was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb to 20 years in prison without parole for distributing heroin that caused the death of another person. Crayton was convicted of the distribution charge on February 3, 2011, following a two-day jury trial.

On May 2, 2009, Nicole Hedges was found dead at the Haven Shelter in Merrill, Wis.. An autopsy revealed that Hedges died of acute heroin toxicity. Telephone records and witness interviews established that Crayton was a heroin dealer and the source of the heroin that caused Hedges' death.

At sentencing, Judge Crabb specifically found that the evidence presented at trial proved that Crayton distributed heroin to another person, who then shared that heroin with Nicole Hedges, and she died as a result. This finding triggered a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years.

United States Attorney Vaudreuil praised the efforts of the Merrill Police Department whose investigation led to the conviction and 20-year sentence. Vaudreuil stated, "People who deal heroin are dealing death and this office will seek, in every appropriate case, this severe penalty."

The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney David J. Reinhard.

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