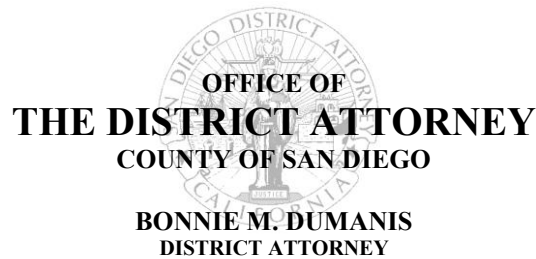


**JESUS RODRIGUEZ**  
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY



San Diego  
330 West Broadway  
San Diego, CA 92101  
(619) 531-4040

[San Diego County District Attorney](#)

**August 4, 2011**  
**For Immediate Release**

[Watch Video](#)

**Contact: [Steve Walker](#) (619) 531-3890**  
**[Tanya Sierra](#) (619) 531-3315**

# **DA Files Murder Charges in Case of Missing 89-year old Rancho Bernardo Man**

San Diego County District Attorney [Bonnie M. Dumanis](#) announced today that Denise Michelle Goodwin, 44, of Valley Center, has been charged with the murder of 89-year old Rancho Bernardo resident Gerald Eugene Rabourn. The defendant was caregiver for Rabourn's terminally ill wife and Rabourn trusted the defendant to handle his financial affairs. Rabourn disappeared suddenly. He was last seen in mid-October 2010.

"This is a particularly egregious case of financial elder abuse that ended in murder," said DA Dumanis. "Mr. Rabourn was victimized at a particularly vulnerable moment—in the twilight of his life after just losing his wife to cancer. The defendant carried out this elder abuse and murder with callous indifference," DA Dumanis said.

Rabourn's 91 year-old-wife, Carolyn, died at home in hospice care on September 29, 2010 from lung cancer. The defendant gained access to the Rabourn home in mid-September as a caregiver and was entrusted to handle all of the victim's financial affairs following the death of his wife. However, within days of entering the Rabourn home, Goodwin began converting Rabourn's assets to her own personal use. Goodwin dissuaded family members from contacting the police through inconsistent misrepresentations of Rabourn's whereabouts and feigned contact with him.

There was an abrupt end to Rabourn's family contacts, cell phone use and financial activity after October 21, 2010. After that date, Rabourn's signature on a document to sell the family residence and title documents to transfer his car were forged. There is no evidence that the victim is still alive.

Goodwin has been charged with 10 felony crimes including special circumstances murder, elder abuse, grand theft, embezzlement, forgery and filing forged documents. The defendant is also charged with an aggravated white collar crime enhancement that applies to thefts in excess of \$500,000. The defendant is being held in custody without bail and will be arraigned today at 1:30 p.m. in Department 12 of the San Diego Superior Court downtown. If convicted of the charges, the defendant could face the death penalty or life in prison without the possibility of parole.

(more)

Follow the District Attorney's Office on  [Facebook](#)

“This case serves as a reminder to seniors and their families to carefully screen caregivers and be aware of the warning signs of elder abuse,” Dumanis said. Advice on hiring an in-home caregiver, recognizing the signs and reporting suspected elder abuse can be found on the District Attorney’s “Safe Seniors” web page at [www.SafeSeniorsSanDiego.com](http://www.SafeSeniorsSanDiego.com).

“Sadly, there are crooks who pretend to be looking out for the welfare of our elderly neighbors, but are instead preying upon them,” says Pam Smith, Director of Aging & Independence Services, a division of the County’s Health and Human Services Agency. “Older adults and their families must be diligent in checking out the background of anyone coming into the home to provide services.”

[The San Diego County Office of Aging & Independence Services](#) works cooperatively with the District Attorney’s Office to prevent elder abuse by educating the community about these crimes so they can avoid being victims. That partnership supports the Safe Seniors Web site and offers “Protect Yourself and Your Wallet” classes that teach people about avoiding both physical and financial abuse.

Members of the public with any information about this case are asked to contact the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office.

###