



# DANE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY ISMAEL R. OZANNE



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For Immediate Release**

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## **STATEMENT REGARDING POSTCONVICTION DECISION IN STATE OF WISCONSIN VS. JENNIFER HANCOCK**

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Today, Rock County Circuit Court Judge Daniel T. Dillon issued a postconviction decision in Dane County Case Number 2007CF2381 regarding *State of Wisconsin vs. Jennifer Hancock*. Judge Dillon found that Ms. Hancock was not entitled to a new trial on the basis of claimed newly discovered evidence; that Ms. Hancock did not receive ineffective assistance of trial counsel; and that Ms. Hancock was not entitled to a new trial in the interests of justice.

In this case, a Dane County jury convicted Ms. Hancock of the First-Degree Reckless Homicide of L.W., a four-month-old infant. The trial prosecutors, Assistant District Attorney (Retired) Mary Ellen Karst and Assistant Attorney General (Retired) Tom Fallon presented overwhelming evidence at trial showing that Ms. Hancock inflicted non-accidental abusive head trauma to L.W. which caused his death. Ms. Karst and Mr. Fallon, working with the Verona Police Department, including then-Detective Stan Petrie, and the Dane County Sheriff's Office, in particular Detective Janet Boehnen, put together a case involving fact witnesses and extensive expert testimony which relied upon well-accepted medical science and allowed the State to meet its burden of proof.

Ms. Hancock's postconviction motion relied upon dubious medical claims that have been rejected by numerous medical societies and organizations. The State was privileged to be able to call the following expert witnesses during the postconviction hearings: Dr. Kara Gill, MD, Chief of Pediatric Ultrasound, Body MR, and CT at the American Family Children's Hospital; Dr. Nancy Harper, MD, FAAP, Medical Director for the Otto Bremer Trust Center for Safe & Healthy Children at the University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital and Hennepin County Medical Center; and Dr. Vincent Tranchida, MD, Dane County Chief Medical Examiner. Each physician called by the State was able to provide clear testimony that supported the integrity of Ms. Hancock's conviction.

I want to specifically thank Deputy District Attorney Matthew Moeser who headed this team effort, retired prosecutor Brian Holmgren, an internationally-known expert in the prosecution of child abuse, as well as Assistant District Attorney Erin Hanson for their roles in this case. Brian Holmgren acted as a special prosecutor in this postconviction matter. Ms. Hanson specializes in postconviction litigation and cold case homicides and is an invaluable member of the Dane County District Attorney's Office. Amy Brown, Director of Victim Services, worked on this case from its beginning in 2007 through its conclusion this year and made sure that L.W.'s family received the victim rights to which they were entitled

under Wisconsin law. Ms. Brown and her unit are models of how prosecutors' offices should treat crime victims and their families. Joy Graffin, a paralegal with the Dane County District Attorney's Office, also assisted in this matter by organizing materials that spanned 12 years of litigation and prepared the prosecutors to conduct a hearing that involved substantially more exhibits than the original trial.

Most importantly, I want to thank L.W.'s parents. Once again, they were forced to relive the pain of losing their son and they honored his memory with their presence at the postconviction hearings. I know that nothing my office or the courts do will be able to take away their pain and their loss, but I am humbled by their support for my office's efforts. They are wonderful people and they did not deserve to have their child taken from them.

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