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'We Don't Give Up'

Search for justice never ends for cold case murders

BY MINDY COOPER

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Throughout the Portland area there are approximately 300 unsolved murders dating back to the 1960s.

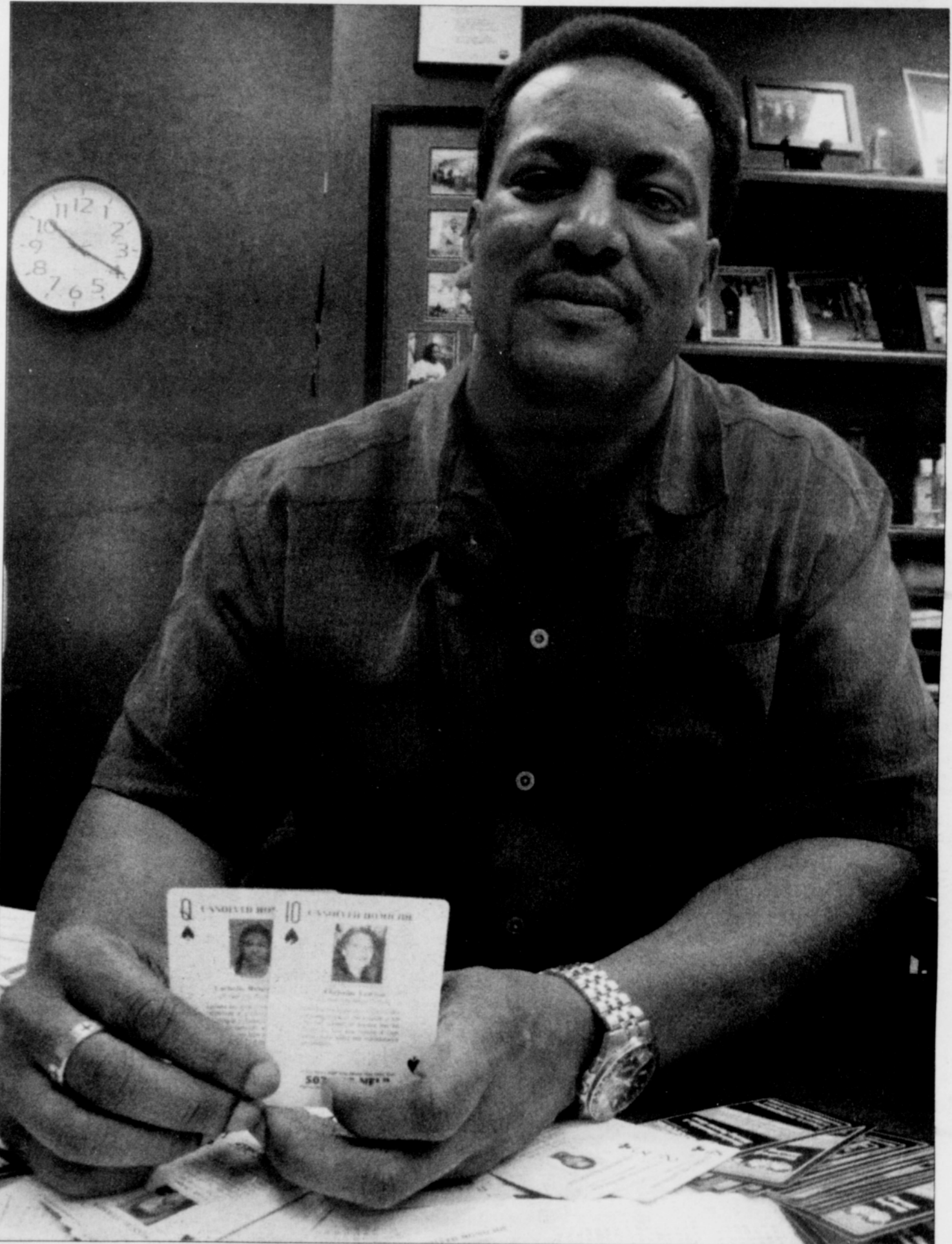
While many deem these homicides an eternal mystery, the Portland Police Cold Case Unit never gives up on the work to bring justice to the families and victims who have been searching for the answers of what happened to their loved ones for many years.

The Cold Case Unit, comprised of a police sergeant, three detectives, and several law enforcement retirees, was created in 2004 to ensure that on-going efforts would be made to solve every murder.

A homicide investigation becomes a cold case after two-years without new evidence or if the original detective working on a murder case is no longer part of the police bureau's Hot Squad or homicide detail.

According to Sgt. Paul Weatheroy, a law enforcement officer in charge of the cold case unit and a Portland police officer for 25 years, the most difficult murder investigations are the cold cases.

"They are cold for a reason," he said. "These are the cases that need the



Portland Police Sgt. Paul Weatheroy, the officer in charge of the bureau's Cold Case Unit, at the downtown Justice Center office where he seeks justice for the families and victims of local murder cases dating back to the early 1960s.

most attention and resources."

The reason most cases become cold, he said, is due to a lack of evidence, no viable leads, no witnesses, or witnesses who were not willing to cooperate.

"There is a lot of preparation that goes into reopening a cold case," said Pete Simpson, a public information officer for the police bureau. "And we still have current cases that need the same level of scrutiny and attention."

Weatheroy said, however, the hard work required to solve murder cases is completely worth the

effort.

"There are two things that really give me a lot of satisfaction with the job," he said. "One of them is that day when you are able to contact the family and give them the answers they have been searching for."

The second, he said, comes when police get to tap on the shoulder of the suspect with an arrest warrant.

"For all of these years, he or she thought they

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In the hands of Portland Police Sgt. Paul Weatheroy are a group of Cold Case homicide cards which were released by Crime Stoppers and local law enforcement in 2009 to help solve 52 unsolved murders and missing persons cases.