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PETE
WALDMEIR



*They just don't
make journalists
like Butch and
Marguerite anymore*

Butch Batchelor firmly believed in the political adage that the office should seek the man, whenever possible. During a Detroit career that spanned three newspapers, four decades and an uncounted number of employers, also, the office

IN WAYNE COUNTY

Dead woman's family sues police

She was in custody for 14 hours after suffering injuries in a beating.

By Wayne Woolley
The Detroit News

The family of a Macomb County woman who died after being held in police custody in October has filed a \$10-million wrongful death lawsuit against the Detroit and Eastpointe police departments.

The lawsuit, filed Friday in Wayne County Circuit Court, claims that Deborah Swanger, 35, of Warren died Oct. 30 because police in Eastpointe and then Detroit kept her locked up for a total of 14 hours with-

out providing treatment for severe injuries she had suffered in a beating before her arrest.

Eastpointe Police Sgt. Dave Gerlach said Sunday that his department doesn't comment on pending litigation. Detroit Police Chief Isaiah McKinnon could not be reached for comment.

The lawsuit, filed by David L. Moffitt of Bingham Farms, doesn't allege that Swanger's injuries were caused by the police, who had arrested the mother of five for outstanding prostitution warrants from Detroit.

Instead, the suit said that Swanger was beaten by her companion, Stephen Michael Wallace, 34, of Warren, on Oct. 29 in the Eastland Motel

in Eastpointe. Wallace faces murder charges stemming from the attack.

Another motel resident who overheard the attack and Swanger's screams told investigators: "The screams were screams of sheer terror ... She was in fear."

The lawsuit said that Eastpointe police took Swanger and Wallace into custody later that evening as the pair walked along Gratiot near Collinson.

Although Wallace was initially released by police, Swanger was put in Eastpointe's lockup to await the arrival of officers from Detroit.

During the course of the night, an Eastpointe officer noticed that Swanger was bleeding on the floor of her cell. When the officer, Steve

Sellers, told his supervisor, Lt. Ker Kenny, the supervisor gave Swanger a sanitary napkin, the lawsuit said.

Detroit officers picked up Swanger about 6 a.m. the next day. She collapsed on the floor of the 9th (Gratiot) Precinct about four hours later, just after her bail was posted. She died several hours later.

According to the autopsy report, Swanger died from blunt-force injury to the head.

"The issue in this case is the when you take away an individual ability to care of themselves, you better be prepared to do it for them," Moffitt said Sunday.

A hearing in the case is scheduled for Jan. 17 in Wayne Circuit Court.