

# Glendale victim's family gets big award

## *Killer cop's deeds cost LAPD \$1.7 million*

By Elyssa Getreu

Glendale News-Press

The wife and children of a man killed in a 1992 Glendale double murder-suicide committed by an off-duty police officer were awarded \$1.7 million Wednesday.

The Glendale Superior Court case against the Los Angeles Police Department was brought by Orleatha Thomas, the widow of Gregory Thomas, who was murdered Aug. 12, 1992 by

LAPD officer Victor Ramos, 29.

Ramos shot his estranged wife, Melba Ramos, 26; her boyfriend, Thomas, and then himself in a Glendale townhouse at 521 E. Garfield Ave.

Three boys, then aged 3, 5 and 6, were found unharmed in an adjoining bedroom and taken into police custody.

The weapon used in the killings was a 9mm Beretta issued to Ramos by the LAPD. About 20 rounds were fired into the victims, including two into the officer.

Orleatha Thomas and her two children filed a wrongful death civil action against the LAPD.

Ramos' weapon was seized by department officials a few months before the killings occurred because he allegedly had beaten his wife.

Orleatha Thomas claimed the department failed to give Ramos proper psychological counseling before reissuing his gun.

According to police documents and court testimony before a Glendale jury,

Ramos had savagely beaten his wife and pointed the Beretta pistol at her May 18, 1992 when she was at work in Hollywood.

"This case is about two basic issues: First, the police failing to deal effectively with spousal abuse; and second, the police 'code of silence,'" said attorney Gregory Yates, who represented the Thomas family in Glendale Superior Court Judge Charles Stoll's courtroom.

City Attorney Victor Schulte argued the killings occurred when Ramos was off duty and drunk, and therefore there was no way the LAPD could be held responsible.

Another suit has been filed against the department by the survivors of Melba Ramos, who was separated from her husband at the time of the murder.

Police found the three bodies when a neighbor called authorities the morning after the murders, police said.

Neighbors said the wife and husband lived in the townhouse together until they separated a month prior to the killings and Victor Ramos moved out of the building.

Police said Melba Ramos and Gregory Thomas were romantically linked.

Victor Ramos was assigned to the

LAPD's, West Los Angeles patrol.

"The LAPD knew (Ramos beat his wife) but failed to report it accurately or deal with it in accordance with their own policies and procedures.

"As a result, they took officer Ramos' gun, but returned it shortly thereafter, and returned him to active duty without providing a psychological evaluation to determine if he was fit to carry that firearm," Yates said.

Orleatha Thomas believes her husband would not have been killed had the LAPD followed its own policy for dealing with Ramos' domestic abuse.

See MURDER/ Page A6

---

# MURDER

From A1

Gregory Thomas met Melba Ramos at a health club where Thomas worked as a personal trainer.

Victor Ramos became enraged by the relationship that developed between the two, attorneys for Thomas said.

According to LAPD documents and court testimony, Ramos beat his wife when she returned to work from a lunch with Gregory Thomas.

Following the incident, police supervisors took Ramos' gun and put him on inactive duty, according to court testimony.

Ramos was not convicted for spousal abuse because allegations Ramos hit, kicked, punched and threatened his wife with a gun were not mentioned in a report filed by the Internal Affairs officer investigating the incident, police said during court testimony.