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March 10, 2011

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**DA's Office, Task Force and HPD's Work Bring
Arrests of 2 Murder Fugitives after nearly 3 Decades**

Houston, Tx – Harris County District Attorney's Office, Houston Police and the Gulf Coast Violent Offender Task Force arrested two fugitives who had eluded law enforcement for more than 27 years in separate murder cases, District Attorney Patricia Lykos announced Thursday.

The District Attorney's Fugitive Apprehension Section partnered with the Task Force and police in developing information to identify the Houston area residences of the absconding defendants. The two are Cruz Sanchez, now 57, and Eutiquio Gonzalez Pedraza, now 63. The two Mexican nationals were wanted for Houston murders committed in 1982 and 1983.

Sanchez was arrested early Thursday at his home. Pedraza was taken into custody Wednesday at a convenience store near his residence. District Attorney Patricia Lykos noted that it was the first time either fugitive had been found, in more than a quarter century of warrants and searches.

"The work by our Fugitive Apprehension Section and the officers is outstanding," Lykos said. "This kind of dedication delivers a strong message to those who would commit crimes in Harris County-- even after decades we will continue to track you down and see that justice is done."

Pedraza vanished shortly after allegedly killing Mario Hernandez, 31, in 1982. He is accused of shooting the unarmed victim during an argument among several men in a parking lot in Northeast Houston.

Sanchez is charged with the 1983 murder of Jaime Casas, 22. Investigators said the two were arguing over a pool game in an east Houston bar when Sanchez stabbed the victim and fled.

District Attorney Lykos established the Fugitive Apprehension Section after taking office in January 2009. It began reviewing hundreds of "cold cases" in which defendants accused of murder had never been located, or had fled prior to their trials. Since its creation, the section's work has led to the arrests of several fugitives.

The Gulf Coast Violent Offender Task Force is a multi-agency initiative led by the U.S. Marshal's Service. (end)

