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**ANNA HAZEL NAMED FIRST WOMAN SUPERVISING INVESTIGATOR
FOR MERCED COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

Anna Hazel has been promoted to the Supervising Investigator position with the Merced County District Attorney's Bureau of Investigations, District Attorney Larry D. Morse II, announced today. Hazel replaces Wayne Hutton, who recently retired after serving as supervising investigator for 11 years. She becomes the first woman to serve in that position in the office.

Hazel, 41, joined the Merced County District Attorney's office in 2003 as a white collar crime investigator. Among her assignments was acting as lead investigator in the Firm build case, in which three men were ultimately sent to federal prison for conspiring to illegally use high school work study students to do asbestos removal from buildings at the former Castle Air Force Base. She also was a member of the trial team, led by Morse, in the capital murder trial of Taha "Tao" Rivera, who was **convicted and** sentenced to death following a change of venue trial in Colusa County for the murder of Merced Police Officer Stephan Gray. Most recently, Hazel has led the investigation into the ongoing bribery case against former Los Banos Mayor Tommy Jones and Merced Union High School District Trustee Greg Opinski.

"Anna is, hands down, the most talented white collar crime investigator in Merced County. She has an incredible gift for unraveling complicated facts and putting together solid, unshakeable cases. Her experience and exceptional organizational skills will be put to important use as supervisor of our Investigations Bureau," Morse said.

Hazel attended Atwater schools until enrolling at Fresno State University where she obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology in 1997. She began her career as an intern in the Fresno County District Attorney's Office and worked in that office for five years. She earned a Master's degree in Criminology from Fresno State in 2000 and completed the Fresno Police Academy in 2001.

The Merced County District Attorney's Bureau of Investigations is comprised of eight full-time sworn peace officer investigators, four part time sworn peace officer investigators and four non-sworn investigative assistants. The Bureau is responsible for law enforcement support for cases filed by the District Attorney's office as well as initiating and conducting complex, long term criminal investigations.

Pat Lunney, who has served as Chief Investigator since July 2008, said Hazel "has continually demonstrated the highest level of professionalism

throughout her career which bodes well for future operations of the Bureau of Investigations as well as the entire office.”

Anna is married to Eric Hazel, a sergeant with the California Department of Corrections and the mother of two sons.