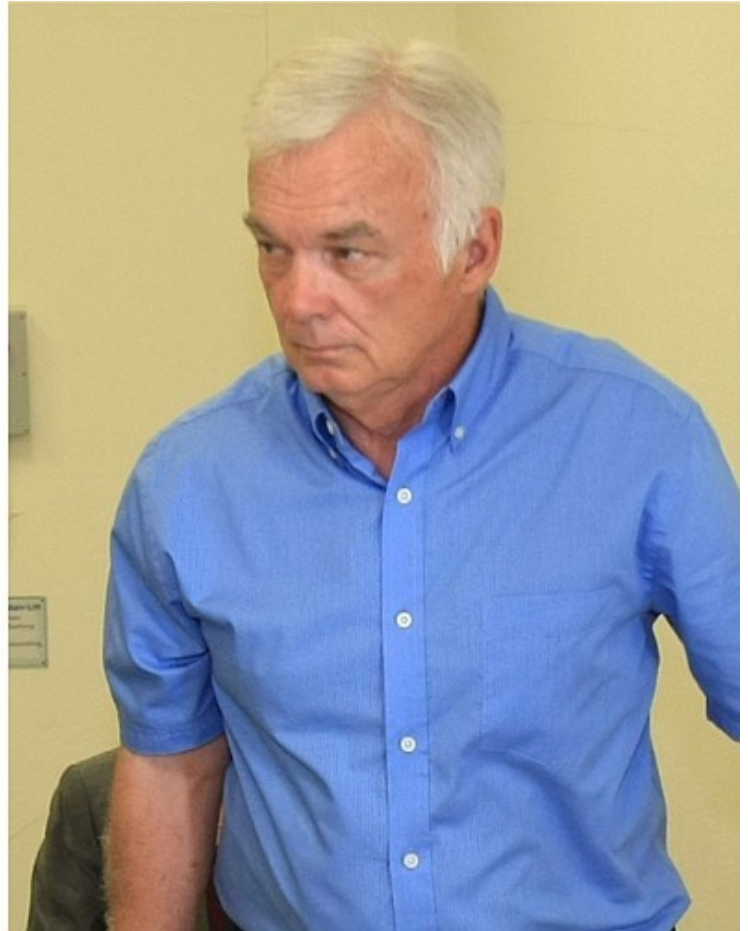
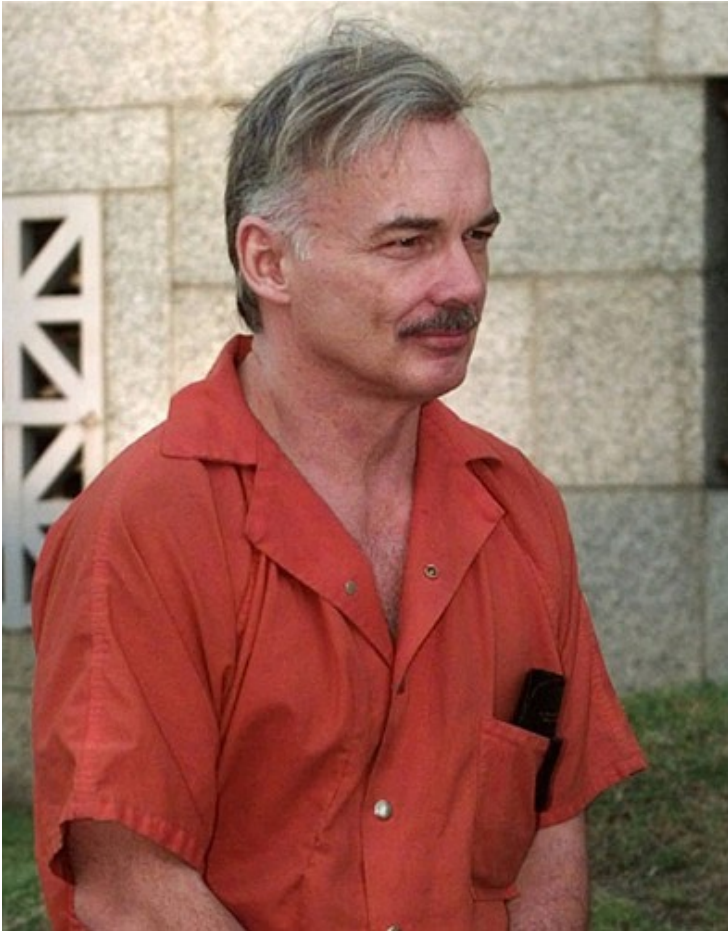


Ex-Saline County prosecutor Dan Harmon, convicted of corruption charges in 1990s, dies at 78

by [Grant Lancaster](#) | September 23, 2023 at 6:12 p.m.



Former Saline County Prosecutor Dan Harmon is shown in these file photos from 1998 and 2010, respectively. At left, Harmon, then 52, was leaving the Little Rock federal courthouse after his conviction on one count of possessing methamphetamine with the intent to distribute, one count of attempting to distribute meth, and two counts of using the telephone to further a drug offense. At right, Harmon arrives at the Grant County Courthouse in Sheridan for his trial on other drug charges. (Left, AP/Danny Johnston; right, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/Staton Breidenthal)

Dan Harmon, the former Arkansas prosecutor who was convicted of taking money and drugs from criminals in exchange for dropping charges against them, died at a Little Rock hospital Friday, his sister said Saturday.

Donna Wright said her brother died at the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in Little Rock. Harmon's death was first reported on the MySaline website, which said Harmon had throat cancer.

Harmon, 78, served as prosecutor for Saline, Grant and Hot Spring counties from 1979-1980, and again from 1991 until 1996. That year, he was removed from office when he took a plea deal in state court over beating up Rodney Bowers, then an Arkansas Democrat-Gazette reporter who was looking into a troubled regional drug task force.

In 1997, Harmon was convicted on federal racketeering, extortion and drug conspiracy charges. He was also convicted of federal drug crimes not long after the racketeering charges, and he was imprisoned until 2006. The Arkansas Supreme Court disbarred him in 1999.

After his release from prison, Harmon worked for the Saline County circuit clerk, sorting and digitizing records. He also took on other jobs, including working with mentally ill adults at a rehab center.

In 2010, Harmon was acquitted of drug delivery charges that could have landed him in prison for the rest of his life. Prosecutors accused Harmon of giving women prescription painkillers in exchange for cash and a glance at their breasts, but jurors did not find those claims convincing.

Harmon was also known for the role he played in investigating the deaths of Don Henry, 16, and Kevin Ives, 17, whose bodies were found on Aug. 23, 1987, after they were run over by a freight train on tracks near Alexander. The initial conclusion in the case was that the teens had smoked marijuana and fallen asleep on the train tracks, but a later autopsy determined that the teens suffered significant trauma before they were hit by the train. Officials eventually concluded that the deaths were homicides.

Harmon led a grand jury investigation into the deaths, and his handling of the case attracted harsh criticism from Kevin Ives' mother, Linda Ives, who died without closure in June 2021 at age 71.

Mara Leveritt, in her 1999 book "Boys on the Tracks: Death, Denial, and a Mother's Crusade to Bring Her Son's Killers to Justice," asserts that Harmon's 1997 conviction convinced Linda Ives and the parents of Don Henry that the teens' deaths happened in "an environment of local corruption." The book does not draw conclusions about the case.

Bob Garrett, a retired circuit judge who said he's known Harmon since college and worked as his deputy prosecutor for a time, heard about Harmon's death from friends. He heard Harmon was placed in hospice care at the veterans hospital in Little Rock on Thursday, he said.

Garrett didn't want to get into the numerous controversies that haunted Harmon's career, he said Saturday.

"He was a friend, and I'm sorry he passed away," Garrett said.

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