## Retrial

## Sisters of murdered woman testify

intend to kill his wife, but rather

intend to kill his wife, but rather himself.
Withher testified under Cleary's ross-examination that she was aware Merlo had told his mothers have to be supported by the was proposed to the support of t

nobody else can either, Lewis said.
Lewis also testifled that she witnessed an argument between Merlo and Sharon while they lived in her loarents home.

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WHEN SHARON noticed her hus-band driving repeatedly past her parents' home, she went outside to his car to let him know that she was hoppe because she was concerned he awould think she was out all night, Lawis testified.

Lewis said she could not hear the

and wife. But Lowis testified that she saw Merlo chase his wife as she walked away from the ear and scuffe with ker, hitting her face and breaking her glasses.

Because of the 20-year lapse, some witnesses called by Garson Chopp, Oakland County assistant prosecutor, have since died or are unavailable to testify. The testimony these witnesses gave in the original trial was read into the court record Tuesday by court officers and employees.

Tuesday by court officers and employees.
Lillian Kamen, Sharon Merlo's mother, who is now dead, was one of the original witnesses whose testimony was read Tuesday.
The bulk of the testimony concerned a telephone call Kamen received from Merlo shortly before his trial 20 years ago.
Kamen testified that she was surprised Merlo called her. During the conversation, Merlo talked about the killing.
"I'm not sorry I did it," Kamen testified that Merlo told her. "I warned her ahead of time. I left a bullet on the front seat."

IN HER testimony, Kamen also said Merlo told her that, "I did it. I haven't shed a tear over it." Merlo also told his mother-in-law during the conversation that he had been outside the funeral home at Sharon's services but didn't want to

go in.
"He asked me how she looked in

the coffin. Was she pretty?" Kamen testified.

Lewis also testified that she was with her father when they found the builtet—apparently left by Merio as a warning — on the front seat of Sharon's car.

"We found the inside of the car was smashed up," Lewis testified. Lewis said she saw Merio by Sharon's car.

A former Oakland County medical examiner's testimony also was read into the court record.

The medical examiner testified 20 years ago that Sharon Merio was shot four times. Two of the shots—to the head and neck—proved to be fatal. She also was shot in the abdomen twice.

men twice.

A THIRD witness whose testimony was read aloud for the jury was Frank Morris, a bank detective, who apprehended Merlo in Philadelphia in mid-January, as he attempted to cash stolen checks.

Morris then turned Merlo over to Philadelphia police detective Allan Roslund. Because of Mester's concern about a statement by Merlo taken by Roslund, the former detective was interviewed last weekend by telephone and video camera. Court officials are wailing for the taped interview to arrive by mail in Oakland County. Mester, Chopp and the defense attorneys were expected to review the interview Wednesday afternoon, if the tape arrived.

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## Felon's letters in dispute

Letters to a then-Farmington Hills etective and to the late Sharon detective and to the late Sharon Merlo's mother were the latest focus of a legal dispute in John Merlo's

Merlo's mother were the latest focus of a legal dispute in John Merlo's retrial.

Questions about the admissibility of the letters prompted a lengthy court recess so Oklada Circuit Judge Fred Mester could determine the series of the series of the description of the letters should be admitted as evidence.

Gary Chopp, Oklada County assistant prosecutes, told Mester the interest of the decident's state of mind."

Defense attorney Partink Cleary disagreed and called the content of the letters "grossly prejudicial" to Merlo, who was convicted 20 years ago of killing his wife in a Farming-tof Township beauty shop.

After reconvening the retrial Mester told attorneys that the only letter that would be accepted was one written to Farmington fills Police Capt. Russell Conway, the detective in charge of the Merlo case in 1967.

CONWAY TOOK the stand and read the letter he received from Merlo in February 1967 when the degreement was in a Philadelphia jail after being apprehended for attempting to east stolen checks.

In the letter, Merlo told Conway that he was awaiting information about a straighter to Allaham Mercon 1969.

that he was awaiting information about extradition to Michigan. He also asked Conway about his wife's burial.

"Where and what cemetery is my wife buried? Did she have a nice fu-neral?" Conway said, reading the

Merio also asked about his baby son and his mother-in-law.

"Who has custody of my son, Jeff? I sure miss the little guy," Merio wrote in the letter.
"Is my mother-in-law taking this very hard? This must have drove her nuts, right? That's what I wanted," Merio said in the letter, adding that he felt his mother-in-law, Lilliam Kamen, was behind much of his troublished.

While on the stand, defense attor ney Patrick Cleary cross-examined Conway about a witness who testi-

Conway about a witness who testi-fied last week. In cross-examination, Martha Stanfield, owner of the Crest Beauty Shop where Sharoo Merlo was killed, denied last week that she told police or a Detroit newspaper reporter 20 years ago that she heard the Merlos arguing the morning of Sharon's death.

BUT IN cross-examination Tuesday, Conway testified that according to his reports, written during the murder investigation, "she (Stanfield) stated the couple appeared to be arguing."

Conway also testified that police reports do not mention a builter found on Sharon Merio's car seat prior to the shooting — apparently left there by her husband as a warning.

But Conway also testified that the incident did not take place in Farmington Township, he would not BUT IN cross-examination Tues

have a report on it. With some prose-cution witnesses, Cleary has chal-lenged differences in testimony in made 20 years ago and testimony in the current trial.

The jury has not been privy to the fact that Merlo was convicted of his wife's killing.

Judge Mester told jurors Tuesday that after they reach a verdict, he will explain the 20-year lapse and the reason they have been frequently dismissed while attorneys argue cer-tain legal questions concerning pos-sible evidence and testimony.

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Balloonfest set.

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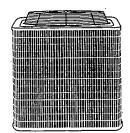
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