Ex-husband indicted in Realtor Crystal McDowell's murder

A Texas man charged with strangling his ex-wife, a Realtor in Houston, was indicted last Thursday, according to The Houston Chronicle.

A Chambers County grand jury leveled the murder charge against Steven McDowell nearly three months after Crystal McDowell, a beloved Realtor with Virginia Malone & Associates, went missing on Aug. 25 during the hours leading up to historic Hurricane Harvey's destructive landfall.

The investigation was hampered by the storm itself, which clogged roads with 40 inches of rain and displaced 30,000 residents and McDowell's own family, who in their quest to find her killer may have complicated the case by hiring a private detective. In all, the list of potential suspects had grown to include nine people, including her boyfriend, an uncle and her husband, who she had divorced in June.

The case garnered national attention, including a segment on the CBS investigative news show 48 Hours, and drew attention to a fundraiser launched by Virginia Malone & Associates that, since Sept. 11, has raised $8,838 toward a $25,000 goal to help fund the education of her children, Maui and Madden.

Steven McDowell is being held on $500,000 bond following the indictment for "intent to cause serious bodily injury" and "an act clearly dangerous to human life," according to court documents obtained by *The Houston Chronicle*. Steven McDowell was arrested and charged with murder in early September, but the grand jury indictment is the next step toward prosecution and sentencing.

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“She is a light in the heavens that can never be extinguished,” her uncle, Jeff Walters, wrote after McDowell’s decomposing body was found in a wooded area following her ex-husband’s confession in September. “She is an angel that watches over us all with that bright smile.”

Email Jotham Sederstrom.

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