

OAKLAND COUNTY NEWS IN BRIEF

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FOSTORIA

Childhood pal scatters ashes of serial killer

A childhood friend of **Aileen Wuornos** scattered the ashes of the Florida serial killer last week among the walnut and oak trees of rural Lapeer County.

It was the very least Dawn Botkins said she could do for the girl she got to know when both were growing up in Troy. **Wuornos** died by lethal injection in Florida on Oct. 9.

"What she did was wrong, I'm not disputing that," said Botkins, who lives in the countryside near Fostoria. "But that has nothing to do with our friendship."

It was a friendship that led the two women down different paths after both dropped out of high school. **Wuornos**, Botkins said, suffered an early life filled with abuse and turned to prostitution, ultimately killing seven men after they picked her up along Florida highways.

Just before she was executed, **Wuornos** visited Botkins. To the Lapeer County woman, **Wuornos** seemed relieved.

Botkins persuaded **Wuornos** to send her ashes back to Michigan.

There was a little place on Botkins' land where the condemned woman's favorite trees -- oaks and walnuts -- grow.

"I wanted to bring her home, amongst people who love her," Botkins said.

"Everybody says, 'She was lucky to have you.' Well, I was lucky to have her."

By John Masson

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