

Jurors decide against teacher

By Erin Rickert, The Daily Reflector

Tuesday, January 24, 2006

A former South Central High School teacher accused of having an improper relationship with a male student was sentenced to two years supervised probation Monday.

A 12-member jury delivered a guilty verdict for the felony charge of taking indecent liberties with a student to 31-year-old Katherine B. "Katy" Tew after deliberating for nearly five hours.

Tew could face six to eight months in prison if she violates the terms of her probation. The maximum sentence for defendants with no prior record is eight to 10 months in prison.

Tew must surrender her teaching certificate and register as a sex offender during the two-year probation period under the sentence handed down by Superior Court Judge William C. Griffin Jr. late Monday afternoon.

She is required to perform 36 hours of community service and undergo a psychological examination, following through with any treatment suggested as a result of the exam.

She also must refrain from any direct or indirect contact with the young man and his family.

Tew was found not guilty by the jury of the felony charge of sex offense with a student.

Her attorney, Keith Williams, gave notice of appeal.

Tew was arrested on two felony charges Feb. 7, 2005, almost two weeks after the then-17-year-old student reported the alleged relationship to authorities.

Tew resigned as an English teacher and cheerleading coach at the school Feb. 15.

She was accused of having sex with the student in the parking lot of South Central on Dec. 11. The two met about 11 p.m. for a rendezvous in the teen's Isuzu Rodeo, according to the teen's testimony on Thursday, the first day of the three-day trial. Tew denied the encounter during testimony on Friday.

The prosecution tried to bolster its case with phone records and other evidence. Attorneys depicted a nearly six-month relationship during which more than 100 phone calls, 14 typed notes and other handwritten notes and four text messages were exchanged.

During closing arguments that began Monday morning, Assistant District Attorney Kimberly Robb said phone records from the night of Dec. 11 underline holes in Tew's testimony.

Tew testified Friday she left her Westhaven home that night after a friend of the student called her to discuss a rumor that her husband had been having an affair. She testified she later called the young man and his friend from a nearby park to learn more details about the rumor.

Robb argued that records show that Tew answered no phone calls from the teen or his friend at her home that night.

"She initiates the contact on Dec. 11 at 9:11 (p.m.)," Robb said, highlighting several calls Tew made to the teens that night.

The last call, at 10:57 p.m., was made to a female student Tew has called a good friend.

Earlier testimony by the young man indicated Tew called the female student from his Rodeo about five minutes before the two had intercourse and about 30 minutes before they left.

Friday testimony from Tew and her husband indicated they remembered her returning home no later than 10:45 p.m. and calling the female student from the house.

Robb disputed Tew's and her husband's version of events and said that phone records showed she could have returned home from South Central later than they estimated.

"It's right there ladies and gentlemen. You can't get around it," Robb said about Tew's testimony. "... It (her testimony) does not ring true. She was obsessed with this boy."

Tew denied ever having discussions outside those related to scholarships, college and similar matters. But Robb said of the 129 calls exchanged between the two from Dec. 1, 2004, to Jan. 25, 2005, Tew initiated all but 22 calls.

Defense attorney Williams focused on the credibility of the prosecution's witnesses.

He pointed out inconsistencies in the testimony of the student's friend, who said he watched the sexual encounter take place from a neighborhood across the street.

The friend said on the stand Friday that he did not see Tew and his friend leave the parking lot. But the teen told investigators he had watched them leave the scene, Williams reminded the witness, and the teen changed his testimony to match the statement he made to investigators.

Williams reminded the jury of the miscue during his closing argument.

"(The friend) got tripped up on his own story right there on the witness stand," Williams said.

Williams also reminded the jury of another friend whose story didn't match testimony that he and the victim were at a store to buy alcohol before the Dec. 11 encounter. The teen said that they were there to buy snacks and soda.

"This is the nature of the people we are dealing with," Williams said. "These are three troubled young men with anger problems, alcohol problems and the inability to tell the truth (on the stand)."

[Return to Top](#)

[Email this page to a friend](#)