

Teacher sex trial begins

By Erin Rickert, The Daily Reflector

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From the time the relationship began his senior year in 2004 until he told a teacher in January, they had talked on the phone hundreds of times and exchanged several notes, an 18-year-old South Central High School graduate said on the stand Thursday.

The admission was the first of many during nearly 90 minutes of testimony from the former student detailing the alleged relationship and sexual encounter between he and his former English teacher Katherine B. "Katy" Tew.

The relationship, he said, ended after a discussion Jan. 25, 2005, with his former baseball coach and physical education teacher prompted the then 17-year-old to report what happened.

He talked to the teacher after learning from his best friend that Tew's husband, the teenager's football coach, knew about the relationship.

Tew is facing felony charges for indecent liberties with a student and sex offense with a student after she allegedly had intercourse with the teenager in the backseat of his Isuzu Rodeo at the South Central parking lot Dec. 11, 2004.

She was arrested in connection with the accusation Feb. 7 and resigned as English teacher and cheerleading coach at the school eight days later.

The Superior Court trial will continue today and is expected to run into next week as witnesses that include former South Central students and faculty, family members, Tew and expert witnesses from the State Bureau of Investigation and Pitt County Sheriff's Office testify.

On Thursday, the teenager, the first witness called by the state, testified Tew taught his junior year honors English class. Tew began sending him letters in August 2004, the young man testified.

The notes, presented as evidence in the case, mentioned a dream Tew had about the young man, a tattoo he planned to get and future meetings.

"Let's stop with the games and get things started," a letter the young man identified as being from Tew stated.

Another said, "You cannot say a word to anyone. ... you must promise not to let this secret out."

Hundreds of phone calls, including two while she and her husband were vacationing in Texas, together supplemented the notes, he said.

On the stand, the teenager said he felt all correspondence hinted at the sexual encounter the two would allegedly have Dec. 11.

He testified Tew called him that Saturday night pleading with him to meet her following an argument with her husband.

The young man said he finally agreed and planned to tell Tew the relationship was over. He even had his best friend watch from a neighborhood across the street.

Around 11 p.m., he said, Tew drove up in a silver Camry got into his vehicle, wearing pajamas and carrying a bottle of tequila. He said he believed she was impaired.

He said Tew made an approximately four minute phone call to a female classmate of his, who he referred to as Tew's best friend.

About 15 minutes later, the two began having intercourse in the back seat. He testified he stopped this about five minutes later and told her to leave.

She got into her vehicle and drove off without question, a cigarette in her mouth, he said.

Tew's attorney Keith Williams, in his opening statement, said she is expected to testify that she and her husband had a disagreement and she went to a nearby park to call the female classmate. Williams said Tew will testify and her husband will confirm that she was back home before 11 p.m., which would not place her at the parking lot.

Selection of the 12-member jury that will help decide the case lasted two hours Thursday. Fifteen individuals were excused for reasons including being a neighbor of the defendant.

The jury, comprised of six men and six women, includes an elementary school teacher, health care workers, a wrecker driver and sales representative. An alternate female juror was also selected.

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