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Page B-1

Cutbacks
County offices hit
Page 2

John Nel
A great we
Page 15

University of Kentucky

Harrison convicted of murder

By JOHN A. NELSON
Circuit Court Reporter

The verdict was "guilty," and James "Nick" Harrison was ill.

The events did not occur in that order Tuesday in Madison County, but they were connected, nonetheless.

Hearings to determine Harrison's fate on the murder

conviction were to have begun yesterday morning. The prosecution is seeking the death penalty.

Other possible sentences for the jury to recommend included life, in which parole could be granted in seven years, or the without parole for 20 years.

His recommendation was unavailable at press time.

The jury of eight men and four women deliberated for less than two and one-half hours, during which time they were served lunch, and returned with their findings—that Harrison killed Irvine Police Chief Bob Walker on Feb. 16.

Deliberation was to have begun at 9 a.m., but because Harrison refused to come to

the courtroom due to an upset stomach, the jury was not sequestered until nearly 11:30 a.m.

In the meantime, Madison Circuit Judge James S. Chenault ordered that Harrison be taken by ambulance to Richmond's Patton Hospital to be examined in the emergency room.

When Harrison returned,

Chenault revealed that the defendant had received an injection to control vomiting and that two prescriptions were to be filled to suppress the symptoms of his ailment and cause sleepiness.

Shortly before 11 a.m., Harrison appeared before Chenault "in judge's chambers. He was dressed in a shirt and blue jeans. There were what appeared to be two small reddened abrasions on the center of his forehead.

Chenault informed Harrison that he must appear in the courtroom for a few minutes so that the case could be officially submitted to the jury. He could then return to the jail to rest, Chenault said.

Defense attorney Max M. Smith strongly objected to that move, "because the jury will see him in this condition."

But Harrison did enter the courtroom at 11:15 a.m. to be present as the jury received its instructions.

When the jury returned with its verdict at 1:38 p.m., Harrison wore a shirt and tie, just as he had each day of the week-long trial.

As the verdict was read by Chenault, little reaction could be noted in the courtroom.

Outside, Harrison's father, James, could only shake his head when asked for a comment. His mother, Linda, who usually wears a smile, was also visibly upset.

"He'll take the blame for anybody," she said of her son.

Chenault said that the defense was Robert "Bob" Norton, Harrison's father-in-law, who was transferred by court order from a federal penitentiary in Atlanta last Friday and housed in the Madison County Jail. Bob Norton is the brother of Billy Norton, who testified last week that Harrison admitted to him that he had murdered Walker.

But Bob Norton was never called to testify.

The decision to offer no defense further reflected disagreements between defense attorneys Max M. Smith and J. Campbell Cantrell III, each of whom had requested formally last week that he be allowed to step down.

One potential defense witness was Robert "Bob" Norton, Harrison's father-in-law, who was transferred by court order from a federal penitentiary in Atlanta last Friday and housed in the Madison County Jail. Bob Norton is the brother of Billy Norton, who testified last week that Harrison admitted to him that he had murdered Walker.

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Grand jury blasts law officers in report

In its final report, the Estill County grand jury has accused local law enforcement officers of having persons of questionable character riding around in their cruisers, showing "unsavory movies" in the back room of the station and with perjury.

"One might expect John Doe off the street to perjure himself," the report says, "but not a person hired to uphold the law."

No names were mentioned, and no indictments in connection with the incidents were handed down.

The report also says these law officers "not only perjure themselves but also withhold information pertinent to cases under investigation."



Virginia Walker, center, the widow of Irvine Police Chief Bob Walker, talks with prosecution attorneys Tom Smith, left, and Barbara Whitley, right, during a delay in the proceedings.

State in control of county money

By BOB HERRON
Circuit Court Reporter

Facing a \$116,000 shortfall if it keeps spending at the present rate, or a \$35,000 deficit if it only spends what is mandated by state law, the Estill County Fiscal Court was told Monday by the Department of Local Government that it must raise revenue or become state-controlled.

The fiscal court took no action.

The only ways county governments can raise revenue are by property taxes and an occupational (payroll) tax.

The state suggested a payroll tax because of the limitations imposed on property taxes.

County Judge-Executive Ralph McClanahan proposed a 1-percent payroll tax with a \$50 cap on net income. The motion died for a lack of a second.

Immediately following the

court's inaction, Al Howell of the Department of Local Government presented the court with orders which would make county officials get the state's approval for all spending.

"This means we are going to suffer some things that I think are unnecessary," McClanahan said.

The order issued says that the county cannot sign for any new bank loans, credit or incur any other indebtedness; no additional personnel shall be employed, nor an increase in compensation be awarded; and all county purchases must be approved by the State Local Finance Office.

According to a letter written to McClanahan by Howell and Glenn Douglas Othman, a state local finance representative, if more revenue is not raised county government operations must cease except for the road department and the jail, which is mandated by

law.

Howell said the order can be rescinded immediately after the county officials decide to get more revenue.

"You gentlemen swore an oath to uphold the laws of the state of Kentucky," Howell told the court Monday. "One of the laws is that you won't spend more than you take in."

If at the end of the fiscal year the county is in the red, the fiscal court could be charged with malfeasance in office, a misdemeanor.

"The bottom line is that public officials must assume financial responsibility for their government's long-term financial stability," Howell said.

No debate ensued on the matter, but Magistrate Mark Honchell said he couldn't understand, since the formation of the special districts, why the county still has a \$116,000 deficit.

In July, the county formed three special districts and approved Tamara Dunaway, property valuation administrator for the county, said her office does review property and that there is a systematic method of assessing the property.

Dunaway said that she could not reassess every piece of property, but the county mapping project, which is underway, will alleviate some of the problems her office has had in the past.

"I'm not blaming you Tammy, I'm not blaming anyone...but this has come to a head on the payroll issue, but it has been messed up for years because you don't have the fair market tax assessment," Honchell said.

Local citizens expressed their concern at the meeting. Doyle Laimhart of Red Lick Road said he did not want the county "to be turned over to

its true value," Honchell said.

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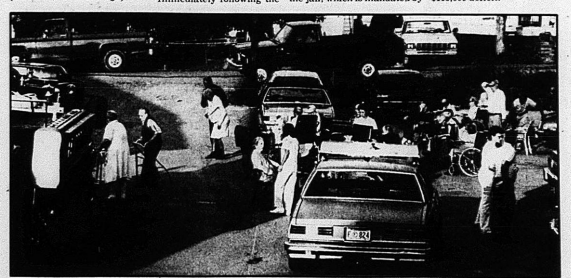
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Residents of the Irvine Health Care Center near Wallace Court were evacuated Sunday evening after a bomb threat was called in at the facility. Firemen, policemen and members

Reed is charged in Willoughby kill

By BOB HERRON
Circuit Court Reporter

After 29 months of investigation and the questioning of 44 witnesses, the Estill County grand jury has indicted Mickey Reed, 27, of Irvine, with the murder of Loretta Lynn Willoughby.

Willoughby, who was 15 at the time of her murder, is the daughter of Larry and Mollie Willoughby and a native of Powell County. She was last seen Feb. 10, 1985.

Her remains were found May 10, 1985 by Reed in a wooded area near Broadway in Irvine.

Reed reported at the time of Willoughby's discovery that he was roaming the

woods when he came upon a pair of shoes, and noticed a strong stench and went for help.

Later, the bones of the girl and several articles of her clothing were found in the vicinity.

Dr. David Wolfe, the state medical examiner who performed the autopsy, identified the remains as belonging to Willoughby and said that the cause of death was homicide.

Reed is being held in the Estill County Jail on \$50,000 property or cash bond.

Particulars of the investigation are not available, and as of press time court dates had not been made known.

Harrison

(Continued from Front Page)

Harrison told the judge in chambers Monday that he wanted new attorneys, and requested a continuance. Both were denied. "It's too late in the ball game to change and players now," Chenault said.

In his closing arguments, Cantrell told the jury, "Nick has just made the hardest decision he has ever made. He is putting his life in your hands. This has come as a somewhat of a surprise to us because we told you we would not rely on the weakness of the prosecution, but that is exactly what we are doing. Nick is not educated or articulate, and he is scared. His an a witnesses are scared."

Cantrell attempted to refute the testimony of several prosecution witnesses who on the stand had admitted previous felony convictions. Some had testified that Harrison had bragged to them of having shot and killed Walker. "I have seen an absolute, total idiot. You don't go down on Main Street and tell everybody that 'you've killed someone,' said Cantrell.

Payroll tax suggested

State in control of county spending

(Continued from Front Page)

the state."

"It's hard to sit in my chair and hear what's going to happen to my county," Laimhart said. "Especially when there is a remedy out of it. There is a remedy. If the payroll tax doesn't have to be tax permanent, don't leave here, thinking there is no remedy."

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