

# **Madison County jury convicts Alton man for shooting near Lovejoy Elementary School**

June 15 2016 9:20 PM



**EDWARDSVILLE** — A **Madison County jury** has convicted an Alton man for a 2014 shooting near Lovejoy Elementary School in Alton.

Jury selection began on Monday afternoon in the case against Charles D. Thomas (d.o.b. 7/26/1988) who was originally charged by the Madison County State's Attorney's Office on February 20, 2014. The case went to the jury just after 1 p.m. this afternoon following closing arguments. After less than one hour of deliberation, the jury returned a guilty verdict on a charge of Aggravated Discharge of a Firearm Within 1000 Feet of a School, a Class X Felony.

**Assistant State's Attorneys Crystal Uhe and Rachelle Crowe**, of the Madison County State's Attorney's Office Violent Crimes Unit, began presenting evidence to the jury on Tuesday which supported the State's case that Thomas deliberately discharged a firearm within 1000 feet of Lovejoy School. Assistant State's Attorneys Uhe and Crowe asked

the jury to convict Thomas on one count of Aggravated Discharge of a Firearm within 1000 Feet of a School, a Class X Felony.

**Madison County State's Attorney Tom Gibbons** expressed satisfaction with the guilty conviction, "Parents should be able to trust that their children will be kept safe as they send them to school each day, just as residents should be able to feel safe while walking the streets of their hometown." Gibbons also thanked the jurors for their service, "I hope that this conviction will serve as a message that these senseless acts of violence will not be tolerated in our community."

On February 19, 2014, the **Alton Police Department** responded to a report of shots fired in the 1000 block of Tremont. The reported shots were fired within 1000 feet of Lovejoy Elementary at a time students were present, causing the school to go into lockdown. Upon arrival, officers located the victim who reported that he had been walking down Tremont when shots were fired.

After locating the suspect, officers discovered a backpack containing a firearm inside his vehicle. The investigation determined that Thomas approached the victim in his vehicle and fired shots out of the passenger window in the direction of Lovejoy Elementary school.

State's Attorney Gibbons thanked his prosecutors and the entire trial team for their work in securing a conviction along with officers from the Alton Police Department who were able to quickly identify and arrest Thomas following the shooting.

Maximum penalty for a Class X Felony is **6-30 years in prison**, in which he will be required to serve 85 percent of the sentence. Thomas will remain in custody at the Madison County Jail in Edwardsville pending sentencing by Associate Judge Neil Schroeder. Sentencing will occur following the completion of a pre-sentencing investigation which usually takes 6-