

Troy man found not guilty by Reason of Insanity in Rev. Winters case; Cindy Winters issues statement

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A Troy, Illinois, man has been found Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity at a Discharge Hearing this afternoon for the 2009 shooting death of a local pastor.



On March 8, 2009, multiple police officers from various locales in Madison County responded to reports of a shooting at the First Baptist Church in Maryville, Illinois. Terry J. Sedlacek (d.o.b. 1/29/82) had walked into the church during a sermon being given by Pastor Fred Winters. Witnesses stated that Sedlacek had walked down the main aisle towards Pastor Winters who acknowledged his presence. It was at that time Sedlacek took out his .45 caliber handgun and began firing multiple shots at the pastor. Several parishioners attempted to subdue Sedlacek who was also armed with a knife. He stabbed two men before stabbing himself in the throat. The cause of death for Winters was a single gunshot wound to the chest and abdomen. The other victims have recovered from their physical injuries.

Sedlacek was charged the following day with First Degree Murder and Aggravated Battery charges. Following his release from the hospital, he was transferred to the Madison County Jail in Edwardsville before being sent to Chester Mental Health Center in November 2009. He has remained hospitalized in state-run mental health facilities since that time. The subsequent investigation into the shooting determined that Sedlacek did not know Pastor Winters nor was he a member of the First Baptist Church.

Since that time, the fitness of Sedlacek has been in dispute; and whether or not he was insane on the day of the murder. In addition to undergoing numerous evaluations during his time at the Chester facility and Alton Mental Health Center, Sedlacek was also evaluated by separate expert physicians retained by the Court, the State's Attorney's Office and the Public Defender, who represented Sedlacek in the case. The State's Attorney's Office retained Dr. Mathew Markos, the Director of Forensic Clinical Services for the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. Dr. Markos has performed thousands of forensic psychiatric evaluations and has testified in hearings for both the prosecutor and the defense. Ultimately, the conclusion was that Sedlacek was found to have not only an extensive history of mental illness, including a diagnosis of schizophrenia, but that he also suffers from a continued decline in his mental health since his arrest, despite ongoing treatment.

The order was entered this afternoon finding that Sedlacek was insane on the day of the shooting and the stabbings, therefore, he was found not guilty by reason of insanity. This verdict supports Sedlacek's status as unfit and unlikely to ever obtain fitness where he would be allowed to ever leave a secure facility.

Pastor Winters' wife, Cindy, was present at today's hearing and has provided a statement below for the media and has no further comment at this time and requests that the media respect her desire for privacy for her and her family.

State's Attorney Tom Gibbons expressed sympathy to the family, friends and parishioners of Pastor Winters. "This was such a tragic and sad case for those who knew

and loved Pastor Winters. March 8th changed their lives forever. Cindy has handled all of this with such grace and dignity. I hope that this provides some peace for Cindy and her daughters and everyone harmed by this terrible and tragic event.”

Sedlacek, who will remain at the Alton Mental Health Center, was not present for the Discharge Hearing that was held in front of Circuit Judge Richard Tognarelli. The maximum length of confinement for Sedlacek is 85 years—60 for the murder and 25 additional years since he used a firearm. Any future attempt by Sedlacek to be released from that secure facility, even if only temporary, will require prior approval from a judge with input from the State's Attorney's Office as well as Cindy Winters and her family.

State's Attorney Gibbons thanked Assistant State's Attorney Rachelle Crowe, who serves in the Violent Crimes Unit, as well as current and former staff members, for their hard work and dedication on behalf of the State's Attorney's Office, as well as all of the law enforcement and medical personnel who also assist

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Statement from Cindy Winters:

On behalf of 1st Baptist Church of Maryville and my daughters, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for the State's Attorney Office and their support and hard work over the past 6 years. In situations such as ours there isn't an outcome in which one side wins and the other loses, for really we have all lost. We are extremely grateful that we live in such a supportive and giving community. Have caring individuals around us has made all the difference during our time of loss and we cannot say, "Thank you," enough. I would ask for prayers for both families involved as we continue to heal and go forward.

Thank you Cindy Winters