

Judge: Teacher Gina Purvis not guilty of sexual assault

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PRINCETON — Citing problems with the credibility of the alleged victim's testimony, Circuit Court Judge H. Chris Ryan Jr. acquitted Gina Purvis, 29, of Fredricktown, Mo., formerly of rural Princeton, on four counts of criminal sexual assault — a Class 1 felony — Monday morning in Bureau County Circuit Court.

One count of aggravated criminal sexual abuse — a Class 2 felony— against Purvis had been dismissed by Bureau County State's Attorney Pat Herrmann on July 5 because it was related to conduct alleged in one of the counts of criminal sexual assault.

Purvis, a former biology teacher at Hall High School, pleaded innocent in February to the assault charges for allegedly committing acts of sexual conduct with a then 15-year-old male student at Hall High School between Feb. 13 and April 9, 2004.

She was represented by Steven Glink of Northbrook, a former Cook County public defender, Nicholas Esposito of Chicago and former Bureau County State's Attorney James May of Princeton.

In his closing statements Monday morning, Pat Herrmann restated the state's position that Purvis and the alleged victim were engaged in a relationship, that she was unhappy in her marriage and that the inordinate number of telephone calls between the alleged victim and Purvis proved that they did not have a typical teacher-student relationship.

Lead defense attorney Steven Glink responded in his closing statement that not only was the alleged victim a liar, but he was also "a troubled kid" and "a bully, stalker and harasser."

Glink also said the state failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that any sexual acts ever took place between Purvis and the alleged victim.

"The government wants to rest the bulk of its case on phone records," Glink said.

"What do they prove? The phone records speak for themselves, but do not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that sexual intercourse or oral sex took place between (the alleged victim) and Gina Purvis."