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PRESS RELEASE

Edwardsville—A Centreville man has been sentenced to life in prison for the 2013 murder of 20-year-old Dakota C. Jones.

Scottie Thompson (d.o.b. 8/22/71) was convicted of First Degree Murder in a 3-day trial by a Madison County jury on February 12, 2015, following deliberations that lasted less than an hour. He had been charged in the beating death of Jones whose body was found in Horseshoe Lake State Park in the morning of August 11, 2013, by three fisherman who alerted the Pontoon Beach Department. Investigators with the Illinois State Police (ISP) assisted and charges were filed two days later.

The investigation revealed that Thompson and Jones met earlier that night in East St. Louis, however, there is no indication that the two men knew one another prior to that time. Police allege that Thompson agreed to give Jones, a Cahokia resident, a ride to meet a friend and the two men left together around 10:30 p.m. that evening. Police believe that Thompson beat Jones about the head with a blunt force object several hours later before placing his body into Horseshoe Lake.

Due to a 1989 murder conviction out of St. Clair County, Illinois, Thompson was facing natural life in prison, a sentence that was handed down this afternoon by Circuit Judge Richard Tognarelli.

State's Attorney Gibbons offered praise for First Assistant State's Attorney Jennifer Vucich and Assistant State's Attorney Crystal Uhe who prosecuted the case. Additionally, he thanked officers from ISP and Pontoon Beach, the pathologist, and the coroner's office for their hard work that helped his office obtain the guilty verdict against Thompson.

"Today we were able to do what the law did not allow in 1989," said Gibbons. "We have removed this horribly violent individual from the streets of our community and locked him behind bars forever which is exactly where he belongs. Our goal was to seek justice for Dakota Jones and I hope that by removing him from society, it helps his family as they continue mourn the loss of their loved one."

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