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## ***Historic 2018 Violence - Verdicts Secured in Every Case***

**Bloomington, IL** - While the jury's guilty verdict from last week in the Oak Street homicide closes one chapter in the book that was a violent 2018 in McLean County, the undersigned believes it necessary to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of so many in the community before that chapter in our community's history closes completely. The violence experienced in 2018 included eleven homicides and two mass shooting incidents. Considerable and substantial resources were deployed to hold those responsible for that violence accountable.

At every turn, the women and men charged with finding those responsible and bringing them to justice were up to the task. Through thousands of hours of relentless work, our police departments solved every case. Charges were filed against numerous defendants and guilty verdicts secured in each and every case.

The men and women in every law enforcement agency in the county have earned our thanks and appreciation for the countless days spent away from their families, times they put themselves in harm's way and desire to ensure the safety of this community. Their efforts are truly historic.

No single entity, organization or department can hold an individual accountable for their harm to others. It has been said that each community decides for itself how much crime it will tolerate. Without a number of brave citizens who came forward to describe what they witnessed when these violent events took place, it would be even harder to hold those responsible accountable.

To those who have assisted in the effort to effectuate justice for the victims of 2018: **Thank You**. This community owes you a great debt of gratitude as we do to the brave witnesses that came forward to describe what they observed. Chief Simington shares in that debt of gratitude and would like to specifically note that *"The Bloomington Police Department is sincerely grateful for the collaborative efforts of the McLean County State's Attorney's Office and their resolve in the pursuit of justice for the victims and their families! Prosecutorial diligence is evident and a difference-maker in the safety of the Bloomington-Normal community."*

Normal Police Chief Rick Bleicher echoed those sentiments indicating that, *"The Normal Police Department is grateful for the collaborative work of the State's Attorney's Office and all of our law enforcement partners. Holding those responsible for violent acts, increases safety and provides a voice to the victims in these cases."*



While this chapter of 2018 is closed, we know there is work left to do. We look forward in working with all our community partners in hopes that we never again experience the violence observed in 2018. For those intent on harming others in this community, please take note of the resources and efforts of those in this community to bring criminals to justice as 2018 serves as a shining example of such efforts.

For any follow-up questions on any of the 2018 homicide prosecutions, feel free to contact Don Knapp at the McLean County State's Attorney's Office at 309-888-5400.

Chief Jamal Simington, Bloomington Police Department  
Chief Rick Bleichner, Normal Police Department  
Sheriff Jon Sandage  
Chief Aaron Woodruff, Illinois State University Police Department  
McLean County State's Attorney Don Knapp

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