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**SUNDAY**  
**APRIL 8, 2018**  
**McMinnville, Tennessee**  
**southernstandard.com**  
Vol. 140 **f** **t** **\$1.25**  
No. 42

# Southern Standard

## Teen indicted for second-degree murder

BY **JAMES CLARK**  
Editor for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

The Warren County grand jury handed down a second-degree murder indictment Friday against a teen who shot his roommate to death last month.

Dakota Ryan Basham, 19, was indicted on four charges stemming from the shooting death of Joshua Dell Smith, 18, on March 16. There were initially no charges filed after a police investigation.

"There was additional evidence that came to light and this is what the grand

jury determined," said District Attorney General Lisa Zavogiannis.

Basham was indicted for second-degree murder, aggravated assault, filing a false report, and possession of more than a half ounce of marijuana with intent to deliver.

The shooting took place at Bybee Woods, a duplex off Bybee Branch Road, around midnight. Basham was reportedly standing in a doorway cleaning a pistol and the victim was on the other



**BASHAM**

side of the room getting dressed when the gun discharged. The gun was a 357 Magnum revolver. The shooting was initially ruled to be accidental.

But conflicting claims have emerged since the initial investigation. There have been reports a witness on scene at the time of the shooting was instructed to leave before police arrived and not discuss what happened. That witness has since come forward.

As a result of that witness, Basham is said to have changed his story from the original version of events he told police.

In addition, there have been reports of several guns found at the duplex, along with marijuana and thousands in cash that may suggest more of a criminal environment.

Zavogiannis would not confirm any of the aforementioned new details, citing the ongoing investigation.

Basham was booked into Warren County Jail on \$50,000 bond Friday afternoon. He made bond a few hours later.



Lisa Hobbs photo

**The inaugural political debate at Warren County High School attracted more than 40 local candidates for a question-and-answer session aimed at piquing the political interest of students. Pictured, from left, are students Logan Kell, Misa Jefferson and Kaniz Momin.**

## Student-led debate packs high school

BY **LISA HOBBS**  
Reporter for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Property taxes, infrastructure, capital projects, school safety, and rehabilitation of jail inmates were among the numerous questions asked of candidates during Thursday night's political forum at Warren County High School.

Young Democrats and Young Republicans held their first political debate. Local candidates were allowed three minutes to introduce themselves, 1 minute to respond to questions, and 30 seconds to make a rebuttal.

"These questions were given by the student body," said Logan Kell, a member of the Young Republicans and one of eight moderators. "They submitted the questions and we're going to ask them to the candidates tonight."

More than 40 candidates were poised and ready to answer those questions in front of an audience of approximately 300.

Continued on **2A**

## A final D.A.R.E.



Lacy Garrison photo

**Dibrell principal Sheila Gann gives Sheriff Jackie Matheny a hug Friday morning during DARE graduation at the school. It was the last DARE graduating class for Matheny in his capacity as sheriff. Also pictured are teachers Ashlee Reep, left, and Tina Mullins.**

## Matheny bids farewell to program

BY **LACY GARRISON**  
Reporter for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

From teachers to students, everyone in attendance for Sheriff Jackie Matheny's last DARE graduation ceremony was misty-eyed Friday morning.

Fifth- and sixth-graders at Dibrell School hung on his every word, applauded loudly and laughed at inside jokes he shared with them from the stage.

"I'm going to miss his stories and the way he teaches," said sixth-grader Cirenica Arellano after giving Matheny a hug. "I'm just going to miss everything about him."

Matheny has influenced children

and the relationship has been mutual. The sheriff reminisced about how being involved in the DARE program has personally affected him.

"They've touched my life," said Matheny with a slight tremor in his voice. "When I got shot, it was life changing. Then the DARE program came along and it was like the good Lord knocked me upside the head and said 'Hey, this is you!' I felt like this was the reason I was still around to work with these children. I will miss being a part of their lives. It's been the happiest part of my career."

Before handing out certificates, Matheny discussed what the program is all about. Matheny has been teaching DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Educa-

tion) for 28 years.

"The drug problem was becoming an issue along with violence and we were tired of arresting young people because it wasn't helping," said Matheny. "We wanted to educate young people and help them see officers in a different light because when they see us, we are arresting people or writing tickets. We wanted to do something different and let them see us as real people who care."

Matheny explained the DARE curriculum focuses on educating young people on the effects of drugs and addiction, along with providing helpful ways to avoid peer pressure to experiment in drug use.

Continued on **2A**



**Wes Williams, left, and Terry Smith are pictured during a political forum sponsored by Southern Standard and WCPI.**

## Smith, Williams vie for Register of Deeds office

BY **JAMES CLARK**  
Editor for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Terry Smith is hoping voters return him to the Register of Deeds office for a sixth term. Wes Williams is hoping they give a newcomer a chance.

The two Democratic candidates talked about their credentials and vision for the office during a recent political forum sponsored by Southern Standard and WCPI.



Early voting begins Wednesday at Warren County Administrative Offices

Early voting for the Democratic Primary begins Wednesday.

The primary itself is set for May 1.

Smith pointed to his 20 years as Register of Deeds as a reason he should have the confidence of voters. He said the Warren County office is only one of 36 in the state that offers e-mailing, e-filing, title search computers, and accepts credit cards.

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