

# Allatoona murder trial on docket

By MARC PEARSON  
Staff Writer

As criminal trial week gets rolling Monday in Bartow County, two men facing murder charges may get their day in court.

On the trial calendar for the week are Sean Phillip Heldt, 35, of Barbourville, Ky., and Heith Hadley Harkins, 29, of Waynesville, Ohio, who are charged with felony murder and involuntary manslaughter.

District Attorney Joe Campbell said he is ready to proceed with the case.

Both men were indicted in October, 1999 by a Bartow County Grand Jury in connection with the August 9, 1999 death of Anthony Ray Kittle, 42, a maintenance man at the Holiday Marina on Lake Allatoona.

Just after midnight on August 10, 1999 investigators with the Bartow County Sheriff's Office responded to a report of a "possible drowning" at the marina on Groover's Landing Road.

According to investigators an altercation had occurred between Kittle and the two suspects after he approached them and requested them to turn down their radio.

They believe Kittle was beaten, forced into the lake and drowned. His body was recovered approximately an hour after the altercation.

A medical examiner with the Georgia Bureau of Investigations ruled the cause of death was drowning following blunt head injuries. It was noted that no defensive wounds were found on Kittle's hands.



**Sean Heldt and Heith Harkins** could go on trial for murder this week.

Harkins and Heldt were arrested that night and charged with the crime and have remained in Bartow County custody since the incident.

Initial police reports from the incident stated that when deputies arrived they spoke with Harkins who said he and Heldt were approached by Kittle who was "raising hell".

He told police that he followed Kittle to a dock where a physical altercation occurred where Kittle wound up in the lake and didn't come back up.

Heldt told police that he went to the dock where Harkins and Kittle were fighting and that Kittle hit him but he never could get hit on him. He told police that Kittle was alive when he left the docks.

Complicating the case is the death of a key witness, who gave testimony to police about what happened that evening.

Jeffery Todd Thomas, 26, was swimming in Lake Allatoona just a little over two weeks after Kittle's death and drowned. His death was ruled an accidental drowning.

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## Witness death complicates lake murder trial

By MARC PEARSON  
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Jeffery Todd Thomas died in an accidental drowning just a few weeks after witnessing the murder of a Holiday Marina maintenance man in August.

In a motion hearing on Tuesday, defense lawyers for the men



HARKINS



HELDT

charged in the murder made argu-

ments for keeping statements Thomas made out of trial proceedings because of apparent inconsistencies in them.

Both Heith-Hadley Harkins, 29, of Waynesville, Ohio, and Sean Phillip Heldt, 35, of Barbourville, Ky., have been charged with one count of felony murder and one count of involuntary manslaugh-

ter. They are accused in the beating death of Anthony Ray Kittle, 42.

Defense attorney Neal Brunt argued that including inconsistent testimony from a witness that cannot be cross-examined violates Heldt's rights. He also said evidence of Thomas possibly

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60,000 or which had grown by at least 800 persons per year on average since the last census. The 40 counties include nearly three-fourths of the state's population, Barnes said.

Counties could choose to participate in the program or not, but Barnes said he believed most would do so in order to win state dollars. "It's a carrot. Fast-growing counties are strapped for funds to create passive areas ... They general-

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