



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 24, 2022

## JUDICIAL CANDIDATE FORBES REVERSED BY HIGHER COURT FOR SEEKING TO CONCEAL DOMESTIC BATTERY CONVICTIONS FROM JURY

DECATUR, IL -

“The trial court's ultimate conclusion... was rooted in misapprehension of the applicable law,” concluded the Fourth District Appellate Court on Tuesday when reversing Associate Judge Rodney Forbes’ failure to admit prior convictions of domestic battery in a domestic battery prosecution.

In May 2021, the State charged defendant, Willie A. Currie, with one count of aggravated domestic battery and two counts of domestic battery (with two prior domestic battery convictions). The charges alleged generally that on April 26, 2021, defendant grabbed victim with whom he was in a dating relationship, by the neck and strangled and kicked her and further alleged that defendant was previously convicted in 2010 of aggravated domestic battery of an intimate partner in Macon County case No. 10-CF-893 and in 2016 for domestic battery of an intimate partner in Macon County case No. 16-CM-1163. The State subsequently amended the charges to allege a third prior conviction for domestic battery in Macon County case No. 17-CF-616. Forbes ruled that a jury should not hear about the previous convictions because the evidence would be too prejudicial to the Defendant. The Appellate Judges disagreed explaining that the applicable law provides when a defendant is charged with domestic battery, evidence of his commission of other offenses of domestic violence may be considered by the jury for any relevant matter, including the defendant's propensity to commit the charged crime.

Forbes’ opponent in the June 28, 2022 Republican Primary, Shane Mendenhall, reacted swiftly. “One clear distinction between Judge Forbes and me is that Forbes comes from a background of service as a public defender viewing the law through the eyes of the accused and the offenders. While the accused have constitutional rights, our legal system also must protect the law-abiding citizens and the victims in our community. This is one example where perspective on the bench impacts the safety of our community,” Mendenhall explained. “Our daughters deserve better than this. Serial domestic battery threats must not be free to roam the streets of our community,” Mendenhall continued.

“My opponent continues to tout his perception of experience to support his candidacy, but a bad experience is just that. As Republicans, and as community members, we can and must do better”, Mendenhall stated.

The case is People v. Currie 2022 IL App(4<sup>th</sup>) 210598.

###

