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In today's paper
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Ledger-Enquirer

Jury: Man guilty of felony murder in death of Renee Eldridge

BY KELBY HUTCHISON
khutchison@ledger-enquirer.com

A Muscogee County jury in the trial of a man who faced charges including felony murder and rape in the death of a Co-

lumbus woman a decade ago has reached a verdict.
Stacey Gray, 55, stood trial during the past two weeks in the death of 25-year-old Renee Eldridge, whose body was found July 7, 2015 in Osanippa Creek in Chambers County, Alabama.

Gray faced charges of malice murder, two counts of felony murder, aggravated assault, kidnapping and rape, according to the bill of indictment.
The jury found Gray guilty of one count of felony murder, aggravated assault and rape.



Renee Eldridge

The jury found Gray not guilty of malice murder, one count of felony murder and kidnapping.
The jury began their deliberations Tuesday before being sent home for the Thanksgiving holiday at noon Wednesday. The jury reached their verdict just after 4 p.m. Monday.
Judge Carolyn "Tippi" Cain Burch didn't announce the sentencing date.

DA REACTS TO VERDICT
Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit District Attorney Don Kelly

told the Ledger-Enquirer it's a "great relief" to have this verdict.
"I believe in the criminal justice system," he said. "I wouldn't do this work if I didn't believe in it."
Kelly said he thinks the jury did a great job and he does not have any problems with the jury's verdict.
"I felt like we were the last opportunity for this family to get justice," he said. "So I'm very relieved that we were able to do that for the family."
Kelly said Gray will face a sentence of life in prison with or without the possibility of parole

SEE ELDRIDGE, 2A



TANNEN MAURY, UPI

People check in for flights for Thanksgiving holiday travel at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago last week. The TSA announced Monday that fliers who don't have an acceptable REAL ID or passport can pay a \$45 fee and use Confirm.ID at security checkpoints.

TSA offers \$45 option for those without REAL ID or passport

BY LISA HORNING
UPI.com

The Transportation Security Administration announced Monday that fliers who don't have an acceptable REAL ID or

passport can pay a \$45 fee and use Confirm.ID, a modernized identity verification system to confirm their identities at security checkpoints starting Feb. 1.
Those without the proper identification will be sent to TSA's optional Confirm.ID pro-

cess before entering the security line, the TSA said in a press release. The process at each airport will be different, and the agency is working with private companies to offer online payment options.
Now, more than 94% of pas-

sengers already have a REAL ID, TSA said. It expects increased wait times for those without.
"Identity verification is essential to traveler safety, because it

SEE TSA, 2A

3 teenagers charged with capital murder in Phenix City death

BY KELBY HUTCHISON
khutchison@ledger-enquirer.com

Three 15-year-olds have been arrested and charged with capital murder (robbery) in Wednesday's shooting death of a Phenix City man, according to the Phenix City Police Department.
Police said officers found Joseph Tassoni, 43, dead at the scene on Cricket Drive from apparent gunshot wounds.
The PCPD Criminal Investigations Division responded and began an investigation, according to the news release.
The PCPD Special Response Team, the Russell County Sheriff's Office STAR team and the Lee County SWAT team executed multiple residential search warrants Saturday, leading to the arrests of the three juveniles, the news release says.
Police said the juveniles are being held in a youth detention center.
PCPD asks anyone with information about this case to call Sgt. Patrick Doleman at 334-448-2796, Lt. Robert Isabel at 334-448-2839 or the department's non-emergency number at 334-298-0611.

How to watch 1st documentary about Columbus native McCullers

BY MARK RICE
mrice@ledger-enquirer.com

The first documentary film about Columbus native Carson McCullers debuted this week, and there's a streaming option for those who missed it.
Georgia Public Broadcasting was scheduled to air "Wonderkind Carson McCullers" in its U.S. television premiere Dec. 1 at 9 p.m.

Born with the name Lula Carson Smith in 1917, McCullers was a bestselling novelist, perhaps most known for "The Heart is Lonely Hunter," published when she was 23. She also was a poet, playwright, essayist and short-story writer.
McCullers suffered through a series of cerebral strokes, partially paralyzing her left side. She died from her final stroke in Nyack, New York, at the age of 50.

According to Vimeo, "Wonderkind Carson McCullers" is a 54-minute documentary by German filmmaker Claudia Muller that "aims to bring to light the work of the best-known unknown in American literature."
The success of "The Heart is a Lonely Hunter" made McCullers "the star of the New York literary scene and a celebrated

SEE MCCULLERS, 2A



COURTESY OF THE COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY CARSON MCCULLERS CENTER FOR WRITERS AND MUSICIANS

Carson McCullers was a bestselling novelist, poet, playwright, essayist and short-story writer.



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