

Edmonds transferred to MDOC facility
By CONSWELLA BENNETT/Starkville Daily News

Tyler Edmonds, the 15-year-old convicted of murder last month in the May 2003 shooting death of his half-sister's husband, Joey Fulgham, was transported to a Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) facility in Rankin County Friday morning.

Edmonds had been in custody at the Oktibbeha County Jail since his arrest May 12, 2003.

Chief Sheriff's Deputy George Carrithers said Edmonds was released to the MDOC's custody under court order following his conviction.

Edmonds and his attorney, Jim Waide of Tupelo, had been waiting to receive word from Circuit Court Judge Jim Kitchens, who presided over the trial, on a ruling on whether Edmonds would be granted a new trial. The new trial motion, which was argued more than three weeks ago, is usually regarded as the first step in the conviction appeals process.

The motion was made a week following Edmonds' week-long capital murder trial. Kitchens said he would inform the attorneys in writing of his ruling within two weeks, which would have been Aug. 13, but according to court minutes, Kitchens' ruling still had not been filed as of Friday.

Jerry Young, a paralegal with the Waide Law Firm, said they were surprised to learn that Edmonds was being transported to an MDOC facility Friday morning.

"It was a total surprise to us and to Tyler (Edmonds), he wasn't expecting it," Young said. "We were hoping it wasn't going to happen, but we knew it could happen."

Young said once Edmonds learned that he was being moved from the Oktibbeha County Jail, he got another inmate to call the law firm to inform them of his transfer.

Sharon Clay, Edmonds' mother, continues to maintain her son's innocence in the May 10, 2003, shooting death. While at work Friday morning, Clay said she learned that her son was being transported.

Clay, who has promised to fight to prove her son's innocence, said she was unable to speak to her son Friday.

"They said it will be three weeks before I can even talk to him," Clay said.

Nick Lott, a spokesperson for the MDOC, said all convicted offenders go through the Rankin County facility for processing and orientation. It was the only information regarding Edmonds that could be released, Lott said.

Under an order from Kitchens, Edmonds will later be sent to Walnut Grove Correctional Facility, which houses younger defendants convicted of serious crimes.

Edmonds' half-sister, Kristi Fulgham, 27, awaits trial on a capital murder charge in her husband's death. The next court action in her case is set for the October term of Oktibbeha County Circuit Court.