

Trial set for Kristi Fulgham in husband's death

By BRIAN HAWKINS/Starkville Daily News

The trial jury for capital murder suspect Kristi Leigh Fulgham will come from Union County.

In a written order Monday, Circuit Court Judge Lee Howard, who had previously granted Fulgham, 29, a change of venue for her trial in March, ordered that the jury for her trial will come from Union County and that jury selection will begin on Dec. 4.

Howard also ordered Union County Circuit Clerk Phyllis Stanford to draw a special pool of prospective jurors for the case.

Fulgham is under indictment on a capital murder charge in the May 10, 2003, shooting death of her husband, Joseph T. "Joey" Fulgham, 28, at the home she shared with him and their two children in the Longview community west of Starkville.

Howard has not yet set a date for her trial, though possible dates in July and October were discussed in court Tuesday, prosecutors said.

Fulgham was granted the change of venue following March hearing after her attorneys, Stephanie Mallette of Starkville and James Lappan with the Office of Capital Defense Counsel in Jackson, successfully argued before Howard that pervasive pretrial publicity about the case had tainted the potential jury pool in Oktibbeha County.

Much of the media coverage of the case has focused on her half-brother, Tyler Edmonds, now 16, who was also indicted in connection with Joey Fulgham's death and was convicted in July 2004 on a murder charge in the case. Edmonds is serving a life sentence, but his attorneys are pursuing multiple appeal options. An appeal of his conviction is currently pending before the Mississippi Supreme Court.

The prosecution, defense teams and court staff will likely travel to the chosen county to select the jury for Fulgham's trial, which will then be transported back to Oktibbeha County and sequestered for the duration of the trial.

Since Fulgham is being tried for a capital offense - one which could result in the death penalty - state law automatically requires that the jury be sequestered for the trial, prosecutors have said previously.

All witnesses in the case will also be banned from the courtroom unless they are giving testimony, prosecutors said.

Fulgham has been jailed since May 2003 on the capital murder charge in her husband's death.

Her husband's body was found May 11, 2003, by family members at the couple's Buckner Street home lying face down in his bedroom with a gunshot wound to the head. Though they had filed for divorce, Kristi Fulgham had recently moved back into the home with her husband, officials said after her arrest.

Fulgham is currently serving a 12-year sentence stemming from her guilty pleas in January on charges of attempted escape and furnishing an improper device to an

inmate. Those charges stemmed from incidents that occurred in August 2004 and October 2004 at the Oktibbeha County Jail.