June 14, 2013

**NEWS RELEASE**

**CHARLES CLAYTON TODD SENTENCED**

**TO LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE**

 Cherokee County Circuit Judge Jeremy Taylor today sentenced Charles Clayton Todd to *life in prison without the possibility of parole* for his convictions of Attempted Murder, Robbery 1st Degree, and Attempted Arson, 1st Degree which were rendered by a Cherokee County jury on May 8, 2013. The verdicts came at the end of a three day trial prosecuted by Cherokee County District Attorney Mike O’Dell and Deputy District Attorney Bob Johnston, while Todd was defended by Florence attorney Allen Elledge.

 According to court records and evidence presented during the trial, Charles Clayton Todd, age 45, of 53 County Road 72, Fyffe, Alabama, broke into the home of Carol Lowry between 7:00 and 7:30 am on the morning of April 19, 2012, while Ms. Lowry was asleep in her hospital bed. According to District Attorney Mike O’Dell, “Todd then proceeded to brutally attack Ms. Lowry with a baseball bat, striking her numerous times across her chest, arms, wrists and knees. Although she was in excruciating pain with each blow, Ms. Lowry attempted to ‘play possum’ and make her attacker think she was dead in order to stop the vicious blows.”

 Believing his victim to be dead, Todd then proceeded to go to specific locations in the house where he knew guns and jewelry were located and placed these items in a garbage bag. O’Dell pointed out that Todd’s knowledge of the description and location of the stolen items came as a result of his wife, Bridgett Ledbetter Todd, having previously worked for Ms. Lowry as a home health nurse. Todd had accompanied his wife to the Lowry residence on several occasions. Just weeks prior to the attempted murder and robbery, Mrs. Todd had been removed from her work for Ms. Lowry, and she and Todd were instructed not to ever return to the Lowry residence due to reported violations of health and safety rules committed by the defendant’s wife against Mrs. Lowry.

 At one point during the robbery, Todd discovered that Ms. Lowry was not, in fact, dead, so he began beating her even more severely. Then, convinced he had killed her, he set her bed on fire and made his escape into the woods with the stolen goods.

 “Despite having been savagely attacked, with both her arms and wrists broken, her knee cap crushed, and deep contusions across her neck, chest, and abdomen, Ms. Lowry summoned the courage and strength to put the fire out, pull herself out of the bed onto the floor, and literally drag herself across the room to her phone in order to call 911,” O’Dell stated. Ms. Lowry knew Mr. Todd and was able to identify him as her attacker to law enforcement. “Ms. Lowry is certainly a woman of incredible faith, and she attributes her survival to her Lord watching over her and protecting her life. She told Bob and me that ‘Jesus wasn’t ready to take me home yet.’ I couldn’t argue with her after what she had been through that day.”

 Testimony indicated that Ms. Lowry was indeed a survivor, having previously dealt with several major medical crises in her life, such as an aneurism, cancer, Fibromyalgia and Neuropathy, that had weakened her over the course of the last few years rendering her disabled on the day of Todd’s brutal attack. “Over the course of the past year, Ms. Lowry’s body has healed pretty well, but I am certain her heart and mind have a long way to go. Where she once felt completely safe and secure in her home, she now has to live with the fear of such an attack ever happening to her again,” O’Dell said. “Carol is a truly delightful woman who had taken great joy in her life despite the setbacks she had incurred along the way. Bob and I hope that she will be able to regain that ‘song in her heart.’ We are confident that, with her deep and abiding faith, she will succeed.”

 Law enforcement responded quickly to the Lowry residence following the 911 call forcing Todd to abandon his escape plans. After spending some 17 hours in thick woods just a couple of miles from Lowry’s home, trying to hide from authorities and avoid capture, Todd was spotted in a ditch by a private citizen who alerted nearby police. When apprehended, Todd turned to the citizen and stated that “He (Todd) was going to kill him.” When searched, Todd had a small bag of coins that he had stolen from Ms. Lowry in his pocket.

 Todd is no stranger to the criminal justice system. He has at least 7 prior felony convictions including drug possession, illegal firearms possession, escape, and robbery. “Charles Clayton Todd is clearly a career criminal. The life without parole sentence rendered by Judge Taylor is both fair and deserving. But for the grace of God, we would have been trying Todd for murder,” O’Dell pointed out. “I believe our entire community can breathe a little easier knowing that such a violent offender will spend the rest of his natural life locked up behind bars. The acts he perpetrated against Ms. Lowry were unconscionable. Todd deserved the harshest punishment available.”

“Finally, Bob and I would like to express our sincere appreciation to fine folks from Cherokee County who served on this jury. They were very attentive and committed to the trial and their deliberations. Justice would not have been possible without them.”