

August 2007: *Young Woman Avoids Death Penalty, Receives Probation*

Kathi Shelton hung around with people who made her feel good about herself and who accepted her despite her life-altering injuries suffered in a nearly fatal car wreck during her senior year of high school. Unfortunately, during one week of off-and-on partying, some of these people decided to go out and rob and beat a wheel-chair bound man to death, and his brother nearly to death, in their own home. Though one of the killers was Kathi's boyfriend, Kathi was not with them when they committed their heinous acts. Nonetheless, Kathi was charged with Complicity to Commit Robbery and Murder and initially faced the death penalty as a possible punishment. Through the hard work of Mark Stanziano, the charges were reduced to one count of receiving stolen property (some of the brother's property was in her car) and one count of Facilitating the Manufacture of Methamphetamine (for acts committed during the partying) and Kathi received a sentence of five years imprisonment, probated.

"Kathi's probation was conditioned on her serving 365 days in jail and completing the Drug Court program in the Wayne County (Ky.) Circuit Court," said Stanziano, adding, "She already had the time served prior to my being able to get her out on bond, so there was no extra time to pull," he added. "So, the only thing left for her to do is to complete the Drug Court program. And, when she completes that program, she will be through with probation." Stanziano continued, "I have every confidence in her ability to successfully complete the Drug Court program because she was clean for more than two years following her release on bond and is committed to staying clean."

Ms. Shelton was elated at the outcome, as was her father, Don Shelton. Emotionally expressing his feelings on the matter, Mr. Shelton said, "Mr. Stanziano has given my wife and me back our daughter. We were just so blessed to have him on her side. I have never seen anyone work so hard for someone else or seen anyone care so much about another person, a stranger in fact. Mr. Stanziano is a good Christian man who saved my little girl."

Stanziano responded, "Well, I don't know about being a good Christian, but I do know that the entire defense team worked very hard to achieve the results we got for Kathi and we are, justifiably, very proud of our work and the results. She was wrongly charged with the offenses for which she was indicted. I suspect that she was charged that way in order to pressure her into ratting-out her co-defendants." Stanziano added, "But, she never gave in to that temptation. She consistently maintained that she had no knowledge about what happened. Her unwillingness to lie to help the prosecutor who charged her was an unselfish act of uncommon bravery, in my opinion."

Kathi continues in the Drug Court Program today. "Mark helped to save my life. Now the rest is up to me. I don't want to let him down and I don't want to let my parents down any more. In spite of my disabilities, I want to be able to live-up to my potential. I feel like God has given me a second chance to do that."