

SLAYER GETS JUDICIAL MAXIMUM Sentence is life, no parole, solitary on murder date

Convicted killer David G. Thorne never will leave prison alive, and on March 31 of every year he will spend the anniversary of his victim's murder in solitary confinement.

That sentence, handed down Friday in Stark County Common Pleas court, did not come from the jury, however.

After 12 hours of deliberation, jurors were unable to decide which of four sentences – including the death penalty – Thorne deserved for hiring someone to kill his ex-girlfriend, 26-year-old Yvonne Layne.

The deadlock meant Judge Richard D. Reinbold Jr. had to choose for them, and he chose the maximum penalty available to him – life in prison without parole.

Thorne spoke for the first time in his trial the day before his sentencing, and told the victim's family he is innocent.

"I know in my heart and soul and mind I didn't have anything to do with this," Thorne said, facing Yvonne Layne's relatives in the audience. "I'm sorry she died. She was the mother of my son."

Joseph Wilkes, 19, confessed that he slashed Layne's throat March 31 in her Alliance home to please Thorne, whom he idolized. He testified that Thorne paid him \$200 the morning of Layne's funeral.