



JACKSON COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JAMES MICHAEL DEESE, DE SOTO, INDICTED FOR FIRST DEGREE MURDER

Michael C. Carr, Jackson County State's Attorney announced today the return of a three count Indictment relating to the death of Frank Stonemark, 76, of DeSoto, Illinois.

James Michael Deese, age 52, also of DeSoto, has been indicted by a Grand Jury for the murder of Frank Stonemark. The Indictment alleges that Deese killed Stonemark by strangling him on October 29, 2017. Deese is charged in a second count with concealing the death of Stonemark with knowledge that Stonemark had died by homicidal means. He is also charged in a third count with moving the body from the place of death with intent to conceal information regarding the place and manner of the death.

If convicted of First Degree Murder as alleged in Count 1, the sentence which must be imposed is 20 to 60 years' imprisonment. Probation is not authorized and there is no early release program available. Concealment of a Homicidal Death is a Class 3 Felony which carries potentially a sentence of 2-5 years' imprisonment. Count 3, Concealment of a Death is a Class 4 Felony which carries a potential sentence of 1-3 years imprisonment. Counts two and three are eligible for probation.

An Indictment is merely a charge and not evidence. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.

The defendant is currently in custody on a \$1 million bond. A jury pretrial hearing is scheduled on May 15, 2018, in Jackson County Circuit Court.

The investigation is being pursued by the Jackson County Sheriff's Office and is ongoing. Anyone with information about this case is asked to contact the Jackson County Sheriff's Office. State's Attorney Michael Carr is handling the prosecution.

*A prosecutor has the responsibility of a minister of justice and not simply that of an advocate. This responsibility carries with it specific obligations to see that the defendant is accorded procedural justice and that guilt is decided upon the basis of sufficient evidence. Except for statements that are necessary to inform the public of the nature and extent of the prosecutor's action and that serve a legitimate law enforcement purpose, by Supreme Court Rule, the State's Attorney is not allowed to make statements about pending cases or investigations which would pose a serious and imminent threat to the fairness of the proceeding. **Rule 3.8 Special Responsibilities of a Prosecutor.** For a list of certain subjects which have been determined to pose such a threat to the fairness of the proceedings and for a list of subjects which do not, please see **Rule 3.6 Trial Publicity.** For any press release involving a case which has not yet been tried, please note that: **a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of the jury.***