

**For Immediate Release**

Contact: Diana Palotas  
Monroe County District Attorney's Office  
47 South Fitzhugh Street  
Rochester, NY 14614  
(585) 753-4532 office  
(585) 314-1046 cell  
[dpalotas@monroecounty.gov](mailto:dpalotas@monroecounty.gov)

**Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley Announces Guilty Verdict  
for Matthew Townsend for Murdering Woman and Dumping Her Body in  
Garbage Tote**

Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley announced today, February 22, 2012, that a Monroe County jury found Matthew Townsend, 46, guilty of Murder in the Second Degree for the beating and strangling death of Toccara Harmon on January 7, 2011. Ms. Harmon's body was discovered in a garbage tote behind a restaurant on Rochester's Lyell Avenue, not far from the home on Spencer Street where police say the 27-year-old city woman was murdered.

"The star witness in this case is the defendant's DNA. It was found on the victim's neck. It was found on the handle of the garbage tote," said prosecutor Julie Hahn in her closing arguments to the jury. It took the jurors 90 minutes to reach their decision of guilty.

Hahn says, "I appreciate the time and patience of the jury. The jurors gave this case their full attention, considering 2 ½ weeks of evidence from 29 witnesses. I am very happy with the result."

This was Townsend's second trial on the murder charge. Judge Vincent M. Dinolfo declared a mistrial in October, after learning that three jurors had discussed the case.

Townsend will be sentenced April 5, 2012. He faces a maximum sentence of 25 years to life in prison.

#