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Counselor cleared of battery charges

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MARIETTA — Frank Robinson, the Lassiter High School guidance counselor and basketball coach accused of inappropriately touching a 17-year-old student in 2009, was acquitted on all charges Thursday morning.

Robinson was charged with two counts each of misdemeanor sexual battery and simple battery on Dec. 19, 2009. Jurors found him not guilty in Judge Toby Prodgers' Cobb County State Courtroom on Thursday after a 45-minute deliberation, according to Robinson's attorney, Barry Hazen of Atlanta.

"The jury unanimously expressed anger about bringing the case before them," he said. "They said the case was over after the first witness."

Throughout the trial, which began Monday, seven witnesses were called to the witness stand by the state and 15 by the defense.

"There were a lot of character witnesses, and two of those were material witnesses," Hazen said. "Those were people who were in the counselor's office when this supposedly happened."

Hazen said students and teachers traveled from all over the Southeast to support his client's innocence.

"He was liked by everyone," he said. "The most trouble he had ever been in before this may have been a traffic ticket."

Following the jury's verdict Thursday, Robinson broke down sobbing, Hazen said.

"I interpret it as just being relieved. The nightmare is over," he said. "His wife was crying, too."

Solicitor General Barry Morgan was not available for comment by press time on Thursday.

Robinson was a counselor at Lassiter, but he was reassigned to Kennesaw Mountain High after the accusations because his bond condition did not allow him to return to work at his old school.

Additionally, the school board voted 4-2 to reinstate him after a tribunal of three school board members, with one member dissenting, found insufficient evidence

to fire Robinson in February 2010.

While Cobb Schools spokesman Doug Goodwin said Robinson resigned in lieu of termination in December after his counseling certification was revoked, Hazen said his client left Kennesaw Mountain last spring.

Hazen said his client is not working.

“There was no way he would have resigned,” Hazen said.

Robinson was a counselor for about 11 years and was at Lassiter for six years before the reported assault.

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