

Saturday, April 11, 2015

DO THEANEAGLE

Ozark teen gets 25 years for murder

Carroll High student shot to death in street

BY MATT ELOFSON
melofson@dothaneagle.com

An Ozark teenager received a 25-year prison sentence after he pleaded guilty to the fatal shooting of a Carroll High student.

Dale County District Attorney Kirke Adams said 16-year-old Joseph Martinez Rodgers

pleaded guilty Thursday afternoon to a felony murder charge in front of Circuit Court Judge William Fillmore. Adams said Rodgers received the 25-year prison sentence as part of the plea agreement.

Rodgers was one of two people charged with murder by Ozark police investigators in the killing

of 17-year-old Christian Alexander Markoff on Sunday, Feb. 2, 2014.

"We'll now move on to the co-defendant," Adams said. "No matter what happened in court it is never going to bring Christian back, but I am happy yesterday made Dale County and Ozark a safer place."

Rodgers, who was 15 years old at the time of the murder, was initially taken to the Southeast Alabama Juvenile Diversion Center, and charged as a juvenile. He was later transferred to the Dale County Jail and held on \$250,000 bail after the court ordered he be tried as an adult.



Rodgers

"This is just the first person charged in the crime," Adams said. "There are others who are going to pay the price. This is the first step in the judicial process of holding those responsible accountable."

Investigators with the Ozark Police Department also arrested 19-year-old Quashawn Markwise Knight the day after the shooting, charging him with felony murder. Knight applied for youthful offender status last November, which was denied by Fillmore. He is scheduled for trial June 8.

Adams said at least one more arrest is pending in the ongoing investigation into the shooting. Ozark police said Markoff was shot to death within a block of his Ozark home.

The shooting happened just after 10 p.m. in the street on Young Avenue near Yancey Street, which is located less than a mile from Carroll High where Markoff attended school.

"This was a completely senseless and irresponsible act," Adams said. "I think it had a big impact on the student body at Carroll High School."