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Jury finds Cheyeene Clifford guilty on all charges following deadly 2023 crash RECOMMENDS 25-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE

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On the final day of the trial against Cheyeene Clifford, a Nicholas County jury found that Mr. Clifford was guilty of all charges rendered against him, which included two counts of Murder in the deaths of Gage Gaunce and Clay Welch; two counts of 1st Degree Assault due to the the serious physical injuries to Emily Earlywine and Dylan Saucedo; one count of Tampering with a Witness; one count of DUI; one count of Reckless Driving; one count of Failure to Wear Seatbelts; and one count of No/Expired Registration Plates. Following the guilty verdicts, the jury recommended 25 years each for the two Murder charges, 10 years each for the two 1st Degree Assault charges, and 1 year for the Tampering with a Witness charge, all to run concurrently. As a vio-



Emily Earlywine, injured passenger in the crash, testified last Tuesday morning during the Clifford trial.

lented offender, Mr. Clifford will not be eligible for parole until he has served at least 20 years in prison.

Mr. Clifford, 27, of Carlisle, Ky. has been lodged in the Bourbon County Detention Center since June 5, 2023, following a horrific, early-morning, accident on Myers Station Road, that occurred on June 4, 2023. Gage Gaunce, 20 and Nathaniel Clay Welch, 17, both of Nicholas County, were pronounced dead at the scene by Nicholas County Deputy Coroner Scott Nelson at 1:26 am that

morning. Emily Earlywine, 24, and Dylan Saucedo, were hospitalized at the University of Kentucky Medical Center with serious injuries. No one in the truck was wearing seatbelts.

During the 4-day trial, which began on Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2026, through the late evening of Friday, Aug. 28, 2026, Commonwealth's Attorney Michael W. Laws and First Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney James G. Stone presented 88 exhibits of evidence and called a total of 38 witnesses to testify, which included surviving passengers Emily Earlywine



Dylan Saucedo, injured passenger in the crash, testified last Thursday morning during the Clifford trial.

and Dylan Saucedo; Nicholas County Sheriff Jeff Sidles; Nicholas County Deputy Sheriff Shane Adams; Carlisle Police Officer James Copher, Jr.; members of the Nicholas County Fire Department and Nicholas County EMS that responded to the scene; Larry and Rebecca Allison that lived just down the road from the crash site and were first on scene; Lucas and Sara Myers who had



Commonwealth's Attorney Michael W. Laws

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Cheyeene Clifford, along with Attorney Chris Tracy and Co-Counsel Mimi Bell, listen as Judge Verax read the jury's verdict.



Photos courtesy of Nicholas County Military Families Facebook page
One of our very own local heroes had the opportunity to participate in Honor Flight Kentucky!!! Jim Galbraith was accompanied on this adventure by his granddaughter Megan Plank!! We would like to thank Jim for his service and dedication. Mr. Galbraith would like to thank Gladys ShROUT for helping him be a part of this Honor Flight.

Board of Education sets tax rates at special-called meeting

By Michael A. Clary
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Members of the Nicholas County Board of Education, including Superintendent Dr. John Derek

Faulconer, met on Monday, Aug. 31, 2026, at 6:00pm, at the Central Office, for a special-called meeting.

Board Chair Cheryl Rawlings called the meeting to order with a prayer and roll call with

all board members present.

The board approved to adopt the tax rates for the Nicholas County

Board of Education
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Nicholas County FFA well represented at State Fair



Dawson Price, Nicholas County FFA member, exhibited the 2026 Grand Champion 2025 Yellow Corn at the Kentucky State Fair. Jackson and Dawson Price and Payton Sims also had entries in the FFA division with corn, tobacco, wheat, hay and soybeans earning

many top placings. Dawson is pictured with the Commissioner of Agriculture, Jonathan Shell.



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