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## **Teen Pleads Guilty in the Murder of His Girlfriend**

On Tuesday, December 10, 2025, Jordan James, age 18, pled guilty to the Second Degree Murder of Makayla Gibbs, age 17, both of Wilmington. Senior Resident Superior Court Judge R. Kent Harrell sentenced James to 125-162 months in prison.

Makayla Gibbs was shot by the defendant in his home on August 31, 2023. Although there was no eyewitness to the shooting, the defendant's sister heard the gunshot and reported no arguing before a shot was fired. Ms. Gibbs and James were in a dating relationship at the time of this offense. In the days preceding the shooting others reported and digital evidence revealed that James had been seen pointing a loaded firearm at other juveniles.

Detective J. Childress of the Wilmington Police Department handled the investigation, which was initially charged in Juvenile Court due to the defendant being a minor at the time of the offense. The nature of the Second Degree Murder charge required the case to be transferred to Superior Court, which is where he was sentenced this week. James had no adult criminal history for sentencing purposes, and he was sentenced in the presumptive range for Second Degree Murder.

"This case demonstrates why juveniles should not have access to handguns," said District Attorney Jason W. Smith. "Whether you are intentionally using a firearm against another or are demonstrating gross negligence in your handling of it, you will be held accountable, regardless of your age. Many times, if you take a life this will result in an active prison sentence."



Jordan James