

# STAMFORD ADVOCATE

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## Acquitted on murder charges

Jury: 2 Stamford men not guilty in 2015 Lione Park slaying

By Pat Tomlinson

STAMFORD — After three days of deliberation, a jury acquitted two men of murder charges connected to the 2015 fatal shooting of Maxine Gooden.

The jury found DeShawn Hayes and Jhonel Telemin-Valerio not guilty of murder and first-degree manslaughter with a firearm in the death of Gooden, a 43-year-old mother of five who was struck by a stray bullet at Lione Park in November 2015. However, they were found guilty on the lesser charge of criminal possession of a firearm.



Jhonel Telemin-Valerio



DeShawn Hayes

A group of nearly 20 friends and family members of the accused received the verdict with hushed celebrations and stifled applause in the courtroom Wed-

nesday afternoon before taking their jubilant celebration outdoors.

Lilly Hayes, mother of DeShawn Hayes, said she felt "amazing" as she wiped tears of joy from her eyes.

"I haven't hugged my son in six years. I was nervous, I was scared, but I knew that light always out-rules darkness. I know he is not an angel, but I knew what he wasn't. He wasn't a murderer, so for that I give God praise," Hayes said.

Friends and family joined  
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Pat Tomlinson / Hearst Connecticut Med

Friends and family of DeShawn Hayes and Jhonel Telemin-Valerio joined hands and celebrated outside the Stamford courthouse Wednesday after the two men were acquitted of murder charges.

# ACQUITTED

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hands outside the courtroom following Wednesday's hearing and, as some cried and others cheered, they shared words of praise and a song. The group then formed a circle around attorney Darnell Crosland, who represented Hayes, as he danced with a stereo speaker in his hands.

"I've been waiting for this moment," Crosland said as he danced with his client's family.

Two sisters of Telemín-Valerio were also present for the post-hearing celebrations, though both declined to comment.

While Hayes and Telemín-Valerio were cleared of the most serious charges that they were facing, they didn't leave Wednesday's hearing unscathed.

The jury found both men guilty of criminal possession of a firearm, a Class C felony that carries a minimum of two years in prison and up to 10 years.

Hayes and Telemín-Valerio could also each face further prosecution on a charge of negligent homicide, a Class A misdemeanor, after the jury failed to come to a unanimous decision on that charge.

Senior Assistant State's Attorney Joseph Valdes said during court Wednesday that the state would need to discuss how it will proceed with the case.

The State's Attorney's Office did not respond to a request for comment following Wednesday's decision.

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witness stand and claimed responsibility for Gooden's death.

"I'm the one who did it," he told the jury.

Moore is currently serving 20 years in prison.

No date was set for the sentencing of Hayes and Telemín-Valerio on the gun conviction.

Attorney Lindy Urso, who represented Telemín-Valerio, said while he was

happy with the result, there were "no winners in this tragedy."

"An innocent woman's life was lost, one young man is serving 20 years for this senseless crime, and

these two other young men have lost 6 years of their lives awaiting their justice," Urso said. "At this point, I'm just very happy for Jhonel, DeShawn and their families."

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The murder acquittal comes nearly a week after Morris Moore, a third defendant in the case who pleaded guilty two years ago to a lesser charge related to the shooting, took the