

Jail guard acquitted, 4 co-workers convicted

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

A former Stouffville man, charged along with four other jail guards with beating a prisoner, was acquitted in a Toronto court Tuesday.

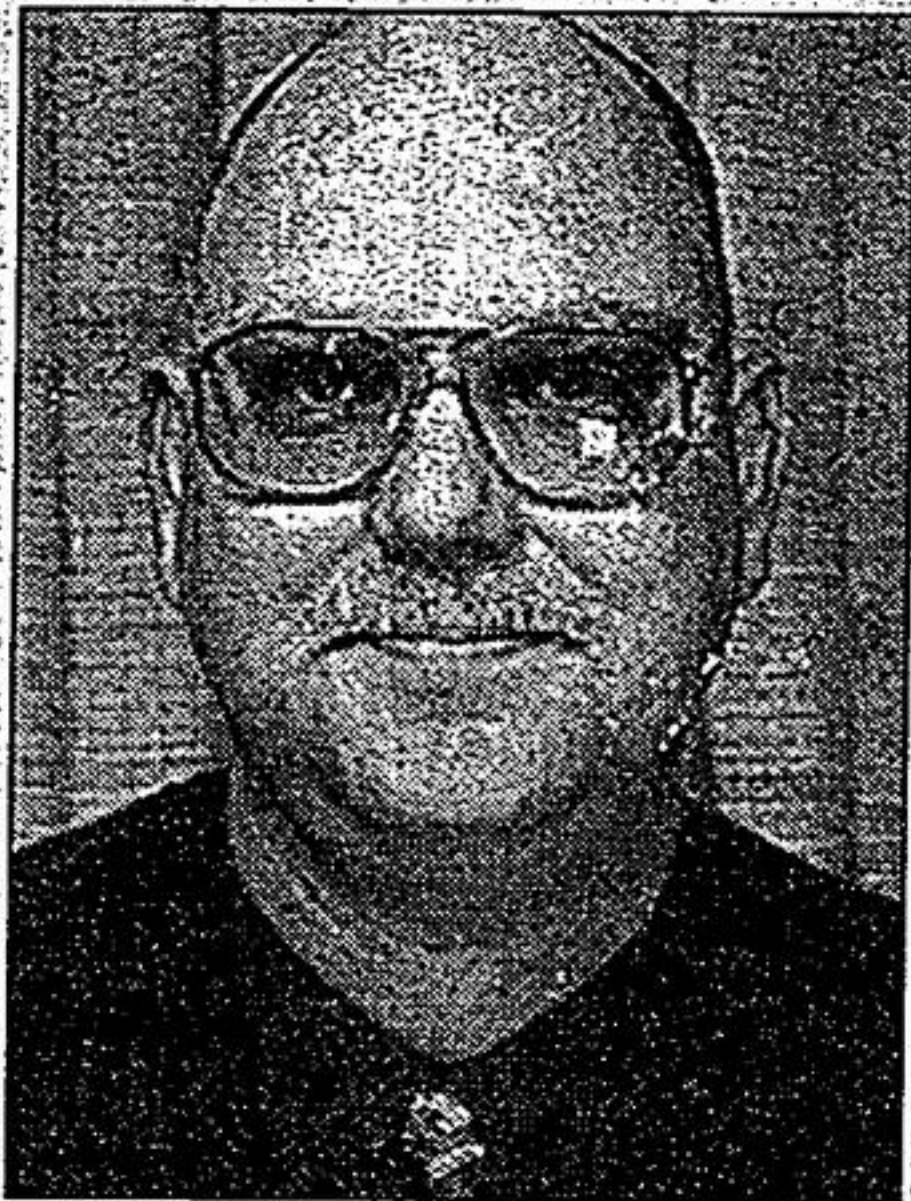
While the other jail guards were convicted of assaulting an inmate at the Toronto East Detention Centre Feb. 2, 2001, Mark Dewar was acquitted of all charges.

Mr. Dewar, a former member of the Whitchurch-Stouffville library board made an unsuccessful bid to represent Ward 6 on Whitchurch-Stouffville council in 2000. He was defeated by now Mayor Sue Sherban. Mr. Dewar has since moved to Bowmanville.

In a 58-page verdict, Madam Justice Geraldine Sparrow found the four guilty of causing bodily harm to then-inmate Harold Pearson.

The four were speechless as Mr. Dewar was acquitted in the Ontario Court of Justice at Old City Hall.

After the judge read the verdict, Mr. Dewar's girlfriend hugged him, while 25 jail guards



MARK DEWAR: Former Stouffville council candidate acquitted of assaulting inmate in 2001.

stood by him offering support.

A sobbing Mr. Pearson testified earlier that he was beaten after being accused of bumping into a female correctional officer while he was being moved between floors of the Scarborough jail. Mr. Pearson claimed he was kicked and punched, including sustaining injuries to his testicles. He was treated in hospital.

The five guards were so sure

they would all be exonerated they issued a media release before the verdict was read. The release carried the following headline: "Five correctional officers found not guilty of assaulting inmate."

The release also states, "We received no support from our employers or the media... We turned to alcohol and prescription pills to help us deal with our anger, stress, anxiety and depression."

*"It's been three years
of hell. But justice
at least prevailed for me.
Justice was denied
for the others."*

The proceedings continued for 55 days intermittently from April 18, 2002 to Nov. 13, 2003.

"It's been three years of hell," Mr. Dewar said. "But justice at least prevailed for me. Justice was denied for the others."

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