

# Pilcher retrial staying in Ottumwa

OTTUMWA — Robert Pilcher’s retrial will take place in Wapello County.

Pilcher is accused of the 1974 murder of Mary Jayne Jones. His first trial, held in March, ended in a hung jury. Prosecutors had asked the judge to move the trial; the defense resisted the request.

Media coverage is a common factor in a change of venue request, but this filing was a bit different. Prosecutors cited the defense’s use of social media during the trial “to express opinions about the evidence and jury deliberations.”

Judge Richard Meadows denied the request Tuesday.

Other court filings suggest the case jurors hear in the retrial may have some significant differences from the original one. The defense has filed motions to re-depose some witnesses and has submitted a list of additional witnesses to the court. Prosecutors also plan additional witnesses and have sought to admit statements made to police at the time of the murder by one of the people who found Jones’ body.

Pilcher’s retrial is scheduled for this September.

In other area cases:

- Stephyne Stewart was sentenced to five years’ probation and given a five-year suspended prison sentence after pleading guilty to a charge of willful injury.
- Kenneth Turner has a new trial date on charges of stalking and violation of a protective order. Turner had been scheduled to go on trial next week, but his trial has been rescheduled for May 6.
- Daniel Vandello, charged with four counts of burglary, will not go on trial this summer as scheduled. Online court documents show Vandello has reached a plea in the case. He is scheduled to enter the plea May 19.