

OFFICE OF THE MONROE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

The Honorable Brian P. Green, District Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Taquida Hendrix Sentenced to 25 Years to Life for the Murder of Malakai Stovall

On Wednesday, January 7, 2026, New York State Supreme Court Justice Miller sentenced 33-year-old Taquida Hendrix to 25 years to Life in the New York State Department of Corrections for the murder of 5-year-old Malakai Stovall. She was previously convicted by a jury of Murder in the 2nd Degree, Arson in the 1st Degree, and Assault in the 2nd Degree. Justice Miller also sentenced the defendant to 25 years to Life in the New York State Department of Corrections for Arson in the 1st Degree and 7 years in the New York State Department of Corrections plus 5 years of post-release supervision for Assault in the 2nd Degree. All three sentences will run concurrent to each other.

Shortly after 2:00 AM on July 29, 2024, Rochester Firefighters and Rochester Police Officers responded to a three-alarm fire at a multi-family home on Portland Avenue. Inside the home was 5-year-old Malakai Stovall and his 19-year-old babysitter. Firefighters rescued Malakai, but he suffered severe injuries and was taken to Strong Memorial Hospital, where he died three days later.

The Rochester Police Department immediately started investigating this case as an arson. It was determined that 31-year-old Taquida Hendrix was responsible for setting the fire that took the life of Malakai Stovall. Neither the child nor the family were the intended target. Taquida Hendrix doused the front porch of the Portland Avenue home with a flammable substance and ignited it, causing the fire. Taquida had assistance from her sister, 22-year-old Tiakayla Hendrix, and 36-year-old Roy Chambers. Both Taquida Hendrix and Tiakayla Hendrix were arrested for their involvement in Malakai's murder and the arson.

Tiakayla Hendrix and Roy Chambers pled guilty to Arson in the 2nd Degree for their roles in assisting Taquida Hendrix in the arson. Tiakayla Hendrix was sentenced to 12 years in the New York State Department of Corrections plus 5 years of post-release supervision and Roy Chambers was sentenced to 9 years in the New York State Department of Corrections plus 5 years of post-release supervision.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Kevin Sunderland, Chief of the Local Courts Bureau and Special Assistant District Attorney Janna Jehlen, of the Special Victims Unit.

"I wish I had the opportunity to meet Malakai Stovall, as he is remembered as a joyful, energetic 5-year-old boy who was the light of so many lives," said Assistant District Attorney Kevin Sunderland. "Taquida Hendrix intentionally started the fire that killed this innocent child. While I am relieved that she received the maximum sentence allowed by law for this murder, this remains a devastating loss. Today's life sentence would not be possible without the work from the Rochester Firefighters who responded and carried Malakai out of the house, the Rochester Police Department who led this tragic investigation, the medical professionals who responded and worked on this child, and the cooperation and support we received from the community. I sincerely hope that Malakai's family can find solace in today's life sentence as they continue to remember and mourn this child they loved so deeply."

"While every homicide case that comes to our office is devastating, the murder of a child is a deep tragedy that is felt by the entire community," said District Attorney Brian Green. "Malakai Stovall was a five-year-old child who was safe in his home before his life was taken by a deliberate act that showed a complete disregard for human life. Though he was not the intended target, Taquida Hendrix chose to set a fire knowing that innocent people could be inside, and Malakai paid the ultimate price. Nothing can restore what was stolen from his family, but today's sentence ensures that the person responsible will not have the opportunity to cause such harm to anyone else. On behalf of my entire office, I offer our deepest condolences to Malakai's loved ones and hope this sentence brings some measure of justice in the face of an unbearable and heartbreaking loss."

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