

METRICH, prosecutors get two convictions in same week

The METRICH Enforcement Unit has gone two for two in court this week.

Richland County prosecutors earned convictions on back-to-back drug trials prepared by METRICH.

Mario Young Sr., 33, was sentenced Wednesday to 10 years in prison for trafficking in cocaine and possession of cocaine, both first-degree felonies because of the amount involved. Young had 30 grams; 27 grams qualifies for a first-degree felony.

Young was convicted Monday at the end of a three-day trial before Common Pleas Judge James DeWeese.

On Tuesday, Calvin “Petey” Caldwell Jr., 55, was convicted of trafficking in cocaine, a third-degree felony, in Judge Brent Robinson’s court. His sentencing has not been scheduled.

Assistant Prosecutor Gary Bishop handled the Young case. He credited the work of METRICH detectives, calling them “heroes” in his closing argument.

“It’s indicative of the excellent work they’re doing to try to rid our community of narcotics,” Bishop said. “They can be prepared to go to trial twice in a week. We literally finished one trial, and they were already starting another.”

Bishop said Young was previously convicted of drug trafficking.

“One of the things that kind of got me about Mario is he set up the sale of drugs at the local American Legion (on Harmon Avenue). I think that’s pretty aggravating,” he said. “When you think of the American Legion, you think of a place for veterans to go.

“Here some guy’s dealing drugs out of the bathroom.”

In the Caldwell case, the defendant sold drugs to an informant at Millennium Car Wash, where he worked.

“The state argued that he was a wholesaler of drugs,” Assistant Prosecutor Cliff Murphy said.

Murphy said defense attorney James Willis argued the state could not show that Caldwell made the transaction.

“Controlled phone calls show the confidential informant was dealing directly with Mr. Caldwell,” Murphy said.

Murphy credited the Ohio Highway Patrol with referring the informant to METRICH. He said the informant proved to be a reluctant witness.

“He did not want to testify,” Murphy said. “He referred to Caldwell as his ‘uncle.’”

Caldwell’s trial was the first presided over by Robinson, the former first assistant prosecutor.

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