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A judge said he was not convinced that Dykesha, left, and Dynesha Harris meant harm to the teacher, who was breaking up a fight at the school.



Charges dropped

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Charges dropped in teacher assault

► Twins were accused of beating teacher

By GARY McELROY
Staff Reporter

A Mobile judge dismissed assault charges Tuesday against twin girls accused of attacking a Murphy High School teacher in March as he tried to break up a fight.

Dykesha and Dynesha Harris, 17-year-old sisters, were in District Judge George Hardesty's courtroom Tuesday for their preliminary hearing, a procedure in which the judge

decides whether to send a case along to a grand jury.

Following a lengthy hearing, Hardesty announced there was insufficient evidence that the twins committed second-degree assault on schoolteacher Leslie Thorpe.

Thorpe, a culinary arts teacher at Murphy, testified before the judge. The twins did not.

Hardesty was told that a long-standing feud existed between the Harris sisters and two younger girls at the school and that the simmering feud exploded March 26 in a school hallway melee.

The cases of the other girls, cous-

ins aged 16 and 14, were sent to the Strickland Youth Center, and therefore restricted from public record.

According to Thorpe, he stepped into the fray after it had already started, trying to break it up.

At one point, Thorpe told Hardesty, he had Dykesha Harris "up against a wall" and as they struggled they slid into a restroom.

Dynesha Harris came screaming up behind them, yelling "My sister! My sister!" according to testimony.

As Thorpe described the hysteria and chaos, he told Hardesty that he was struck in the head with a



Dykesha Harris



Dynesha Harris

broomstick.

Dynesha, he said, appeared bent

Please see **Twins'** Page 3B

Twins' assault charges dropped

Continued from Page 1B
on saving "her sister at any cost."

During cross-examination, the Harris twins' attorney, William "Jay" Casey, asked Thorpe if he believed either of the twins was intent on doing him harm.

Thorpe answered by saying he believed he was inten-

tionally struck and that in the heat of the fight the girls would have gone after anything in their way.

Casey also established that Thorpe was not seriously injured.

In the end, Hardesty ordered the girls to stand up and announced that he was dropping the cases against

them — meaning he was not convinced the girls meant Thorpe harm and that the injuries the teacher suffered did not rise to the level needed to substantiate the charges.

But Hardesty then sternly lectured the twins, in reference to the feud and fight with the other girls, that the

Harris sisters' attempts "to get at somebody" and their "carrying on like some jungle warfare" was unacceptable in society and in school.

