

Man cleared of reckless homicide in friend's death

By Alayna DeMartini
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A Franklin County jury cleared a 21-year-old man yesterday of reckless homicide in the death of his best friend.

No one disputed the fact that Keith L. McCarty fired the fatal shot that killed Shawn J. Thompson, 21, last year.

McCarty and Thompson were with friends Sept. 22 when McCarty picked up his 9 mm handgun and pulled the trigger repeatedly without it firing. Then the gun fired, and Thompson was shot in the chest.

Before then, McCarty and a

number of others had tried unsuccessfully to fire the handgun that he bought from a neighbor, said McCarty's attorney, Mark J. Miller.

"He had clicked it over 100 times and it didn't work," Miller said.

As a result, McCarty never expected the gun would fire during the gathering at his house at 389 E. Woodrow Ave. When it did fire, Thompson was standing in front of McCarty. He died that night at Grant Medical Center.

Part of prosecutors' case against McCarty was that he had been reckless because he had been drinking beer, smok-



Keith L. McCarty, 21, shot and killed his best friend last year. He hadn't expected the gun to fire, his attorney said.

ing pot and had Xanax when he fired the gun.

A jury that heard the case in April could not reach a verdict. During the second trial, which began last week, the defense included more witnesses who testified the gun hadn't worked for them.

Assistant County Prosecutor

John P. Graceffo would not comment on the verdict except to say that he respected the jury's decision.

Although McCarty was cleared of reckless homicide, Common Pleas Judge Charles A. Schneider found him guilty in April of illegally having a firearm.

McCarty is scheduled to be sentenced for the gun offense next Wednesday.

Miller said his client remains upset that he fired the shot that killed Thompson.

McCarty "lost his best friend, and he has to live with that the rest of his life."

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