

# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA



## OFFICE OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 28, 2019  
Portsmouth, VA

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### **SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA UNANIMOUSLY AFFIRMS CONVICTION IN COMMONWEALTH V. STEPHEN RANKIN**

**PORTSMOUTH, VA** – Portsmouth Commonwealth's Attorney Stephanie N. Morales announces that on March 28, 2019, the Supreme Court of Virginia unanimously affirmed the voluntary manslaughter conviction of Stephen Rankin. This ruling comes after multiple panels of the Court of Appeals of Virginia previously affirmed the conviction. During the appellate process, the Portsmouth Commonwealth's Attorney's Office submitted a brief in opposition to Rankin's petition for appeal, arguing that the conviction should stand and that there were no legal errors at trial. The Virginia Office of the Attorney General filed subsequent briefs echoing that position and presented oral argument requesting that the conviction be affirmed. In affirming the conviction, both the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court of Virginia adopted and agreed with the position of the Portsmouth Commonwealth's Attorney's Office and the Virginia Office of the Attorney General.

Commonwealth's Attorney Stephanie Morales, former Chief Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Cedric Wiggins, and Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Brandon Wroblewski prosecuted the case for the Commonwealth.

"Today hopefully marks the end of the litigation of this case. We are pleased that the highest court in the Commonwealth of Virginia agrees that the prosecution of this case and the rulings made at trial were appropriate and lawful. We hope that with the end of this case, the healing process can be completed for our victim's family and the entire community."

- Stephanie N. Morales

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