

Teacher 'scarred' after accusations

Jury acquits man of sex charges

A teacher found not guilty of sexually assaulting a 13-year-old student is so traumatized by the false allegations that he may never set foot in a classroom again, said his defence lawyer yesterday.

A jury acquitted veteran francophone elementary school teacher Paul Senecal, 49, on Monday night of all eight counts with which he had been charged. He and his family have been "scarred for life" by the case, said his lawyer Aitan Lerner.

After a 23-year career as a



Oprah influence?

» The complainant told police that in June 2005 Senecal touched her breasts over her bra. But after seeing an Oprah TV show detailing a sexual assault of a young person by a trusted adult, she adopted that storyline to expand the number of alleged incidents, the defence said.

dedicated teacher, Senecal was suspended from his teaching job without pay, court heard.

The jury was shown a 2005 videotaped statement by the girl, then 13, claiming Senecal sexually assaulted her on four occasions in May and June of 2005. But in a previous statement, the student only mentioned one incident. The complainant

admitted she once had a crush on Senecal and left a message on his phone saying she loved him.

The embarrassed girl dreaded facing the teacher again the following fall, the defence argued. So she decided to lodge a sexual complaint to make sure he would have to leave the school, Lerner suggested.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

letters

It's the same GO story for years

Re: "Another storm, another excuse,"

Like other commuters, I

Whitby. Prior to big storms (especially the first big one), we hear in the media about: The city gearing up for storms

after year.

I've been commuting

GO Tr