

Ex-Keene man pleads innocent in girl's death

By Associated Press

ROCHESTER — A former Keene man accused of beating his girlfriend's 21-month-old daughter to death remained free on bail Tuesday after pleading innocent to murder charges.

Chad Evans, 29, of Rochester, was arraigned in Strafford County Superior Court for second-degree murder, two counts of first-degree assault and six counts of second-degree assault in the death of Kassidy Bortner.

He was a Keene Board of Education member in 1992 while also serving as manager of the McDonald's restaurant on Winchester Street in Keene.

Assistant Attorney General Wil-

liam Delker said Evans has been free on \$100,000 bail since Nov. 24. He was ordered to have no contact with the victim's family and to return to court March 5.

Evans was arrested Nov. 16 after Kassidy died on Nov. 9 of blunt-force trauma to the head at York (Maine) Hospital.

Evans has also been charged with endangering the welfare of a child and simple assault involving Kassidy's 18-year-old mother, Amanda Bortner.

Evans lived with Bortner and her daughter at 191 Milton Road in Rochester at the time of the girl's death.

Evans also faces a charge of violating his probation on a prior con-

viction for assaulting his ex-wife, Tristan Evans, Delker said. A hearing on that charge had been scheduled for Jan. 8, but has been postponed, Delker said.

According to court records, Evans had beaten Kassidy repeatedly for three months. The records say Evans threw Kassidy against walls and broke her leg and arm in separate incidents this summer and fall.

"Evans bruised Kassidy's body and fractured her bones by repeatedly grabbing Kassidy by the face, throat, arms and legs" and by "propelling Kassidy into the walls of the home," the court documents charge.

The indictments say Evans

showed "extreme indifference to the value of human life."

After a weeklong investigation by New Hampshire and Maine state police and Kittery and Rochester police, Evans was arrested at his home and charged with manslaughter. The charge later was raised to second-degree murder.

State social workers in New Hampshire say they are involved in the investigation.

Evans made headlines in Keene in 1991 by running for the Keene Board of Education at age 19. Unopposed, Evans was elected overwhelmingly, but had to go to court to take his seat because his father's name was mistakenly put on the ballot instead of his.