

NEWS-LEADER

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Ex-cop gets probation for sodomizing boys

By Christine Justice
NEWS-LEADER

A former Republic police officer who sexually assaulted three boys for nearly a decade may never go to prison.

Jerry E. Davis, 50, was sentenced Friday on two counts of first-degree statutory sodomy in Circuit Judge Don Burrell's Greene County courtroom. In June he pleaded guilty to the charges.

Davis' sentence — 10 years on each count, which will run concurrently — is suspended pending successful completion of five years probation.

Assistant Greene County Prosecutor Cindy Rushefsky strenuously opposed probation.

"He's done a tremendous amount of damage to his family, to the victims ..."

"The family has been devastated ... The fabric of their family was torn apart by this."

Davis was arrested in December 2001 and charged with assaulting

three boys beginning in the late 1980s and continuing through 2001. He previously pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Davis' attorney could not be reached for comment.

Republic Mayor Keith Miller was disappointed with the ruling.

"I'm not sure the message that sends," he said. "The legislature needs to look at Missouri laws — they're not protecting the innocent victims."

Rushefsky believes regardless of the sentence, "The victims already paid a much, much higher price than he'll ever pay."

The crime is particularly troubling, Rushefsky said, because of his position as a police officer.

"I think when it comes to anyone who works in law enforcement ... they have an extra obligation to obey the law. If they don't what they're saying is 'the law applies to everyone but me,'" Rushefsky said. "I hold those people to a much higher standard."

OZARKS VOICES

Sex-crime policy must be stronger

Seven young girls have been reported missing in newspaper stories since February 2002. A high-profile case is 14-year-old Elizabeth Smart of Salt Lake City, Utah. Also missing are Laura Ayala, a 13-year-old from Houston, Texas; Alexis Patterson, 7, who disappeared in Milwaukee; Erica Pratt, 7, who was kidnapped, but fortunately, returned unharmed; 5-year-old Samantha Rannion, who was raped and murdered; and Danielle van Dam, 7, of San Diego, Calif., also raped and murdered. The latest to be killed was Casey Williamson, 6, of the St. Louis area.

Concerned Women for America educates the public about the underlying causes of rising child sexual abuse rates. Women and



Joey
DAVIS

children once enjoyed protections provided by the law and law enforcement, but legal protections were weakened and/or eliminated by the late 1970s largely on what is now understood to be the fraudulent authority of the "anything goes sexuality" of Indiana State University's Kinsey Reports (1948-1953).

Kinsey's fraudulent research supported theories that sex offenders' behavior was not really shocking or abnormal. The widespread acceptance of this resulted in changing child protection laws as sex crimes were redefined and penalties lightened. In 1979, Missouri adopted these new definitions and lesser penalties.

The legacy of this legal revolution under the guise of "science-based" criminal law reform is easily seen in skyrocketing levels of sexual disease, crime and dysfunction. Today, according to the American Bar Association, 80 percent of convicted child molesters serve no time, even though credible evidence points to the fact that these predators cannot be cured. These often are the ones who go on to murder their next victims.

The remedy for the soul-searing tragedies of Casey Williamson, Samantha Rannion and Danielle van Dam must include rebuilding legal and institutional protections for children. Hardened sexual criminals are not able to be reformed and have to be watched and tracked by state law enforcement agencies. A "one strike and you are out" approach should be used in sentencing these sexual predators so they are not back out on the streets looking for another victim.

Joey Davis, Branson, is state director of Concerned Women for America of Missouri.

Group lies about state's abuse laws

Joey Davis' diatribe against the so-called weakening of the women and child abuse laws nationally and in Missouri (Aug. 9 Ozarks Voices, "Sex-crime policy must be stronger") is nothing short of an uninformed rant. Her group, Concerned Women for America, seems most determined to rewrite history by creating false concepts of the evolution of our laws and attempting to blame now-unpopular studies like the Kinsey Reports for increases in abuse and murder.

She claims that Missouri adopted new sex crimes definitions and lesser penalties in 1979, and we've been holding pep sessions for women/child abuse ever since.

Here are the facts:



Harold
CASKEY

In 1977, the Missouri General Assembly adopted SB 60, which codified numerous portions of criminal law. A check of the transcript of the Senate subcommittee hearing, which I chaired, reveals a carefully conceived method by which crimes were rated in order of seriousness.

The changes were designed to make the laws clear and understandable. University of Missouri-Columbia law professor Edward Farnwald noted it was important to grade offenses and state those elements that make a certain crime more serious and deserving of a greater penalty. Nary a word about lesser penalties.

Ms. Davis also misrepresented an American Bar Association study when she said "today" 80 percent of convicted child molesters serve no time. If true, it would be astounding and downright scary. Ms. Davis' "today" was actually a 1987 study conducted in three smaller cities, all half a continent from Missouri. She forgot to mention mandatory treatment had been ordered in 89 percent of the cases.

Had Ms. Davis bothered to review the General Assembly's actions over the past decade, she would have seen the tough, effective methods lawmakers have taken to strengthen sexual predator laws. I am proud to have been at the forefront of this effort along with Rep. Craig Hosmer of Springfield.

Groups like Ms. Davis' can be helpful as they advocate for tougher penalties for the dregs of our society, but when they make uninformed statements and twist facts to suit their purposes, they damage their credibility and misinform your readership.

Sen. Harold Caskey is a Democrat from Butler.

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