



Former Woodbridge cop get 12 years in prison for sex assault on teen boy

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Sue Epstein/The Star-Ledger

By



Ed Murray/The Star-LedgerFormer

Woodbridge Police Officer Douglas Karlson is led from a Middlesex County courtroom in June. WOODBRIDGE -- A former Woodbridge police officer was sentenced today to 12 years in prison — and ordered to serve six before becoming parole eligible — for sexually assaulting a teenage boy and taking nude and provocative photos of a teenage girl.

Douglas Karlson, 48, did not comment to Superior Court Judge Frederick De Vesa before he was sentenced.

But the boy, now a 29-year-old man, told the judge, "this will be with me for my entire life."

"There is no atonement for what he's done to me," the man said. "I believe he should receive the maximum sentence."

The sentence, handed down in New Brunswick, was the second Karlson has received for the crimes. However, his previous convictions were overturned by an appellate court, which ruled in August 2008 that the Middlesex County

Prosecutor's Office should not have presented both cases to the same grand jury and included them in one indictment against Karlson.

This time, Karlson was tried separately in June for sexually assaulting the boy over a three-year period; the jury convicted him of aggravated sexual assault and sexual assault.

Karlson avoided a second trial on the charges involving the 15-year-old girl when he pleaded guilty in July to official misconduct and endangering the welfare of a child for taking the semi-nude photos of the girl he met while on duty.

Karlson received more than two years credit for time served before his convictions were overturned and before he was sentenced the first time.

The judge also ordered that Karlson, who had been a police officer in Woodbridge for 18 years before his arrest in 2005, never again hold a public position or office.

After the sentence was issued, De Vesa called the victim to the bench and, with tears in his eyes, said, "I hope you have come away with a different view of our system."

De Vesa, who presided over all of Karlson's trials, noted the victim testified that he didn't report the sexual assaults to authorities for years because he didn't think anyone would believe him. He said he was abused from the time he was 14 until he was 17.

"When you did come forward, the authorities took you seriously and two juries believed you," the judge said. "I hope that gives you some level of satisfaction."

When the man turned to leave, he too had tears in his eyes.

Thomas Buck, who represented Karlson, said his client will again appeal his conviction of assaulting the boy, because "he believes he's innocent," but, he said, Karlson "deeply regrets the problems he has caused" the young girl.

"Mr. Karlson preys upon innocent people to get what he needs, a need for power and sexual desire," Middlesex County Assistant Prosecutor Christie Bevacqua told the judge.

Previous coverage: June 19 -- Former Woodbridge police officer convicted of sexually assaulting a minor Aug. 16, 2008 -- Sex assault convictions overturned Dec. 9, 2006 -- Woodbridge cop guilty of sexual assaults July 21, 2006 -- Woodbridge cop convicted in teen nude photo case

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