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FROM VETERAN COP TO (ALLEGED) SEX PREDATOR

SPRINGFIELD JOURNAL-REGISTER

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

The president of a north-end neighborhood association that has worked closely with Springfield police officer Kevin Barrington said Monday he was stunned by news of the officer's arrest for alleged sex crimes.

Steve Combs called Barrington's arrest "just an absolute total shock."

"I still don't believe it," Combs said. "I've talked to my wife about it, and she feels the same way. What they're talking about is not the Kevin Barrington that we know. To me, he's a friend."

Barrington, 51, is a 22-year veteran of the Springfield Police Department. He is well-known for his work as a popular neighborhood police officer in the Enos Park and Oak Ridge areas on the city's north end.

He was arrested Sunday night at his Springfield home on charges of predatory criminal sexual assault, criminal sexual assault, aggravated criminal sexual abuse and sexual relations with family.

Formal charges are pending. Bond on the warrant for his arrest was set at \$250,000. He remained in the Sangamon County Jail Monday and is scheduled to appear in court today.

Sangamon County State's Attorney John Schmidt said Monday that his office was still reviewing reports to determine exactly what formal charges will be filed against Barrington.

Barrington was put on paid leave Monday, pending the outcome of the criminal case and of an internal affairs investigation by the department.

Springfield Police Chief Ralph Caldwell said Barrington was well liked within the department and the community. He said he is "totally shocked that this could happen by any Springfield police officer," while also noting that Barrington is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Caldwell said police were told Friday that Barrington had been involved in alleged criminal activity. They initiated criminal and internal investigations and contacted the Sangamon County state's attorney's office.

The Department stripped Barrington of his police powers Saturday afternoon.

Caldwell declined to reveal any additional information about the investigation, specific information about the allegations, the ages or relationships of the victims and how long the alleged abuse took place.

Combs said Barrington has been a positive leader in the Enos Park neighborhood, an area north of Springfield's downtown which has struggled for years with crime, absentee landlords and boarded-up

buildings. The neighborhood has a strong neighborhood association, and residents and business owners work closely with city officials, police and property owners.

Barrington has been a strong component of that effort. He was the neighborhood police officer from 2000 to 2003, but had to change assignments when his three-year stint was up. He later returned to the job for a second stint at the urging of the neighborhood's residents.

The State Journal-Register profiled Barrington in 2001 as part of a weeklong series of stories about the Enos Park neighborhood's struggles and triumphs. According to the article, Barrington has five children – three from his first marriage and two with his current wife. His interests outside of police work range from computers to historic preservation.

Barrington was injured on the job recently and has been on light duty. Another officer, Ryan Irwin, has been the interim neighborhood police officer in Barrington's absence, according to Combs.

"As a neighborhood and as far as the programs to stay on top of the bad guys, I feel very comfortable we're there," Combs said. "My concerns right now just are for Kevin as a person. I just can't believe it. That's not Kevin."

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In the Line of Duty
 P.O. Box 28232
 Saint Louis, Missouri 63132
Tel: 800-462-5232 / 314-890-8733
Fax: 314-429-4137
sales@lineofduty.com

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