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(Darcy Gray/The Hutchinson News) Mike Akins Jr., right, and his attorney, David Harger, center, listen as Naomi Jackson, left, speaks Tuesday in support of Akins during his sentencing in McPherson.

## Former Inman police chief gets 2 life terms in sex abuse case

By Darcy Gray - The Hutchinson News - [dgray@hutchnews.com](mailto:dgray@hutchnews.com)

McPHERSON - A former Inman police chief will serve at least 55 years in prison without parole for molesting three girls in 2009 in the small town southwest of McPherson.

Mike Akins Jr., a 39-year-old Hutchinson native, was escorted from a McPherson County courtroom in handcuffs Tuesday after he was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences under Jessica's Law, plus an additional five years in prison.

A McPherson County jury convicted Akins last month of 15 charges he molested, inappropriately touched and solicited three girls, now ages 10, 11 and 15. He was acquitted of four charges, including allegations he also molested a boy, now 14, in 2009 in Inman.

The sentencing Tuesday was marked with emotional testimony from the girls' mother, followed by statements from Akins and his friends and family members.

The girls' mother asked Senior District Judge Ronald Innes to follow the state's recommendation for consecutive life sentences. She recalled how her children trusted Akins, who was in a romantic relationship with the mother when the crimes occurred over a period of six months in 2009.

"Children are only children for a short time," she said, noting her girls had experienced two years of "fighting off a coward" who exposed them to sexual abuse.

Akins took an oath as an officer to serve and protect, but he only served his own "depraved" desires, she said. The mother noted he "still operates" on three social networking websites as if he is an officer, although "he has been removed from that privilege."

Friends and family of Akins, however, said they were shocked by the allegations and said Akins would never harm a child. Along with his lawyer David Harger, they asked the judge to allow Akins to remain free on his \$250,000 bond while he appeals the case.

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Longtime friend Rebecca Lynn Childs said she worked with Akins in Alaska when he was part of a missionary team.

"Mikey was one of the top ministers" to Native Americans in Alaska, she said, and she wasn't surprised he became a law enforcement officer to "continue to protect children" in abusive situations.

Three more women, including Naomi Jackson, who spoke in support of Akins said they had been sexually abused as children and never saw such tendencies in Akins.

Jackson said she had been a pastor for more than 25 years and never had a problem with Akins taking care of her children and grandchildren, describing him as a "defender of the weak and vulnerable." Having counseled convicted child molesters, Jackson said, "If he had those tendencies, I would've sensed it."

Innes denied requests from Harger for an acquittal, a new trial in the case or a five-year prison sentence for Akins.

Harger argued Jessica's Law was unconstitutional, noting sentences under the law carry a mandatory 25 years in prison without parole and were "cruel and unusual punishment." He said the life sentences were disproportionate because the crimes carrying the Jessica's Law sentences were inappropriate touching of the girls in which "there was no physical injury."

Akins' record of service as a law enforcement officer and lack of criminal record should also be considered, Harger told the judge.

Assistant Attorney General Christine Ladner countered the three girls trusted Akins and viewed him as an authoritative figure. She noted he was at times in uniform when the inappropriate touching occurred.

"Boy, did he breach that trust," she said. "To be a law enforcement officer makes these factors all the more egregious."

Innes said Akins betrayed the confidence of the children's mother and the confidence of the public when he failed to treat the girls as an authoritative figure or police officer.

"He treated these children as a pedophile, and he is a pedophile ... any way you cut it," Innes said. "There is no evidence that he is in any way remorseful for what he did."

Pedophiles begin with groping children and then move on to more invasive actions, which is what happened with the oldest girl, Innes said.

"That can't be denied that was occurring in this case," the judge said.

Akins told the judge the children "meant the world to me." He asked the judge to allow him to remain free on bond pending his appeal of the case, noting he had done everything required by the court.

Innes said Akins' continued freedom "does present a danger to children" and denied the request.

He ordered lifetime post-release supervision and lifetime offender registration for Akins, and no deduction from the sentence for "good time" in prison. He also ordered Akins to pay more than \$6,000 to the Crime Victims Compensation Board.