



## Story

## UPDATE: Former Aurora Police Chief Sentenced to 8-12 Years for Sexually Assaulting a Child

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After a tearful goodbye from his wife, former Aurora Police Chief William Gage found himself being escorted from court in handcuffs after being sentenced to prison for sexually assaulting a boy.

Gage admitted to performing a sex act on the boy as part of a plea agreement. However, prosecutors still asked for a lengthy prison sentence, calling Gage a "predator."

The judge sentenced him to 8 to 12 years, making him eligible for parole in four years.

Deputy Hamilton County Attorney Jo Petersen said it was not the 15 years she was asking for, but she accepted it.

She said, "It's a very difficult case, there are no winners here. You still have a victim who's going to be living with this his entire life, so I thought the sentence was appropriate."

The attorney for Gage calls him a warm and gentle man.

Armed with a favorable pre-sentence report and letters from friends and family, the defense tried to paint a picture of a man who dedicated himself to the community but had found "unusual" releases to stress.

Defense attorney Marvin Andersen said Gage was suffering from the loss of his mother and his wife's illness as well as resulting financial trouble and depression. Anderson said that stress was to blame.

Andersen said they came to through the court system in "rapid fashion" and agreed to a plea to avoid traumatizing the 15-year-old victim testify in court.

Andersen said the downside was that the public and media only had one side of the story, since William Gage never took the stand in his own defense.

Andersen argued Gage's primary problem was the stress in his life, which led to him visiting inappropriate web sites and "one thing led to another", according to the defense.

Andersen said Gage admitted to the crime. Why would he spill the beans? Stress again was the answer from Andersen, saying Gage sought to relieve it in "an unusual manner."

"He will wear the proverbial scarlet letter," Andersen said.

Everyone in the community would know, but many have supported Gage.

The prosecutor said she was "appalled" by how many people blame the victim. Judge Michael Owens appeared to agree, in his words saying "blame... does not lie with the ones who received... abuse."

Petersen said there was no excuse for Gage's actions.

She told the judge, "He really doesn't take responsibility" despite his admissions to the crime.

Petersen said the 15-year-old boy was scared and afraid and "actually hid in his house" to avoid further contact with Gage.

She told the judge that Gage "understood more than most" and did it anyway. Her comments afterwards echoed that theme.

She said, "He certainly had many years in law enforcement, knew what he was doing was wrong, still chose to participate in the act and there's a child that's suffered as a result."

Petersen said Gage was in a position of "authority and trust" and "took advantage of a child." Officials thought more victims would come forward. None have.

As Gage begins his journey through the prison system, the deputy county attorney hopes there will be no new victims.

"That was our goal to make sure no other victim exists out there after this and hope that's what happened here today," Petersen said.

Gage's attorney says the media has not been given the full picture, although he declined to comment.

Gage's wife Patricia did not want to speak either, as she left in tears. All the attorneys all agree this has been difficult on the family.

It's not known where Gage will spend his prison term. That will be up to the Nebraska Department of Corrections.