

Former Cave Spring police officer sentenced to 35 years on child molestation charges

northwestgeorgianews.com

2013 Cop Pedophile Patrick Earwood

- by *Alan Riquelmy*

Former Cave Spring police officer Patrick Earwood knew he'd get at least 25 years in prison for aggravated child molestation.

Earwood's family pleaded at his sentencing Monday for that minimum. His wife, Melody, cried when she told Floyd County Superior Court Judge Tami Colston her husband is a caring father admired by his community.

Convicted last month on accusations he touched or coerced sex acts from two girls and a woman while on duty, the 31-year-old Earwood sat quietly throughout the hearing.

"I don't think this was about sex," Colston said. "I think it was about power. And that's so appalling."

Colston then sentenced Earwood to 35 years in prison, followed by life on probation and a \$10,000 fine. He must register as a sex offender when released.

Jurors took two hours to convict Earwood on two counts each of aggravated sodomy and second-degree child cruelty and on one count each of aggravated child molestation, sexual battery, sexual assault against a person in custody, child molestation, giving false statements and violation of his oath as a public officer.

They acquitted Earwood on one count each of sexual assault against a person in custody and sexual battery.

Earwood's attorney has said it's likely he'll appeal.

"Police officers are given a special position of trust in our community," District Attorney Leigh Patterson said after the sentencing. "I think the judge's sentence reflected that. He abused that position of trust. He abused these victims and he made it that much harder for the police officers, who truly are the good guys, to do their jobs."

Attorneys Monday had the chance to offer evidence and testimony in their attempts to sway Colston before she pronounced sentence. Assistant District Attorney Kay Ann Wetherington opted against calling witnesses at the hearing, instead only telling Colston about a 2004 DUI conviction Earwood has.

The victims chose against appearing for Earwood's sentencing.

Defense attorney Peter Odom had four members of Earwood's family testify in an attempt to have Colston lessen his sentence. Earwood's wife, Melody, told Colston that she remains married to Earwood. They have two children.

"He's always been there for me," she said. "He's my best friend. We have a great relationship and we'll continue to have a great relationship no matter what."

Earwood's father, Edward, called his son his best friend, adding he's always been the family voice of reason.

"He will offer his advice to anyone in need," the father said. "Patrick is generally a good guy."

Aunt Toni Rhinehart has known Earwood his entire life. She had a car seat for him in her vehicle when she was 16 years old.

"Everyone loves Patrick," she said. "He got into law enforcement because he wanted to help people."

Kristina Wiggins, Earwood's cousin, has been close to Earwood since childhood. She speaks with him regularly and writes him letters.

All of Odom's witnesses said the accusations against Earwood do not match the man they know.

Colston, who presided over the trial, said she would have convicted Earwood on all 12 charges. She added, however, that she has sympathy for Earwood's family.

"I don't have any sympathy for Mr. Earwood," she said.

© **Copyright 2015, Northwest Georgia News, Rome, GA.** Powered by BLOX Content Management System from TownNews.com. [[Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)]