

Former Flint cop can't withdraw guilty plea on 16 sex assault charges

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2014 Cop Pedophile Lawrence B. Woods

FLINT, MI - A former Flint Police sergeant will not be allowed to withdraw his guilty plea to more than a dozen counts of sexual assault.

Genesee Circuit Judge Richard Yuille ruled Monday, Oct. 17, that Lawrence B. Woods could not change course on 16 counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and the case will now head to sentencing.

His attorney, Nicholas Robinson, argued Monday that the plea should be withdrawn in the interest of justice, and that his client wanted to defend himself in front of a jury on the allegations.

"Mr. Woods has maintained his innocence throughout this matter," Robinson said.

Retired police sergeant wants to withdraw sexual assault plea

Woods was scheduled to be sentenced July 18, on the charges. However, the sentencing hearing was delayed after Woods wrote a letter to Yuille claiming he was inappropriately pressured into the plea.

In the letter, Woods, 68, claimed his then-attorney, Carl Jordan, forced him into making the plea.

Jordan told Yuille that he went through painstaking efforts during the plea hearing to show that Woods was entering the plea at his own discretion. Jordan asked to withdraw from the case following Woods' letter, which Yuille agreed to allow.

Robinson said Woods will continue to challenge his conviction and eventual sentence.

"Mr. Woods is disappointed, but undeterred," Robinson said. "He's looking forward to exploring his opportunities with the Court of Appeals with the case is concluded."

Retired Flint police sergeant pleads guilty to sexually assaulting children

During the summer of 2014, the Flint Police Department opened an investigation regarding criminal sexual conduct allegations against Woods. The investigation began after a victim came forward and reported the crimes that had been committed against them nearly 20 years ago.

Investigators released information to the public which brought more victims forward who disclosed their horrific past experiences with Woods. The crimes committed against the victims made them fearful to come forward and file reports, according to police.

Authorities claim the attacks occurred from 1996 until 1999 while Woods was a sergeant with the Flint Police Department.

Investigators said they believed some of the alleged assaults occurred while Woods was on duty. They added that there were incidents inside the police department, on the street in police vehicles and on city property.

Police raided four homes in 2014 where they believed Woods lived or stayed and found what detectives called a "large amount" of child pornography. Police believed the victims were photographed by Woods.

The plea agreement did not include a sentencing agreement from prosecutors, but Yuille has advised Woods he could face up to a minimum of 25 years in prison. The charges carry a potential sentence of life in prison.

Sentencing is scheduled for Nov. 15.