

UNCATEGORIZED

## **Child molester, former Minneapolis parks police chief gets 18 years in prison**



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Former Minneapolis Park Police chief William Jacobs.

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Beginning at age 12, the boy silently endured three years of sexual abuse at the hands of family friend Bill "Jake" Jacobs. When he finally came forward, he had to wait more than two years as Jacobs' case moved through the courts.

Now 17, he stood with eyes fixed on his tormenter one last time as two sheriff's deputies led Jacobs through a door out of the Minneapolis courtroom.

The door closed, and Jacobs was gone. The young man's shoulders fell in relief. He hugged his mom. It was over.

Jacobs – a former teacher, coach, lawyer and police chief who prosecutors said spent 50 years abusing dozens of young boys – was sentenced Monday, April 9, to 18 years in prison.

It was the maximum sentence he could've received after he pleaded guilty last month to three counts of criminal sexual conduct and three counts of possession of child porn.

Despite a defense plea for mercy in the form of a 12-year sentence, Hennepin County District Judge Daniel Morales told Jacobs, "I can't find any reason to sentence you to anything less than 18 years."

Afterward, Hennepin County Attorney Michael Freeman said the sentence was just. "Jacobs is not going to see the light of day," he said.

Jacobs, 68, will be among the oldest inmates in state prison. As of Monday, only 81 of the 9,300 people in state lockups were 68 or older. He must serve at least 12 years before he's released, and he'll spend the rest of his life under court supervision as a registered sex offender.



The sentencing came at the end of a sometimes emotional 75-minute hearing in which the victim and his father gave victim-impact statements. The courtroom was packed with family members and people who claimed they, too, were Jacobs' victims.

In separate turns, son and father called the man they once trusted a sexual predator who spent decades preying on young boys.

"I was stripped of my childhood," the teen said. "I will live with this until the day I die."

He said he doubted Jacobs felt remorse. "If a man feels remorse for his actions, then why over a period of decades would he continue to abuse children?" the teen asked.

The father, of Minnetrista, called his son a "hero" who brought a halt to Jacobs' half-century of molestation. He called Jacobs "the worst child pedophile the state of Minnesota has ever had to deal with."

The Pioneer Press generally does not identify victims of sex crimes. It is not identifying the father so as not to identify the son.

Given the chance to speak before being sentenced, Jacobs delivered an 11-minute statement in which he agreed he'd hurt people and should've gotten help. He referred to his problem as a "curse" and blamed it for his actions.

"I have failed to take adequate steps to stop that curse from hurting and affecting others," he said.

Only once did he say he was sorry, a passing reference in a jailhouse letter he wrote but never sent to the teen's parents. He read it into the record.

He also had written a letter to his victim, but it, too, was never sent; a court order barred him from contact with his victim.

"I know that you can't ever forgive me for what I did. I will ask God for that," he wrote in his letter to the teen, which he handed to prosecutors when he was done reading it.

Jacobs had lived in Deephaven but spent his last few months of freedom at his cabin on the shores of Lake Superior north of Lutsen. He had a career teaching and coaching at posh private schools, working as a police officer and later police chief, earning a law degree and then becoming an instructor at Minneapolis Community and Technical College.



The end of that career started Sunday, Jan. 17, 2010, when the young man told his mother that Jacobs had been sexually abusing him since a 2007 camping trip.

Jacobs, a trusted family friend, often took the boy on outings.

The criminal complaint said the child often would awake at night on camping trips to find Jacobs molesting him.

Five days after the youth confided to his mother, Jacobs was charged with two counts of first-degree criminal sexual abuse.

Suspecting other victims, Hennepin County officials released a "wanted" poster with photos of Jacobs from 1965, 1980, 1995 and 2010, and asked victims or parents to call.

More than 20 people came forward to claim Jacobs had abused them. The earliest case was 1962, when he was a 19-year-old camp counselor and student at Carleton College in Northfield, Minn.

Prosecutors added a third count of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and three counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct. They also had charged him with 14 counts of possession of child pornography.

Court filings show that over the years some people around Jacobs suspected him of molesting young boys but did little to stop him. YMCA camp officials and administrators of at least three private schools dealt privately with accusations against the man; none went to police.

The frustration of that boiled over when the victim's father read his statement to Morales.

"We hold them all accountable for what he did to my son, our son," he told the judge.

Among those nodding in agreement was Rick Covin, a retired ophthalmologist in Rhinelander, Wis., who claimed Jacobs abused him over a two-year period when he was a student at Breck School in Golden Valley, where Jacobs taught chemistry.

Had Jacobs gone to trial, Covin's tale of abuse was one of three the judge had ruled prosecutors could present to jurors to show Jacobs' pattern of behavior.

After the sentencing, Covin said "justice" was an elusive concept.



"I'm a little upset when his lawyers said he could be fixed. That's bull—," he said. "The only way you cure someone of pedophilia is by draining the bad blood from them onto the floor, bleeding them to death. But we don't do that in a civilized society. He hasn't changed his ways, and he won't."

Moments before the hearing, a bike messenger entered the courtroom and served legal papers on Jacobs and his lawyers. It was a civil lawsuit Covin filed against the man and Breck School.

Over the months, defense attorneys Joe Friedberg and Paul Engh fought the criminal charges, appealing some pretrial issues to the Minnesota Supreme Court. But in the early stages of picking a jury, Jacobs agreed to a plea bargain.

Jacobs was taken into custody at the close of that hearing last month. In jail, he wrote the letters to the victim and his parents.

As the sentencing hearing drew to a close, Assistant Hennepin County Attorney Judith Johnston rose to say there was one last matter.

"Mr. Jacobs had given the letters to the victim and his family, and they don't want them," she said as she handed the letters to Engh, who gave them back to Jacobs.

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