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Former youth pastor gets 41-month sentence for abuse of student

Aug 16 2011

By TIM KELLY

Editor



Dirk Jackson
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Dirk Jackson, a former pastor in South Kitsap, received the maximum sentence of 41 months in prison for his sexual abuse of a sixth-grade girl at a Christian school where he was a teacher.

At the conclusion of Jackson's sentencing hearing today that included emotional testimony from his victim in Kitsap County Superior Court, Judge Leila Mills imposed a sentence the top end of the standard range of 31 to 41 months.

Jackson entered guilty pleas to two counts of indecent liberties as part of a plea agreement reached with prosecutors. He was arrested in February on charges of second-degree child rape.

The victim, who is now 21 and first reported the abuse to authorities in November, said in court today that she didn't tell anyone about it when the incidents took place in 2002 and 2003 because she felt no one would believe her. She said the abuse that occurred when she was a troubled youth has had a devastating impact on her life since then.

"I don't want him doing the things he did to me to any child," she tearfully told the judge. "I don't want anyone else to be in my shoes, ever."

When Jackson, a 32-year-old father of two young children, got his turn to address the court, he told Mills, "I want you to know that I am very sorry. I understand the profound gravity of what I've done."

In the years since his abuse of the victim when she attended Manchester Christian Academy — which included having her perform oral sex on him — Jackson said he has "tried to live a life that is right and honorable."

Several people, including Jackson's wife, Ashley, spoke in support of him and asked for leniency in sentencing. They said he is remorseful over what he did, and they sought to assure Mills that Jackson would not reoffend after he serves his time.

Richard Olson, who went to school with Jackson and was his neighbor in 2007-09, described him as "a dedicated father, husband and pastor," and added "I would trust him with my own kids."

"This one incident of indiscretion was completely out of character for Dirk," Olson said.

However, Mills noted that Jackson "didn't come forward with remorse" until "his cover was blown."

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The judge also said "clearly this was not one incident of indiscretion," noting that Jackson's criminal actions "spanned a long period of time, and certainly a long period of time in the life of a sixth-grader."

"He victimized a very vulnerable young girl," Mills concluded before imposing the sentence.

The victim decided to report what happened to her after she had a chance encounter with Jackson last year at First Baptist Church in Port Orchard, where he had been a youth pastor since October 2003.

Jackson sent the woman a friend request on Facebook after their encounter at church, which was followed by several recorded phone calls.

According to charging documents filed in court, during those calls Jackson admitted to sexually abusing the victim when he was her teacher years earlier.

Jackson, who has been jailed since his arrest, will get credit for his time served. After completing his prison sentence, he will have community custody restrictions for three years and will be required to register as a sex offender.

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kathrynsimpson 6 hours ago

Sad that 41 months is the limit of the sentencing range. Sad that he was allowed to plead to a lesser offense.

One of his 'character' witnesses said it was "one incident of indiscretion that was out of character for Dirk". That isn't what the evidence shows. The victim was victimized multiple times between 2002 and 2003.

Finally, kudos to this young woman for having the courage to come forward to protect potential future victims. This speaks volumes to your character and your capacity to move forward in your own life. Best wishes. I will be praying for you.

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Judy Block-Jones 5 hours ago

This very courageous victim is to be commended for taking action and not giving up to expose the truth, and getting Dirk Jackson in jail and away from kids. This is an extremely hard thing to do, but keep in mind your silence only hurts, and by speaking up there is a chance for healing, exposing the truth, and therefore protecting children.

Let's hope that others, who have witnessed, suspected, or may have been harmed by Jackson, will find the courage and strength to speak up, call police, expose wrongdoers, and protect others.

Judy Jones, SNAP Midwest Associate Director,
636-433-2511
snapjudy@gmail.com
"Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests" and all clergy.



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