

COLLINS

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 than 41 years in prison. Collins has been in the Union County Jail since November 2017 when he was arrested. Five underage female victims came forward with similar stories of how he took advantage of their vulnerability and sexually assaulted them. At the time of the incidents all the women were underage. At the end of a five-day trial, Collins was found guilty of 11 of 20 sexual abuse charges. One of the charges alone earned him 25 years in prison.

The sentencing hearing on Friday included multiple outbursts from Collins against District Attorney Kelsie McDaniel as well as the judge.

Powers said Collins was "one of the most remarkable" people he had ever come across in his career — and not in a good way.

In sentencing hearings, victims, defendants, their families and their lawyers are able to make final statements to the judge about why the defendant should be given the maximum penalty or some leniency.

McDaniel said Collins was the most "dangerous sexual predator I have ever come in contact with" in her career.

She said Collins treated his situation as a joke throughout the entire trial process. He made threats against the Oregon State Police trooper responsible for the case, as well as his family, McDaniel said. He made threats against the victims and had winked at

a woman attending the trial.

"He has learned nothing through this process," McDaniel said.

► Corey Collins' criminal charges

- Three counts of second-degree sexual abuse
- Third-degree sexual abuse
- Third-degree sodomy
- Two counts of contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor
- First-degree unlawful sexual penetration
- Fourth-degree assault
- Third-degree rape
- First-degree rape

McDaniel talked about a sexual harassment accusation made against Collins when he was a juvenile. She said the details of the claim were "remarkably similar" to the incidents in this case.

While McDaniel was talking about this juvenile case, Collins started to protest and mumbled to the DA that she needed to "shut her damn mouth."

Next, the victims and families talked about the impacts of Collins' actions.

"I've never been more terrified and didn't know what to do," Victim No. 1 said of the night Collins sexually assaulted her. "Now I live in fear this will happen again. I am afraid."

Her mother said her daughter cannot sleep without the light on.

"Her personality changed," she said. "That

night changed everything. I couldn't fix her problem with a hug or kiss."

Victim No. 3 said Collins assaulted her because she broke up with him and rejected him multiple times.

"He views young women as objects," she said.

Victim No. 5, who had been engaged to Collins and has a son with him, said she always thought she and Collins would be a family.

During the February trial, Victim No. 5 said on the night of the assault, she had not been feeling well. She and Collins were lying in bed in his trailer and Collins wanted to have sex with her, but she had said no multiple times.

Despite that, Collins forced her, she said. She testified Collins said the next morning "he felt like he had raped (her)."

Also during the trial in February, Khirenda Collins, Corey's sister, testified that she had seen Corey and Victim No. 5 together during the time of a no-contact order.

Victim No. 5 said Friday that her idea of a family with Collins is gone.

"He hurt me mentally and physically," she said.

The victim's parents testified they felt helpless for their daughter.

"I've heard her wake in terror," her mother said.

Her father said Collins had promised to love and protect his daughter.

"It's one thing to learn your daughter was raped, it's another to hear it in court," he said.

Victims No. 2 and 4 were unable to attend the sentencing hearing.

Collins' defense at-

torney, James Schaeffer, asked rhetorically what was an appropriate amount of time for his client to serve a sentence.

"While my client was an adult, he wasn't that much older than the victims," Schaeffer said. "How much time is

"I understand how life-changingly significant my decision is," Powers told the defendant. "What I heard at the hearing... changed what I was (planning on) doing. What people say (during their statements) matters."

— Thomas Powers, Union County circuit court judge

enough for my client to pay for his actions?"

Collins' family said Corey was a loving human being who had a bad temper. Most of them said he was unintelligent, and Shataeu Lansdon, Corey's sister, added he was mentally not mature at the time of the assaults. They argued he shouldn't have his life taken away from him because of this situation.

Collins then spoke directly to Powers.

He apologized for his outbursts and then said he had been a "little kid" when those incidents had taken place.

"(Victim No. 3) and I got drunk and slept together. If I had been sober, I wouldn't have," Collins said.

He then recanted the statement and said "it sounded way worse than

it should've."

Collins said he shouldn't go away for life.

"Why am I supposed to mope and cry? There's nothing I can do to change (things). Crying won't fix anything," he said, alluding to the lack of apology. "Women have all the power in society. They just point their finger, and you're guilty."

He also said McDaniel pushed this case for "political gain."

Just 15 minutes later, Powers came back with his decision.

He said the young women, under the law, are classified as victims, but by coming forward, they start the process of being survivors.

"It was compelling to hear (their testimonies)," Powers said.

The judge then addressed Collins.

"I understand how life-changingly significant my decision is," Powers told the defendant. "What I heard at the hearing... changed what I was (planning on) doing. What people say (during their statements) matters."

Powers told Collins he had been taken aback that the defendant still denies he sexually assaulted the victims.

"It happened," Powers said of the assaults. "I gave out the convictions."

He said there was a "profound lack of empathy" from the defendant

who claims to be a victim of false accusations.

"I find that remark to be somewhat disturbing," Powers said. "What I saw was vulnerable girls not protected but treated as prey."

Powers said Collins was "reprehensible" when he preyed on one of the victims because her father had fired him from a job.

"What kind of mind decides to get revenge (on someone) by sexually assaulting his daughter?" he asked.

The judge had the option of running Collins' sentences concurrently (at the same time) or consecutively.

"What I heard today, especially from Collins, was an extraordinary inability or unwillingness to take responsibility for what happened.... Based on what I heard today, the sentence will be served consecutively. That's not a decision I expected to make."

The sentence Collins could've received was 25 years. Powers said due largely to Collins' actions in court, he will now be serving more than 41 years in prison and a lifetime of post-prison supervision.

The Collins family does intend to appeal the decision. ■

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POLICE

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 fortunate," he said.

One reason the job is less sought after, he noted, is that there is a good job market right now, and people are finding it easier to get jobs that pay more or aren't as dangerous as policing.

Another big factor is the change in the public perception of police officers. Harvey said that a negative perception of cops is making the job seem more dangerous and less appealing.

After several highly publicized incidents involving police use of lethal force that resulted in the deaths of black men, national outrage sparked and protests broke out across the nation. A Gallup report from 2015 found public confidence in law enforcement was at the lowest it had been in 22 years.

"Look at the amount of negativity that's put toward police," Harvey said. "(A law enforcement) career is not perceived to be as desirable as it used to be."

He recalled seeing applicants losing the desire to become officers and speculates that some may have lost interest because of the national distrust.

"They are saying, 'Why would I even want to do this job?'" he said.

Kaleb Cole started working for the La Grande Police Department about a year ago. Cole said of the national increase in distrust for police: "Some cops have made a bad name for us as a whole."

He said that he under-

stands why the job is not for everyone. He decided to become an officer because his "heart is in the job."

"I've always had that need to protect people," he said.

Cole said that in La Grande, the national trend of distrust isn't reflected.

"I think our community supports law enforcement," he said. ■

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CHD

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 the contest. First place will earn a Microsoft Surface Pro 6 laptop, while second and third places will each receive a \$100 Amazon gift card.

Brogioiti said she hopes youth will be inspired to share what they've learned about underage drinking through their art with the adults in their lives.

"This contest allows youth to think about how alcohol impacts them now and potentially in the future," she said. "Youth are gathering and sharing information to educate adults with the goal of creating an environment to support youth not drinking."

Along with its underage drinking awareness contest, CHD is working to educate the public on gambling addiction during March, which is Problem Gambling Awareness Month. CHD

treats clients who have gambling addictions with one-on-one counseling services year round.

DeAnne Mansveld, prevention programs coordinator at CHD, said gambling is less likely to be seen as an addiction than alcohol or tobacco use, but because it activates the same areas of the brain as other addictive substances, gambling should be considered an addictive activity.

"We're trying to increase awareness that gambling can be a problem for some people," she said. "Awareness is important because many people don't realize gambling can even be an addiction."

Brogioiti and Mansveld agree the best example of a successful preventive health care effort is against tobacco use. While it is still widely used, tobacco is much less socially acceptable than it used to be, ac-

cording to Mansveld's own experience of witnessing students smoking cigarettes with their teachers while she was in high school.

"There was rampant smoking everywhere, but now we're at the point where smoking is not as culturally acceptable as it once was," she said. "This has been a huge success of public and population health."

Brogioiti agrees, but adds she believes the best way to approach preventative care is to start at home with the family unit.

"(Tobacco use prevention) is a good example of how public health controls can work to protect a whole community," she said. "The idea (with prevention) is to stop problems before they

happen. The greatest success is starting with families where kids are born into environments with less likelihood of ill health happening."

By encouraging preventative care and reaching out to the community with education, mental and physical services, CHD and its team are dedicated to making Union County a happy and healthy community.

"Prevention is still a developing science," Mansveld said, but she pointed out that preventing addiction is much more effective than treating it.

As she put it: "It's easier to prevent folks falling into a stream than pulling them out downstream." ■

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