



BCPO News

Scott A. Coffina, Prosecutor



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July 27, 2018

Medford Pastor Sentenced to 18 Years for Sexual Assault of Minors

MOUNT HOLLY - Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that a Medford Township pastor was sentenced today to 18 years in New Jersey state prison for sexually assaulting four juveniles and having inappropriate interaction with a fifth one over a multi-year period ending in 2015.

The sentence handed down by the Hon. Jeanne T. Covert, P.J.Cr., contained no parole eligibility for the defendant, Harry L. Thomas, 75, of Queens Lane. He will serve his term at the Adult Diagnostic and Treatment Center in Woodbridge, which houses sexual offenders.

Thomas attempted to withdraw his guilty plea, but the motion was denied by Judge Covert.

“What we saw in court today was the unmasking of a true Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde,” Prosecutor Coffina said. “An individual who professed to take responsibility for his actions moved – unsuccessfully – to withdraw his guilty plea. An individual who professed to be a man of faith and who has made many positive contributions to strangers committed the ultimate act of betrayal against family members who loved and trusted him. There is no sentence that can approximate justice in light of this defendant’s despicable acts against these children, but it is gratifying that the victims have been spared the pain of a trial and the defendant almost certainly will spend the rest of his life in prison, where he never can harm a child again.”

Thomas was arrested in December 2017 and pled guilty in February to one count of Aggravated Sexual Assault (First Degree), three counts of Sexual Assault (Second Degree) and one count of Endangering the Welfare of a Child (Second Degree).

He was the pastor of Come Alive Church in Medford Township at the time of his arrest. The investigation revealed that the assaults occurred in Medford Township between 1999 and 2015.

“I want to commend Assistant Prosecutor Stephen Eife, Medford Township Detective William Knecht, BCPO Detective Jack Bowker, and BCPO victim advocate Nichole Borger for their diligence and sensitivity in prosecuting this case, and to wish the survivors and their families the strength to overcome the challenges they face in coming to terms with these crimes and moving forward with their lives,” Prosecutor Coffina said.

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