

VICTIM 'RELIEVED' OVER SEX ABUSER'S GUILTY PLEA

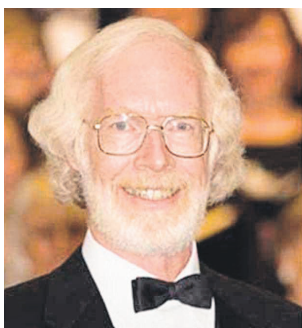
ARTHUR 'DALE' WOOD SENTENCING SET FOR DEC. 15

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Katherine Breward was 11 when her world changed.

At the time, the Halton Hills woman — now 49 — was a music student of Arthur 'Dale' Wood, who last month pleaded guilty to sexual assaulting her and others in the 1970s and '80s.

"I was surprised and relieved and experienced a feeling of disbelief," Breward said about the Sept. 10 guilty plea. "I thought he would fight the charges to the bitter end and deny



IFP file photo

Arthur Wood has pleaded guilty to sex assault charges.

what he had done. I was relieved because it meant that I would not have to testify, which is always a relief since that is a stressful experience."

"I was in disbelief because, as a child of the '70s and '80s, I had hoped for accountability but not genuinely believed I would get it."

Breward is now an asso-

ciate professor of human resource management at the University of Winnipeg. The case against Wood centred on allegations made by four victims, who say incidents dated as far back as 1975. With the exception of Breward, their names are protected under a publication ban.

Halton Regional Police Service's Child Abuse and Sexual Assault unit opened an investigation into Wood in 2018 when victims came forward. He was first arrested and charged on Mar. 27, 2018.

When the investigation revealed additional victims, Wood was arrested for a second time on Apr. 20, 2018. A third arrest was made in September of the same year. Pretrial hearings began the following month.

The police investigation resulted in charges of sexu-

al assault, sexual interference and gross indecency. Wood pleaded guilty to gross indecency and two counts of sexual assault. More submissions will be made on the sexual interference charge.

Breward had reached out to police asking them to look into Wood on March 18. "I was in Junior High School" she told police in a letter. "I took private vocal music lessons from Dale Wood in his home without other adults present and he molested me."

A non-jury in-person trial date of Sept. 13 was sched-

uled originally. In the lead-up to that, in August, Wood requested Justice Bruce Durno to allow him to get a doctor's note "outlining any particular and specific risks to Mr. Wood attending a courtroom, which is set up in accordance with COVID-19 protocols."

The Sept. 10 guilty plea brought an end to that request.

"There is a great line in an old Drew Barrymore movie called 'Ever After,'" said Breward. "She says something like 'after today I will never think of you again. But you will think of

me every day for the rest of your life.' I want to say that to him."

Breward said she will not be haunted by Wood. But rather, by "our collective inaction as a community. Not just myself. Over the decades there were hundreds of people who knew or suspected something was not right. This man was a children's choral director!! And nobody did a damn thing."

Another court date is set for Nov. 24 when pre-sentencing submissions will be made. Sentencing is scheduled for Dec. 15.

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