

FORMER MUSIC TEACHER 'SO SORRY' FOR SEX ABUSE

PRE-SENTENCING HEARING HELD IN TRIAL OF ARTHUR WOOD

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Former Georgetown music teacher Arthur (Dale) Wood expressed remorse and regret at a pre-sentencing hearing on Wednesday (Nov. 24).

The appearance in court was a chance for lawyers from both sides to make cases for leniency and strictness in sentencing, respectively. In a statement through his lawyer, Charles Barhydt, Wood addressed his victims directly.

"I deeply regret making you feel uncomfortable and victimized by my ac-



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Retired music instructor Dale Wood has pleaded guilty to sexual assault charges dating back to the 1970s, when he taught vocal lessons out of his home.

tions," Barhydt read on Wood's behalf. "This has caused each of you pain and stayed with you all these years. If I could take this back and make your pain go away... I am so sorry."

Barhydt also brought

up Wood's heart and cancer-related health issues, as well as financial difficulties, listed in Wood's pre-sentencing report. Character statements from friends and family were brought forward to appeal for compassion. The defence asked for a 12- to 15-month sentence.

On Sept. 10, Wood pleaded guilty to sexual misconduct charges that went as far back as the 1970s. The victims were all minors under Wood's tutelage. One victim, Katherine Breward, came forward in 2018.

An investigation was conducted by Halton Police's Child Abuse and Sexual Assault unit. Arrests and charges soon followed. A total of four victims are in the case.

Assistant Crown attorney Renee Mahoney took

Wood's statements into consideration, but ultimately said that they didn't matter.

"We know he feels sad and anxious and shame for what he did, but it is my submission that shame and being a social pariah is not enough," Mahoney said.

"Shame should have stopped Mr. Wood from doing this in the first place. A blemished reputation is not an indication that someone knows

enough about their behaviour to not abuse." The Crown is requesting a sentence of less than two years.

"The Crown's position of two years less a day is fully in line with the case law provided to the court by the Crown," Mahoney said. "It gives Mr. Wood an opportunity to go to OCI should your honour choose to recommend it."

A sentence of two years or more would put Wood in a federal penitentiary.

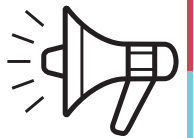
Less than two years gives Justice Bruce Durno the option of putting Wood in an Ontario Correctional Institution (OCI).

The defence has agreed to have Wood come under the Sexual Offenders Information Registration Act. His information will be available in the National Sex Offender Registry.

Victim impact statements on the case were submitted yesterday (Dec. 10). Sentencing is set to take place on Dec. 15.

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