

Molester gets 25 years

Jan 29, 2010

BY KEITH EPPS

A Spotsylvania County man was ordered yesterday to serve 25 years in prison for molesting girls his wife used to baby-sit more than two decades ago.

Earl Craven Likins, 63, had previously pleaded guilty to two counts of forcible sodomy and one count of aggravated sexual battery.

He was sentenced to a total of 70 years in prison with 45 years suspended.

According to the evidence, Likins molested at least three young girls between 1980 and 1990 at his former home on Charles Street in Fredericksburg.

An investigation started in late 2008 when a woman who is now in her 30s contacted city police about the molestation.

People are also reading...

- 1 **Spotsylvania man who shot pregnant stepdaughter gets 35 years**
- 2 **Spotsylvania approves water use agreement for data center**
- 3 **Sewage spill in Tappahannock leads to swimming advisory**
- 4 **Pilfered honey packet results in gun display in Stafford**

The woman had told someone at work what happened to her as a child and was encouraged to tell police.

The investigation turned up two more victims. Likins told Detective Mark Purcell there were even more victims, but he couldn't recall their names.

One victim Likins told police about was only 3 when she performed a sex act on him. After his arrest, Likins wrote letters of apology to his victims.

Most of the abuse occurred in a room known to the children as the "music room," according to the evidence.

Likins would take the victim into the room, close the door and turn up the music. It was not clear where his wife, who is hard of hearing, was during these incidents.

Prosecutors said the children knew to stay away from the room when the music was playing. One victim claimed she was taken into the room once or twice a week for about a year.

Defense attorney Jim Ilijevich asked for leniency. He said Likins cooperated with police and had stopped molesting children years ago.

Prosecutor Travis Bird argued that Likins' word is the only evidence that he is cured and pointed out that it took more than 20 years to find out about these victims. Bird asked for two life sentences.

Because the offenses took place before Virginia's no-parole laws took effect, Likins will be eligible for parole in 14 years.

Keith Epps: 540/374-5404

Email: **kepps@freelancestar.com**