

Sections



Sign In

Subscribe

Today's Paper Home Election Biz News Features LEARNS Sports Opinion Obits | Archives Video



ADVERTISEMENT



Ads by Google

Send feedback

Why this ad? ▶

Josh Duggar sentenced to prison term in porn case

12½-year sentence handed to former reality-TV star

May 26, 2022 at 7:16 a.m.

by [Ron Wood](#)



1 VIEW LEFT

Be informed and inspired this holiday season!

BE INFORMED FOR \$1





Josh Duggar

1 VIEW LEFT

Be informed and inspired this holiday season!

BE INFORMED FOR \$1

x

FAYETTEVILLE -- Former reality television star Josh Duggar faces more than a decade behind bars for downloading child pornography after a Wednesday hearing.

Duggar was convicted Dec. 9 of possessing child pornography by a federal jury. U.S. District Judge Timothy L. Brooks sentenced Duggar to 12½ years in federal prison Wednesday.

Duggar, 34, the oldest son of Jim Bob and Michelle Duggar, is best known for being part of his family's cable television reality show "19 Kids and Counting" on the TLC channel. The show, which chronicled the Duggar family's home life, was canceled in 2015 after it became public knowledge that, as a teen, Josh Duggar molested four of his sisters and another girl.

He was charged in federal court with two counts involving receiving and possessing child pornography. The jury found him guilty on both counts after more than six hours of deliberation over two days. Duggar, of Springdale, was sentenced on the single count of receiving child pornography because possession of child pornography is considered a lesser included offense under federal law.

ADVERTISEMENT

The sentence was less than what was sought by prosecutors, who sought the maximum 20 years, and more than the five years defense attorneys wanted.

1 VIEW
LEFT

Be informed and inspired this holiday season!

BE INFORMED FOR \$1

X

Clay Fowlkes, U.S. attorney, said after the sentencing hearing he was pleased with the outcome because it sends a message that child pornography will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

"This is a lengthy sentence. While it's not the sentence we asked for, it's a sentence we're proud of," Fowlkes said. "We will continue to investigate these cases no matter who the defendant turns out to be, and we will continue to use every tool available to us to make sure that justice is served in these cases."

Duggar was remanded to the custody of U.S. marshals for transfer to a federal prison, most likely in Texas.

ADVERTISEMENT

Brooks allowed a number of sentencing enhancements on top of Duggar's base offense level, which pushed his sentencing guideline up significantly from most child porn cases.

"Compared to the average offender, you start out a whole lot higher," Brooks said.

One was a five-level increase for past bad acts related to Duggar's history of molesting young girls when he was a teenager. The defense argued it should not apply because Duggar was never charged with or convicted of a crime and almost 20 years have passed. But Brooks found from a preponderance of the evidence that Duggar had committed second-degree assault.

"This was there has been conduct of sexual assault that creates a pattern of conduct," Brooks

1 VIEW LEFT

Be informed and inspired this holiday season!

BE INFORMED FOR \$1

x

The judge noted it was troubling that one of Duggar's victims was roughly the same age as the children in the pornography he downloaded. Brooks said he was also bothered by the great lengths Duggar went to defeat pornography-reporting software installed on his computer by his wife and the sophisticated technology he used.

The other thorny issue Wednesday was determining how many images of child porn Duggar actually downloaded. The defense said 127; prosecutors said 725. Brooks determined the number to be 590, which added four levels to sentencing; 600 images would have bumped that up to five additional levels. Brooks said he believed there were probably more than 600 images but said he couldn't prove that.

Brooks said while the number of images was low for a child porn case, the images were some of the worst he has seen in his time on the bench.

Duggar was denied a reduction in sentence for acceptance of responsibility. He did not make a statement during his sentencing hearing nor did he testify at trial.

Lawyers for Duggar said an appeal is planned, and they didn't want him admitting to anything.

Brooks rejected a request from prosecutors to figure in Duggar's past infidelity, in which he got caught up in the Ashley Madison dating app scandal and said at the time he had been unfaithful to his wife and was addicted to pornography. Brooks said neither was relevant for sentencing purposes but may be relevant for determining treatment options and conditions of supervised release.

ADVERTISEMENT

1 VIEW
LEFT

Be informed and inspired this holiday season!

BE INFORMED FOR \$1

X