

Former judge accused of possessing child porn

The Internet porn was found on John Junke's computer when he took it to a shop for repairs.

By [Terry McConn](#)

- As of Friday, December 27, 2013

WALLA WALLA — A disbarred lawyer who once was Walla Walla County District Court judge has been charged with possessing Internet child pornography on his personal computer devices late last summer.

John P. Junke Sr., 70, of 603 W. Alder St., is accused of two counts of first-degree and four counts of second-degree possession of depictions of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

The charges were filed Thursday afternoon in Walla Walla County Superior Court. Junke has not been arrested, but is being summoned to court Jan. 13 for his first appearance.

The child pornography was discovered after Junke took his computer tower to the Best Little Computer Store at Stateline on Sept. 9 because it had a virus and was running slowly, according to a Walla Walla police report filed in court. Under Oregon law, computer technicians are required to report such illegal material downloaded on computers.

Officials were notified, Walla Walla police obtained a search warrant for Junke's residence Sept. 13 and, with Junke's cooperation, also located a laptop computer and an external storage hard drive.

Later examination of the confiscated devices allegedly revealed 35 images of child pornography, including two that each depict a preteen girl having sexual relations with a male.

Junke reportedly provided a sworn statement to police in which he admitted knowingly possessing the images.

"John stated he has had a long battle with viewing pornography for many years and it had spiraled out of his control," the police report says.

But Junke denied viewing any pornography in connection with his employment as director of ticket sales for the Walla Walla Sweets baseball team.

Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Joe Golden said in an interview Junke has since been fired from that job because of the police investigation.

Golden added it's his understanding Junke is undergoing counseling relating to the alleged offenses.

Junke faces a standard-range prison term of about 6½ to 8½ years if convicted. But were a judge to opt for a sentencing alternative, Junke could be ordered to serve up to a year in the County Jail and successfully complete three years of sex-offender treatment.

An ordained minister, Junke came to Walla Walla in 1979 to join John Lohrmann — now a county Superior Court judge — and Herb Freise in their law firm. Starting in 1982, he worked with attorney Ron McAdams and became a partner with McAdams and Gary Ponti in 1985.

Junke's term as District Court judge from 1991 through 1994 was mired in controversy. He vowed to be tougher on convicted criminals, a stance that worried some defense attorneys.

The state's judicial conduct commission reprimanded Junke in 1993 for various acts, including losing his temper and improperly gathering and considering evidence outside of a trial. In addition, several attorneys in town refused to let him preside over their cases, forcing a rise in taxpayer cost to cover substitute judges.

After losing his bid for re-election, Junke started a private practice.

He was admonished by a review committee of the Washington State Bar Association's Disciplinary Board in 2003 for representing two clients in the same matter whose interests were directly opposite.

Then in 2006 he voluntarily consented to disbarment after having a yearlong romantic relationship with a woman starting in March 2004.

Junke, the father of grown children, was long involved in youth activities, but the recent investigation "did not find any evidence that John has exploited any juveniles," according to the police report.

"There is evidence that the possession was intentional by viewing Internet searches and sites visited with the subject of preteen," the report says.

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