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## **Former Tecumseh track coach back in court, this time on embezzlement charge**

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A former Tecumseh High School track coach, who served more than four years in prison on child pornography and assault charges, has been charged with embezzlement in Oakland County.

Matthew James Peterson, 43, is charged with a felony of embezzling more than \$100,000 while acting as a trustee of an estate. A pretrial hearing in Oakland County Circuit Court was adjourned Thursday to Sept. 29, according to court records. He is free after posting 10 percent of a \$50,000 bond.

Peterson's attorney, David I. Lee of Detroit, declined to comment on the case. Peterson was arrested in April after an investigation by Southfield police. Lt. Ted Goff of the Southfield Police Department said Peterson was operating his own business and a family was referred by a friend to hire him to act as the trustee for an estate with a value of about \$450,000. Eventually, they became suspicious when reviewing estate documents.

"Things weren't adding up," he said.

A court filing by Oakland County Prosecutor Jessica Cooper alleges Peterson took \$141,340.43 from the estate between April 15 and Dec. 31, 2015.

Embezzlement of \$100,000 or more usually is punishable by up to 20 years in prison and a fine of \$50,000 or three times the amount stolen, whichever is greater. In this case, that would be \$424,021.29.

However, because of Peterson's criminal history, Cooper has requested a sentence enhancement that would make the maximum incarceration life in prison.

Peterson was sentenced May 4, 2006, by Lenawee County Circuit Judge Timothy P. Pickard to 56 to 84 months in prison on charges of distributing or promoting child sexually abusive activity, 17 to 48 months for possession of child sexually abusive material, time served and five years probation for assault with intent to commit great bodily harm, and one year on a misdemeanor assault charge. Peterson pleaded guilty to those charges.

Alleged crimes that weren't charged but were included in the sentencing hearing were accusations Peterson sold fake Rolex watches through an online auction website.

"In all my years as a judge, I cannot recall someone who was a sexual deviant, an assaultive person and a thief," Pickard said during sentencing.

The litany of crimes Peterson was accused of included hosting parties for high school students at his home in Tecumseh where alcohol was available. At one party, two male students sexually assaulted an incapacitated female student in a hot tub while Peterson and other students cheered from a balcony, police said.

After a two-year investigation, primarily by then-Tecumseh Deputy Police Chief John Clark, prosecutors charged Peterson with single felony counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct during the commission of another felony, distributing or promoting sexually abusive activity, accosting a child for immoral purposes and possessing child sexually abusive material; 12 felony counts of distributing obscene matter to children; five felony counts of child sexually abusive activity; one misdemeanor count of allowing the consumption of drugs or alcohol at his residence; and 10 misdemeanor counts of furnishing alcohol to minors.

Late in 2005, Peterson was charged with raping and beating his wife. The assault charges to which he pleaded guilty were from that incident.

According to the Michigan Department of Corrections, Peterson was paroled in January 2011. He was discharged from parole in December 2012 then completed a probationary term and was discharged in March 2013.

Some of the male students also were convicted of felony and misdemeanor charges. Several students were charged with being minors in possession of alcohol at the parties.