

CENTRE DAILY TIMES**15 / 48 - Friday, February 6, 2009****Section:** CITY**Page:** 1**Source:** By Sara **Ganim** sganim@centredaily.com**WOMEN RECOUNT MARSHALL BEHAVIOR**

BELLEFONTE -- Two women have told the Centre Daily Times that former Assistant District Attorney **Lance Marshall** made sexual advances to ward them in a hotel room when they were 17-year-old students at Bellefonte Area High School. And a third woman, a former Centre County probation officer, recently told the CDT that she complained to the county's Human Resources Department in 2006 of unwanted sexual remarks **Marshall** made to her at work.

The allegations by the three women were made after they learned the state Attorney General's Office is investigating allegations that **Marshall** sent more than 140 text messages, some sexually explicit, to the victim of a domestic violence case he was prosecuting.

"At first I thought, he had it coming," said former probation officer Chrissie Prisk, of the investigation. " ... But then the more I thought about it, it made me more angry. If somebody would have listened to me, maybe we could have prevented this from happening." **Marshall** denied the allegations of the former Bellefonte students that, in a middle-of-the-night encounter, he engaged in three-way kissing with them in a hotel room and talked of his sexual fantasies. They were members of the school's mock trial team, and he was a court representative to the team. "No," **Marshall** said when contacted by phone. "I mean, I should say, no, I don't even know what you are talking about."

He denied that any mock trial high school girls were ever in a hotel room of his. When asked about other details of their account, he said: "I feel very uncomfortable now answering any more questions, but no, that did not happen."

When asked if he believed the women were lying, he said: "I don't want to say that."

As for Prisk's allegations, **Marshall** said that he believed he and Prisk were friends until the day he was told of her complaint. "The first time I learned she wanted me to stop talking to her, I stopped talking to her," **Marshall** said.

Marshall resigned Dec. 30 after 10 years in the District Attorney's Office. District Attorney Michael Madeira at the time said only that the resignation came after he and **Marshall** discussed **Marshall's** handling of "several cases."

Last week, Madeira said he encourages anyone with concerns to contact him.

"We have been at the forefront of protecting victims of crime, particularly domestic violence, sex assault and stalking," Madeira said. "I take allegations of this nature seriously and while no one has yet contacted me, I will review any case in which someone comes to me with a credible allegation of inappropriate conduct on the part of Mr. **Marshall**."

Women tell of encounter The former Bellefonte students spoke to the CDT on the condition their names and certain details of the incident of several years ago not be revealed.

They said they have kept quiet about this until recent weeks, when one woman said she decided: "It needs to come out. ... He just acted like he had such a freedom about it. Like nothing was ever going to come about it."

When told of the women's account, **Marshall** said, "This is the first time I am hearing that," and denied the incident ever happened.

Three friends confirmed that the women had confided in them about the incident shortly after it happened.

In separate interviews, the women each told the same story: They were at a mock trial event when flirtation between **Marshall** and one of the girls got out of hand in his hotel room early one morning, leading the two friends into a situation they didn't know how to handle.

"I remember we were sitting there like, 'Oh my God, I can't believe he just kissed us,' " said one of the women, describing him kissing and touching one teen, then the other. "We both freaked out."

The woman said **Marshall** patted the bed and said: "Well, there is only one thing left to do."

"And I was like, 'Hell no,' " she said. "He said we couldn't leave because people would see us. We had to leave at a certain time in the morning."

That ended up being around 5 a.m., about four hours after they'd arrived, one woman said.

"No sex was involved," said one woman, who added she went to the hotel room because she didn't want to leave her friend alone with **Marshall**. "But I think we were definitely violated. I never had the guts to actually come out with it."

In the beginning, the woman said her friend was flirting with **Marshall**, and even asked him to buy her alcohol, which she said he refused to do. They said they hadn't believed **Marshall** would take the situation beyond harmless flirting.

But when they arrived at **Marshall's** room, his pants were unzipped and unbuttoned, one woman said.

"We went up there like, 'We're going to be rebels, we're supposed to be sleeping, ha, ha,' " her friend said. "But he wanted to like make out with us and have sex with us. I don't want to have a relationship with him. That's why after this happened, I had the mindset of, 'This is my fault. I shouldn't have gone up there.' But I was just harmlessly playing around, and even if I did go up there, he was the adult."

She said she confronted **Marshall** later and "he basically told me that he couldn't get in trouble. ... And that's why I never said anything because he did have such a high

position."

Matt Martin, the district's mock trial coach, said he never witnessed any such behavior by **Marshall** and never received any complaint from any student. The women say they tried to act normal, to keep Martin from knowing what had allegedly happened.

Martin said he was "totally floored" and "very surprised" when he read about text messages **Marshall** allegedly sent to the domestic violence victim.

Last year, Martin said, **Marshall** told him that he wouldn't be helping the mock trial team because he wanted to spend more time with his family. Co-worker filed complaint In the spring of 2006, then-probation officer Chrissie Prisk went to county Human Resources Director Mark Hendrickson and complained that **Marshall** was making unwanted sexual remarks to her at work. The two had worked on the fourth floor of the courthouse and handled several cases together. Prisk says she endured years of uncomfortable conversations with **Marshall** before she complained.

An example, she said, is that **Marshall** once suggested she got a promotion because she was "sleeping her way to the top."

"He said, 'Isn't that the way people do it in your office?' " Prisk said.

Prisk said the unwanted comments started in 2002 when she was just out of college and new to the job. She said she told her supervisors and co-workers she was uncomfortable with **Marshall's** comments only to hear responses such as: "That's just how **Lance** is -- he's like that," Prisk said. "It was kind of blown off, 'Don't even worry about it; it's not a big deal.' " **Marshall** said he never knew Prisk was uncomfortable with anything he was saying and said he was "surprised" when his boss, Madeira, told him she had made a complaint and he was not to talk to her anymore.

Marshall said he doesn't remember saying or doing any of the specific things that Prisk alleges.

Around the time she filed the complaint, Prisk said she got a promotion that minimized her contact with **Marshall**.

"People are going to think, 'Why did it take so long for you to say anything?' " Prisk said. "Because you're told over and over and over again that it's just how he is." Director of Probation Tom Young and Prisk's immediate supervisor at the time, Tom Backenstoe, said they wouldn't comment on a personnel issue.

Hendrickson said he can't comment on a specific personnel issue or even confirm that Prisk made a complaint. But generally, he said, "every complaint is taken seriously. I can't speak to Chrissie Prisk's situation specifically, but generally speaking, sometimes complaints just don't rise to the level of sexual harassment."

A copy of the county's sexual harassment policy is given to each employee, and training on the issue is done each year, Hendrickson said. Last year, **Marshall's** wife, attorney Amy **Marshall**, did the training for the county, Hendrickson said.

When a complaint is received, statements are taken and Hendrickson said a panel -- usually three people: the director of children and youth services, the director of mental health and mental retardation, and himself -- meet to determine if disciplinary action is merited.

"The board's decision really is the final decision in terms of the county decision," Hendrickson said. "If (the complainant) want(s) to go through an appeals process, they

can."

Anne Ard, director of the Centre County Women's Resource Center, said it is not unusual for victims of harassment to wait years to make a formal complaint.

"Because most struggle with: One, are people going to believe what they're saying? Two, on the surface it looks innocuous," Ard said.

"But the problem becomes when it's a pattern that interferes with people doing their jobs appropriately," Ard said. "Patterns don't become a pattern in two days. It doesn't surprise me she waited four years. They often try to handle it themselves."

Madeira said he can't comment specifically on this case.

"Unfortunately, this is a personnel matter that I cannot discuss because the policies of the county do not permit that," Madeira said. But, he said, "I would never put up with that. As soon as I was told, in any case, anything like that, I would follow the advice of HR."

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