

STALLWORTH GETS PROBATION - JUDGE IS LENIENT IN DRUG MONEY CASE

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A smooth delivery and letters from more than a dozen supporters, including Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, helped persuade a federal judge to sentence former state Rep. **Keith Stallworth** to probation and home confinement Tuesday for his role in helping a drug gang launder money.

"I've lost my career. . . . I've lost my ability to go home," Stallworth said before U.S. District Judge John O'Meara sentenced him to three years of probation and 6 months of home confinement on an electronic tether. O'Meara also fined Stallworth \$3,000 and ordered him to perform 100 hours of community service.

Federal prosecutors had recommended 7 months in prison in a plea deal that requires Stallworth to cooperate with the government. The deal also called for dismissing two more serious charges.

Stallworth, who served six years in the state Legislature before winning a seat on the Wayne County Commission in 2002, blamed his legal woes on what he called an ill-conceived decision to buy a Detroit strip club and allow it to be run by others. Prosecutors said the gang used Tiger's Lounge on Woodward to launder drug proceeds.

Stallworth and his lawyer, Christopher Andreoff of Detroit, pledged that Stallworth would try to continue serving the community if given a chance.

O'Meara told Stallworth he could have given him prison time, but "I don't understand what good that would do the public." Assistant U.S. Attorney Joe Allen said he was satisfied with the sentence.

O'Meara wouldn't release about a dozen letters written on Stallworth's behalf without Andreoff's approval. The judge said only one of the letters was negative -- it apparently was written by Stallworth's ex-wife.

Kilpatrick spokesman Dave Manney said the mayor wrote the letter because the pair served together in the state House.

"The mayor believes Keith is capable of change and can again have a positive influence on the community," Manney said.

Stallworth, 47, of Detroit was indicted in June 2001 with 13 other people for their alleged involvement in a drug gang that came to be known as The Dog Pound.

The indictment said the alleged gang ringleaders, Raymond Canty and Milton (Butch) Jones, founder of Young Boys Inc., a notorious Detroit drug gang from the 1970s and 1980s, plotted robberies, kidnappings and killings of rival cocaine and marijuana traffickers from 1994 to 2001. Canty and Jones could face the death penalty if convicted of the drug killings at their upcoming trial.

In December 1997, the indictment said, under pressure from state regulators to sell the bar for liquor law violations, Stallworth allegedly recruited Clifford Mathews to buy the lounge, so he could retain a hidden interest.

In March 1998, Stallworth allegedly converted \$20,000 in drug proceeds from an unidentified person into \$20,000 worth of cashier's checks, then lied about the source of the money in currency transaction reports he filed with the bank.

Stallworth pleaded guilty in March to one count of structuring a financial transaction to evade federal currency-reporting requirements, a 5-year felony. Prosecutors agreed to drop the more serious money-laundering and drug-conspiracy charges.

After pleading guilty, Stallworth resigned his seat on the County Commission.

O'Meara said he hopes Stallworth follows through on his pledge to reenter public service.

Last June, Stallworth was sentenced to two years' probation and 100 hours of community service for trying to fraudulently obtain a voter registration and driver license so he could visit Canada.

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Caption: Photo

Keith Stallworth

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