

## **Roach gets 5-year sentence**

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### **AMARILLO - U.S. District Judge Mary Lou Robinson today sentenced former 31st District Attorney Rick Roach to five years in a federal prison followed by three years supervised release on a federal gun charge.**

Judge Robinson handed down the sentence in U.S. District Court shortly before noon.

"Your drug use has lead to unscrupulous behavior, sometimes going out of bounds," she told Roach in pronouncing the sentence. "The court hasn't imposed a fine because your family will need whatever assets you have left."

Roach, wearing a charcoal gray suit, tie and dress shirt, apologized for his conduct in a voluntary statement to the court.

"I am extremely sorry for what I've done," he said. "That doesn't fully address all the harm I've caused to my family, my position and my employees.

"I recognize I was an elected official charged with upholding the law," he said. "I accept the judgment of the court.

"In my defense, I'll say I was a good employee. I also feel I did a lot of good things."

He asked to be allowed to spend "what time I have left with my boys."

Spectators were asked to leave the courtroom as Roach began emptying the pockets of his suit for an officer.

On Feb. 8, Roach resigned as 31st District Attorney and entered a guilty plea in the Amarillo U.S. District Court to a federal charge of addict or unlawful user in possession of firearms.

Maximum penalty on the charge is 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, supervised release for not less than two years or more than three years upon release from prison and a mandatory assessment of \$100, according to Christy Drake, assistant U.S. attorney of Amarillo, who prosecuted Roach.

Roach attended the hearing which began at 9:30 a.m. today with his attorney Bill Kelly of Canyon. Much of the morning was spent with Judge Robinson going over Kelly's responses to a pre-sentencing report.

Two witnesses also testified this morning - John Wentworth, a special agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Amarillo, and Jason Henderson, a Texas Department of Public Safety trooper.

In the pre-sentencing report responses, Roach's attorney for the most part did not deny charges mentioned in the report, but contended that the former DA's actions were not improper.

The report stated that Roach asked DPS troopers to wear their uniforms and drive cards on their days off in the course of doing work for him. The nature of the work was not specified in court.

A statement in the report said that Roach allegedly agreed to give part of seized money back to the suspects' defense attorneys. Kelly responded that it was not improper for Roach to have done this.

Kelly also said that it is not improper for, in return of making an agreement with Roach, to drop charges against a suspect.

Roach's attorney did not deny that his client had guns in his brief case or in an evidence locker at the courthouse at the time he was arrested in early January, but did deny that there was any illegality about possessing the guns.

The responses either denied or claimed there was nothing improper about other charges mentioned in the pre-sentencing report, as well.

The remaining three federal charges against Roach are expected to be dropped as a result of his guilty plea, Drake said in a previous interview.

Roach was arrested Jan. 11 at Gray County Courthouse by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents on a charge of possession of methamphetamine.

Roach's indictment in federal court later included three additional charges concerning firearms, methamphetamine and cocaine.

Two state indictments on charges of possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver, a first-degree felony, were handed up by a Gray County grand jury on May 17, according to court records.

One of the charges specifies methamphetamine, and the other specifies cocaine.

Both charges allege that Roach committed the offenses within 1,000 feet of a school and that a handgun was used or exhibited during the commission of the alleged crime.

Both charges also state that the amount of the controlled substance for each indictment was four or more grams but less than 200 grams.

Perryton attorney David Scott was appointed special prosecutor in March by 31st District Judge Steven Emmert and confirmed by 84th District Judge Kelly Moore to investigate the possibility of filing state charges against Roach.

In addition to possible drug offenses, Scott has retained the Pampa firm of Brown, Graham & Co., certified public accountants, to examine financial records from Roach's office concerning possible irregularities in the DA's bank accounts.

Present 31st District Attorney Lynn Switzer said earlier this week that the investigation is continuing.