

By Phil Ray
Saturday, Jan. 12, 2013



Attorney for victim says PSU could settle

The Altoona Mirror BELLEFONTE - An attorney representing one of the victims in the Jerry Sandusky child sexual abuse case said this week there is a possibility that potential lawsuits against Penn State University can be settled out of court.

Thomas Kline, who represents the man known as Victim 5 in the Sandusky trial, said, "We have made progress," when asked what was happening in discussions concerning payment of damages to Sandusky victims.

Speaking outside the Centre County Courthouse this week, Kline said he is hoping that settlements can be reached "in terms of months, not years."

If settlements are not reached, litigation will move ahead, he said. But, overall, Kline said he was pleased with progress of the talks so far.

Attorneys representing Penn State, including Kenneth R. Feinberg and Michael K. Rozen of New York, feel the same way.

Rozen said he would agree with Kline that progress is being made, noting discussions "are going along quite well."

The attorneys acting on behalf of the university are holding negotiations with representatives of 28 alleged Sandusky victims.

Rozen said some of the attorneys are representing more than one victim but said negotiations are separate for each case.

He noted that while things are moving along, it doesn't mean that discussions are at the same stage for each of the possible litigants. He agreed that settlements could "reasonably" be expected within months.

Kline of Philadelphia has followed the Sandusky case closely and attended the pretrial, trial and post trial proceedings over the past year.

He was attending an argument Thursday on Sandusky's request for a new trial, primarily based on the lack of preparation time for his attorneys and the failure of Senior Judge John Cleland to grant continuances.

The trial was held in June, with Sandusky found guilty of 45 offenses. He is serving 30 to 60 years behind bars. Kline scoffed at the argument that Sandusky's defense team didn't have time to read and analyze 12,000 pages

of documents prior to trial.

To a lawyer, he said, 12,000 pages represents the reading of a newspaper, which takes little time. He said he's been involved in civil litigation that included 15 million pages of documents.

Kline said the negotiations with Feinberg and Rozen initially involved gathering of facts - whether the abuse occurred on Penn State property and whether it occurred before or after Penn State graduate assistant and former Penn State quarterback Mike McQueary told top Penn State officials he saw Sandusky sexually abusing a child in a locker room shower in 2001.

That stage of discussions is past, Kline said, and now the talks are down to "brass tacks."