

Larry Nassar loses last appeal in sexual assault scandal

By **Ed White - AP** - June 20, 2022

DETROIT — The Michigan Supreme Court on Friday rejected a final appeal from [sports doctor Larry Nassar](#), who was sentenced to decades in prison for sexually assaulting gymnasts, including Olympic medalists.

Attorneys for Nassar said he was treated unfairly in 2018 and deserved a new hearing, based on [vengeful remarks by a judge](#) who called him a “monster” who would “wither” in prison like the wicked witch in “The Wizard of Oz.”

“I just signed your death warrant,” Ingham County Judge Rosemarie Aquilina said of Nassar’s 40-year sentence.

The state Supreme Court said Nassar’s appeal was a “close question” and that it had “concerns” over the judge’s conduct. But the court also noted Aquilina, despite her provocative comments, stuck to the sentencing agreement worked out by lawyers in the case.

“We decline to expend additional judicial resources and further subject the victims in this case to additional trauma where the questions at hand present nothing more than an academic exercise,” the court said in a two-page order.

[More than 150 victims spoke or submitted statements](#) during an extraordinary seven-day hearing in Aquilina’s court more than four years ago.

“It’s over. ... Almost six years after I filed the police report, it’s finally over,” Rachael Denhollander, the first woman to publicly accuse Nassar, [said Friday on Twitter](#).

Nassar [pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting gymnasts and other athletes](#) with his hands under the guise of medical treatment for hip and leg injuries. He worked at Michigan State University and at Indianapolis-based [USA Gymnastics](#), traveling the world with the elites of the sport.

“Our Constitution does not allow for cruel and unusual punishment,” Aquilina told Nassar. “If it did, I have to say I might allow what he did to all of these beautiful souls, these young women in their childhood. I would allow someone or many people to do to him what he did to others.”

Nassar subsequently received another 40-year sentence in a separate case in a neighboring county.

He currently is in federal prison for child pornography crimes in a different case that grew out of the same investigation. The sentences effectively mean Nassar, 58, will spend the rest of his life behind bars.

The Nassar case turned Aquilina into a celebrity. She appeared at the 2018 ESPY awards in Los Angeles, where his victims were honored. The judge said she trademarked her name after it started appearing on T-shirts, including one worn by actress Natalie Portman on “Saturday Night Live.”

The scandal hasn’t faded. More than 100 women, including Olympic gold medalist Simone Biles, are collectively [seeking more than \\$1 billion](#) from the federal government for [the FBI’s failure to stop Nassar](#) when agents became aware of allegations against him in 2015. He was arrested by Michigan State University police in 2016, more than a year later.

Michigan State, which was accused of missing chances over many years to stop Nassar, [agreed to pay \\$500 million](#) to more than 300 women and girls who were assaulted by him. USA Gymnastics and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee [made a \\$380 million settlement](#).

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