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COURTS AND JUSTICE

Judge, Summit County settle lawsuit with employee who deputies attacked entering courthouse

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A court-appointed psychologist sued a Summit County judge and sheriff's deputies in an incident in which the judge is accused of shoving the man, then telling the deputies the man was a security risk.

By [Adam Ferrise, cleveland.com](https://www.cleveland.com)

AKRON, Ohio — A Summit County Probate Court judge is among several officials who agreed to pay \$82,500 to settle a lawsuit filed by a court psychologist after he was attacked by sheriff's deputies entering the downtown courthouse.

Curtis Williams II will receive \$42,500 from Summit County, \$30,000 from Summit County Probate Judge Elinore Marsh Stormer and \$10,000 from the city of Akron, according to Williams' attorney, Peter Pattakos.

Summit County and the sheriff's office settled last week. Stormer settled her portion of the case on Wednesday, court records say.

"While we believe we would have recovered substantially more at trial, this was never about the money for Dr. Williams, who is glad to put this behind him now that the county, city and judge finally agreed to a settlement that sufficiently reflects the seriousness of their violations of his constitutional rights and clears his name," Pattakos said in a statement.

Cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer reached out to Marsh Stormer, her attorneys and spokeswomen for the county and city for comment.

The lawsuit [was filed](#) in September in federal court in Cleveland. It accused the deputies of excessive force and falsification of evidence and prosecutors of malicious prosecution.

It said deputies covered up the evidence and that Marsh Stormer lied about what happened in subsequent interviews with investigators.

Williams, a licensed psychologist, at the time of the Sept. 15, 2020, incident worked for a Summit County Common Pleas program aimed at helping those with mental illness.

After leading a therapy session outside the courthouse at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Williams tried to walk inside the courthouse through an employee-only entrance to use the restroom, according to the lawsuit.

Marsh Stormer, whom Williams did not know, confronted him at the doorway. Williams told her that he was an employee and urgently needed to use the restroom. Marsh Stormer shoved him, and he walked by her into the courthouse, according to the lawsuit.

Marsh Stormer followed him and shouted to nearby sheriff's deputies that Williams had assaulted her and posed a security risk, the lawsuit said. She left the building as four deputies rushed Williams.

The deputies beat, tackled, handcuffed and used stun guns on Williams, the lawsuit said.

Some surveillance video of the interaction went missing, according to the lawsuit. Sheriff's officials later cleared the deputies of any wrongdoing.

City prosecutors charged Williams with assaulting the judge, disorderly conduct and trespassing.

Prosecutors later told Williams that they would dismiss the criminal charges if he wrote a letter of apology to the judge and sign a waiver saying that he wouldn't sue. He refused, and prosecutors later dropped the charges after a judge found prosecutors violated Williams' speedy-trial rights.

Adam Ferrise covers federal courts at [cleveland.com](https://www.cleveland.com) and The Plain Dealer. You can find his work [here](#).

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