

SJC Justice Cordy won't hear case vs. old boss, William O'Connell

The Patriot Ledger

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BOSTON — Supreme Judicial Court Justice Robert Cordy has recused himself from a case involving Quincy developer William O'Connell.

Cordy did not disclose the reason why he withdrew from hearing arguments Wednesday in a criminal case in which the 72-year-old real estate tycoon is accused of paying a 14-year-old for sex and cocaine trafficking.

Cordy worked as a lobbyist for O'Connell, his brother Peter and their business partners in the late 1990s as they were negotiating with state officials in charge of the Big Dig project in Boston. The O'Connells and their partners inked a deal in which the Big Dig spent \$100 million to send 13 million tons of dirt and clay to West Quincy. The developers transformed 400 acres of publicly owned land at the Quincy-Milton border, once home to several landfills, into Granite Links Golf Course at Quarry Hills.

Cordy had been former Gov. William Weld's chief legal counsel and later joined the private law firm where Weld landed after leaving office. Weld's successor in the governor's office, Paul Cellucci, tapped Cordy for the state's highest court in early 2001.

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William O'Connell has pleaded innocent to charges he paid to have sex with a 14-year-old girl and had more than 14 grams of cocaine hidden in his Marina Bay condominium.

The high court on Wednesday is scheduled to hear arguments from O'Connells lawyers and from Norfolk County prosecutors working for District Attorney Michael Morrissey that police reports filed in the case should not be made public because they identify the alleged underage victim.

Lawyers for The Patriot Ledger and with the support of several media and First Amendment groups including the **New England First Amendment Center at Northeastern University** will argue that a law that restricts the public availability of police records in sexual assault cases does not apply to materials in question in the O'Connell case.

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