



THE SUN CHRONICLE

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Alleged party host gets rebuke

BY DAVID LINTON SUN CHRONICLE STAFF

ATTLEBORO - Attleboro District Court Judge Gregory L. Phillips chastised an 18-year-old North Attleboro High School student Tuesday who allegedly hosted an underage drinking party about a month after the judge spoke to seniors at the school about the dangers of alcohol abuse.

"I spoke at that high school about three weeks ago. Were you there?," Phillips said, peering out at Madison Brittingham, who was standing at a podium about 10 yards away.

"Yes I was," said Brittingham, a NAHS basketball player, who wore a purple shirt and black sport coat and was accompanied at court by his stepmother.

"You weren't listening were you," Phillips shot back.

Phillips looked over police photographs of the inside of Brittingham's house taken early Sunday morning, when police raided the party and found more than 100 empty beer cans, wine and liquor bottles, in addition to a marijuana bong.

He also listened as North Attleboro police prosecutor Chris Ciccio read from a police report of how police showed up at Brittingham's home at 723 Mt. Hope St. around 2:30 a.m., broke up the party and found an 18-year-old girl unconscious from alcohol intoxication on a couch.

Police learned about the party, Ciccio said, after responding to a domestic assault at another house allegedly involving another student who had been at the party and arrived home "highly intoxicated."

Phillips had Brittingham's stepmother look over the photographs before he ordered the young man to report to the probation department on a daily basis and submit to drug and alcohol testing.

Brittingham's parents were away last weekend when the party was held, police said.

Brittingham pleaded innocent to being a person under 21 in possession of alcohol, furnishing alcohol to minors under the state's social host law and possession of marijuana with intent to distribute.

When Brittingham told the judge he wanted to represent himself, Phillips warned him he could face up to 2 1/2 years in jail if convicted on the drug charge, alone.

Phillips continued the case to Feb. 17 so Brittingham could consider hiring a lawyer.

After the court proceeding, Brittingham and his stepmother - who did not give her name - declined to comment about the allegations.

Phillips spoke to seniors at North Attleboro High School Jan. 9, along with Kathi Meyer, the mother of 17-year-old King Philip Regional High School student Taylor Meyer of Plainville who died in October after an underage drinking party in Norfolk.

When Phillips spoke, he told the students that in the 10 years he has been presiding judge in Attleboro, he has seen 17-year-old defendants charged with alcohol offenses arrested again when they are in their mid-

20s for more serious crimes, including rape and robbery.

"Those people aren't making the right decisions," he told the students at the time.

Police Chief Michael P. Gould Sr. said detectives are still investigating the party and are trying to determine how the students got the alcohol. The chief said he anticipates more charges at a later date.