

Texting assault nets teenager month in jail

But injuries suffered in courtroom may force county deputy to retire

By **SCOTT DAUGHERTY**
Staff Writer

A Baltimore teenager was convicted this week of assaulting a county deputy sheriff earlier this year after he was asked to stop texting inside an Annapolis courtroom.

Demonte T. Jones, 18, was sentenced Tuesday to one month in jail for the Jan. 6 assault inside the county courthouse, which broke the deputy's right leg in two places and may force him to retire early.

While Deputy Brian Schwaab recently returned to work with a temporary desk assignment, he is still in pain and may never be able to put on a uniform again.

"This man's career is probably over because of this punk," said Sheriff Ron Bateman, lamenting that Jones did not receive a longer sentence. "It's a real shame ... (and) its all because some kid couldn't follow directions."

According to deputies and prosecutors, Jones and Schwab squared off Jan. 6 in the courtroom of Circuit Court Judge Paul F. Harris Jr.

Jones was in court because his sister's fiance was asking Harris to reconsider the sentence he received in a felony drug case, officials said.

During the hearing, deputies noticed Jones was using his cell phone despite a large sign in the

TEXTING

(Continued from Page A1)

courtroom telling people to turn off their phones while court is in session.

The deputies repeatedly told Jones to put away his cell phone, but he continued texting, they said.

Schwaab, who served the Baltimore Police Department for 21 years before joining the county Sheriff's Office in 2003, eventually ordered

Jones to leave the courtroom. Instead, Jones stood up and cursed at the deputies.

"You guys can't talk to me like that. (Expletive) you all," he said according to deputies.

The outburst stopped court proceedings. Schwaab told Jones he was under arrest.

Jones resisted and Schwaab's brother, Deputy Doug Schwaab, tried to step in and help get Jones into handcuffs. In the process, Jones and the Schwaabs

fell to the floor and Brian Schwaab broke his leg.

Jones was convicted Tuesday of second-degree assault on a law enforcement officer. The charge is a felony which carries up to 10 years in prison.

Kristin Fleckenstein, a spokesman for the State's Attorney Office, said prosecutors did not seek a specific sentence. She cited the wishes of Schwaab, who wanted it left up to the judge.

District Court Judge Jonas

D. Legum sentenced Jones to five years in prison with all but one month suspended. Upon his release, he will be on three years' supervised probation.

"It hurts every day," said Schwaab, who said he cannot run or go up and down steps very well. "Swelling, stiffness, tightness, it comes and goes."

sdaugherty@capitalgazette.com