

How a Respected Pastor Abused Hundreds of Children for 40 Years, and No One Knew

John and Clara Hinton arrived in Somerset, Pennsylvania in 1972. Just two years into their marriage and with a young daughter, the young couple was eager to start their ministry at the Somerset Church of Christ, a small congregation in the rural community.

John had completed a Bible degree at Oklahoma Christian University and served as a youth pastor when he stepped into the pulpit.

"We were kids when we moved to Somerset, Pennsylvania. We were 22 years old," said Clara. For her, years of dreams were coming together. "I had prayed from a young child up for a Christian husband. That's all I ever wanted was a Christian husband and I wanted to be a Christian wife and mother."

'I wish my husband was like yours': The Respected Dad

The two would go on to have 11 children, and Clara considered John to be a model husband and father. She described him as soft-spoken and thoughtful, fixing her breakfast every morning.

"He was my spiritual leader. We would spend many hours talking about God and our faith and our service within the church," she said.

He was also engaged with their children, never missing a game or a concert. "He played with them. He hung out with them. He was that person," said Clara. "In fact, women in the church would often tell me 'I wish my husband was like yours.'"

Their fifth son, Jimmy, adored his father. "He just always

treated us well and always taught us how to respect other people, how to respect older people. And I just have really good memories,” said Jimmy.

His dad, said Jimmy, was also “go big or go home.” That meant surprising the family with an above-ground swimming pool one year and buying three-wheelers for his sons another time.
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