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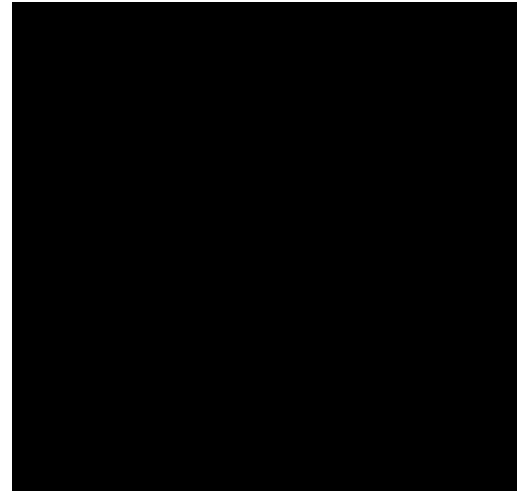
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## Former Coon Rapids Police officer sent to prison

By **Peter Bodley** on March 31, 2012 at 12:04 pm



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A former Coon Rapids Police officer has been sent to prison for sexually assaulting a child.

Anoka County District Court Judge Dyanna Street March 30 sentenced Joseph Lawrence Hunt, 61, Coon Rapids, to serve 41 month in prison after he had pleaded guilty in January to a felony first-degree criminal sexual conduct charge.

As part of a plea agreement, two other first-degree criminal sexual conduct charges and another in the second-degree were dismissed at the sentencing.

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According to Anoka County Attorney Tony Palumbo, the sentence was within the guidelines in place for first-degree criminal sexual conduct at the time the crime was committed.

He expressed concern for the victim and felt justice was “finally accomplished after so many years,” Palumbo said.

Hunt was accused of sexually abusing a boy from 1978 to 1987, starting when the boy was seven until he was 15.

According to the complaint, an Anoka County Sheriff’s Office Criminal Investigation Department detective met with a now 40-year-old man in early July 2011 regarding allegations of sexual abuse.

The man told police that when he was about seven years old Hunt started fondling him and that continued until he was nine years old when the abuse became oral sex until he was 15 years old.

At his plea hearing, Hunt admitted repeatedly performing sexual acts on the victim when he was between 13 and 15 years of age.

These acts occurred while Hunt was in a position of authority of the victim.

According to court documents, prosecutor Amy J. Reed-Hall, assistant Anoka County Attorney, had planned to introduce evidence at trial of additional offenses involving two other victims in later time periods.

An earlier motion by defense attorney John Leunig to have Hunt’s statement to investigators, in which he admitted to the allegations, suppressed as evidence because it was not voluntary was denied by Street in December 2011.

The statement was made during a non-custodial interview before Hunt was arrested, were not subject to the Miranda warning and were voluntary, according to Street’s ruling.

Hunt was a Coon Rapids Police officer from 1977 until 2004 when he retired as an investigator. He had been working for a state agency until he was charged with the offense.

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