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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Duluth man gets maximum sentence for sexual assault of pre-teen

St. Louis County Attorney Mark Rubin's office announced that a 49-year-old Duluth man was sentenced today to 30 years in prison for sexually assaulting a pre-teen girl.

A jury in September found Joseph Edward Wilson guilty of both of the counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct he was charged with.

Assistant St. Louis County Attorney Kristen Swanson, who prosecuted the case, asked the court to sentence the defendant to 30 years in prison, the statutory maximum.

Sixth Judicial District Judge Sally Tarnowski asked Wilson, who had a prior first-degree sex assault conviction in Illinois in 1992, if he had anything he wanted to say before sentencing. He did not. The judge sentenced the defendant to the maximum 30-year sentence.

The girl's mother contacted Duluth police after her daughter told her what Wilson did to her. The woman said she noticed that her daughter had "lost her spark" and had been complaining of headaches. She asked her daughter what was wrong and the girl told her Wilson had sexually abused her.

The victim took the witness stand and testified against her abuser during the trial.

"I admire the courage shown by this young girl in standing up for herself and telling her story to a courtroom full of strangers," Swanson said after the sentencing. "Hopefully, this will be a good start to helping her and her family to heal from this tragic episode."

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