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JUSTICE NEWS

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Former Birmingham, Ala., School Security Officer Sentenced to 30 Years in Prison for Production of Child Pornography

WASHINGTON – A former security officer in the Birmingham City School System, who was also a substitute bus driver for Shelby County, Ala., schools, was sentenced today to 30 years in prison for producing child pornography, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Joyce White Vance of the Northern District of Alabama, Northern District of Alabama FBI Special Agent in Charge Patrick J. Maley and Birmingham Police Chief A.C. Roper.

U.S. District Judge Inge P. Johnson also sentenced Michael Wayne Wooten, 61, of Alabaster, Ala., to lifetime supervised release following his prison term. The court noted during the hearing that Wooten had numerous child victims. Law enforcement efforts have identified 11 children whom he exploited.

Wooten pleaded guilty in January 2012 to the child pornography charge.

“Mr. Wooten used his position as a school security guard to gain access to young children,” said Assistant Attorney General Breuer. “But rather than protect school students, he sexually abused them and captured this abuse in dozens of photographs. Today, appropriately, he was sentenced to 30 years in prison.”

“Restoring the innocence and trust this defendant stole from his victims is impossible, but the judge's sentence punishes him for the harm he did and ensures he will never exploit another child,” said U.S. Attorney Vance. “This defendant will be eligible for release when he is 91. Today, we confirm that victimizing children by taking sexually explicit photographs of them is abhorrent criminal behavior and it will be not tolerated.”

“Mr. Wooten used and abused his position of trust to satisfy his own perverse sexual interest in children,” said Special Agent in Charge Maley. “Working with our law enforcement partners, the FBI will bring to justice those individuals who prey on the innocent.”

“We believe that justice has been served, and this is the appropriate sentence in a case where so many innocent children have been affected,” said Police Chief Roper. “We appreciate all the various criminal justice agencies that came together to bring this investigation to a successful conclusion.”

According to court documents, Wooten, a retired Birmingham police officer, worked as a security officer for the Birmingham City Schools from July 1997 until May 2011. Before his November arrest, Wooten had worked as a substitute bus driver in Shelby County schools during the current school year.

Between August 2009 and April 2010, Wooten used an office at Dupuy Elementary School in Birmingham to take modeling photos of numerous juvenile girls, according to court records. After one of these modeling sessions, one of the victims told her parents of potentially inappropriate conduct by Wooten. A subsequent search of Wooten's residence yielded multiple computers containing child pornography images, including images produced by Wooten depicting several victims, between four and nine years of age, engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

The FBI and the Birmingham Police Department investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel Fortune of the Northern District of Alabama and Trial Attorney Jeffrey H. Zeeman of the Justice Department Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section prosecuted the case.

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Criminal Division