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### **FORMER MIAMI AREA TEACHER SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS IN PRISON FOR TRAVELING TO THAILAND TO ENGAGE IN ILLICIT SEX WITH MINOR BOYS**

CHICAGO — A former Miami area teacher was sentenced to a maximum term of 15 years in federal prison for traveling overseas to engage in illicit sexual conduct with minor boys, federal law enforcement officials announced today. The defendant, **Charles Todd Stokes**, 49, who taught physical education in the Miami - Dade County public school system between approximately 1985 and 1998, was sentenced for traveling in 2002 from Chicago to Thailand, where he lived for several years, to have sex with minors. Stokes was convicted in a June 2010 trial in U.S. District Court in Chicago, following his extradition from Thailand. Evidence at the trial showed that Stokes engaged in sexual conduct with more than 70 boys, most of whom were under 16, and about half of whom were under 12 at the time. Two victims, who were 11 at the time, traveled from Thailand to Chicago and testified at the trial.

Stokes, who formerly lived in the Miami area, was sentenced Friday by U.S. District Judge Rebecca Pallmeyer. Although federal sentencing guidelines provided for life imprisonment, Stokes' sentence was capped by the statutory maximum of 15 years in effect at the time of his crimes. The maximum sentence has since been increased to 30 years in prison. The case was brought in Federal

Court in Chicago because Stokes traveled from here to Thailand. At his trial last summer, the jury found that Stokes traveled overseas with the “significant purpose” of engaging in sex with minors. The sentence was announced today by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and Gary Hartwig, Special Agent-in-Charge of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Chicago. ICE HSI partnered with the Royal Thai Police in conducting the investigation.

According to court documents, following a misdemeanor battery conviction in Florida, Stokes “believed that he could outsmart and evade the law. When the criminal justice system in Florida and the Miami - Dade Public School System caught on to [him], he moved his life to Thailand where he believed that he could continue to engage in sexual conduct with minors free from the monitoring of the criminal court in Florida and the terms of his probation. [Stokes] further believed that he could continue to abuse minors without being punished for doing so.”

Stokes began living in Thailand in 2000. He traveled to Chicago in late 2001 and renewed his visa before returning to Thailand from Chicago in early 2002. Stokes was arrested in Thailand in 2006, extradited here in 2007, and has remained in federal custody since then. Additional evidence showed that he possessed thousands of photographs of himself engaging in sexual conduct with minor boys.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Nancy DePodesta and William Ridgway.

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