

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney  
Laura E. Duffy***

**For Further Information, Contact:**

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**Assistant U.S. Attorney Helen Hong (619) 546-6990**

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*For Immediate Release*

## **Retired San Diego Unified School District Educator Sentenced to 84 months for Receipt of Child Pornography**

**NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - December 6, 2013**

SAN DIEGO - James Rick Mitchell, a retired teacher and counselor in the San Diego Unified School District, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Janis L. Sammartino to 84 months in prison, followed by five years of supervised release, for a child pornography offense. He is expected to self-surrender to serve his sentence by February 7, 2014.

According to documents filed in court, Mitchell collected 947,542 images and 4,751 videos depicting minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct. Mitchell was identified as a collector of child pornography in an investigation conducted by the United States Postal Service into a commercial distributor of child pornography images and videos.

The investigation revealed that Mitchell had purchased videos and images from the company over an approximately 5 year period between 2006 and 2011, spending approximately \$4,300 to purchase dozens of illicit images and videos. Based on that information, United States Postal Inspectors executed a search

warrant at Mitchell's residence, where they uncovered the trove of child pornography that Mitchell had collected.

Mitchell was employed by the San Diego Unified School District for 34 years between 1969 and 2003. He worked as a physical education teacher and counselor at Einstein Junior High School; as a math teacher and track coach at Point Loma High School; and for 24 years between 1979 and 2003 at University City High School as a math teacher, counselor and track coach. Judge Sammartino told Mitchell that he had cast a "pallor" on his career as an educator with his actions and noted that possession of child pornography results in acute harm to the children depicted in the images.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse, launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.projectsafefchildhood.gov](http://www.projectsafefchildhood.gov).

Participating Agencies:

**DEFENDANT**

**Criminal Case No. 13-cr-667-JLS**

James Rick Mitchell

**SUMMARY OF CHARGES**

Receipt of Images of Minors Engaged in Sexually Explicit Conduct, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2252(a)(2)

Maximum Penalties: 5 year mandatory minimum, 20 year maximum; 5 years of supervised release

**AGENCIES**

United States Postal Service  
San Diego Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force