

Lake Park Teacher Gets 6 Years For Sex Abuse

July 27, 1999 | By Jeff Coen, Tribune Staff Writer.



A former Lake Park High School special education teacher was sentenced to 6 years in prison Monday after being found guilty of engaging in a sexual relationship with a minor last year.

Gary A. Edelman, 45, of the 500 block of Lafayette Lane, Hoffman Estates, was found guilty of two counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse and weapons charges. After the guilty finding in a stipulated bench trial, DuPage Judge George Bakalis sentenced Edelman to 6 years in prison for the sex charges and 3 years for unlawful use of a weapon.



The prison terms will be served concurrently, along with a 6-year term Edelman received in Lake County last month. Authorities in that county had

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charged Edelman for taking lewd photographs of the same minor, a family friend, in Highland Park.

Edelman was charged in August 1998. Prosecutors have alleged that he abused the 16-year-old girl, now 18, in his vehicle, in which an illegal handgun and a switchblade were found at the time of his arrest.

At Edelman's Lake County trial, the girl testified that the sexual activity took place after Edelman drove to secluded areas and placed cardboard over the windows of his vehicle. DuPage County prosecutors said the relationship lasted from April to June 1998.

Jim Ryan of the DuPage County state's attorney's office, who prosecuted Edelman, called the outcome of the case satisfactory.

"I think this was a fair disposition for the victim in this case," Ryan said. "The victim's family was pleased with the result."

Edelman made no statement Monday before Bakalis. Prior to his sentencing in Lake County, Edelman apologized and said he would take full responsibility for his crime.

Officials have said the girl was not a student at Lake Park High School's Roselle campus at the time of the abuse, and that the crime was not related to Edelman's teaching position. Edelman had taught at the school for 18 years.

Authorities have said that Edelman knew the girl and her family for years and that the teen had moved in with Edelman and his family when her parents were in divorce proceedings.

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