

Child molester, 83, is oldest person sent to Indiana prison

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Convicted child molester Warren Charles Gutermuth on Friday became the oldest person ever to be sent to prison in Indiana when he was sentenced to 24 years.

Gutermuth, 83, a retired Boy Scout leader, was convicted of molesting three children — twin girls who were 7 and their brother, who was 8 — in 1995. The children considered him their grandfather.

The children and their parents

were living with Gutermuth in Jeffersonville, Ind., at the time.

During Friday's sentencing hearing in Clark Circuit Court, the children's father testified that Gutermuth had also molested him some 25 years ago and had taken pictures of him, his brother and other boys naked. The victims' father said Gutermuth took the pictures and told them how to pose: The boys, who were between 8 and 11, were shown touching each others' genitals.

The father had lived with Gutermuth off and on since he was 6.

In closing arguments at the sentencing hearing, Clark County Deputy Prosecutor Denise Schafer called Gutermuth a "predator, pedophile who preys upon children" and said Gutermuth had no remorse for the crimes he admitted committing.

Schafer quoted Gutermuth as saying: "It's OK to molest children when children want it."

Gutermuth's lawyer, Mike Forsee, compared a lengthy jail term to a death sentence for his client and asked Clark Circuit Judge Daniel Donahue to take Gutermuth's age,

lack of prior arrests and the fact that Gutermuth had "acknowledged his wrongdoing to the court" into consideration when passing sentence.

But Donahue said he was "not going to let age interfere" in his decision and said there was "undue hardship" placed on the children because of Gutermuth.

"Lord knows what these children are going to become as adults," Donahue said.

He then sentenced Gutermuth to three consecutive eight-year prison terms. The last four years would be

suspended and Gutermuth would be placed in home incarceration for two years.

The victims' grandmother testified and disputed her son's testimony.

When told that Gutermuth had pleaded guilty to molesting her grandchildren and shown the pictures that were found in Gutermuth's home, she said she still did not believe he molested any of them.

Both parents of the victims testified that Gutermuth's molestation of their children had been the major reason they divorced last May. Both

said the children have suffered emotionally from the molestation.

In the pre-sentencing investigation, the victims' father said of Gutermuth: "He's no monster. He's sick. He needs to get some prison time and get counseling while there."

Both parents said they were satisfied with the sentence and hoped Gutermuth would receive counseling.

"I would like to see him rehabilitated," the children's mother said. "He broke the trust of some kids who loved him very much."