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Press Release

Child rapist's 25 to 30 year Prison sentence will stand *DA Morrissey credits victim's courage*

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A Franklin man convicted of raping and molesting a young girl known to him from 1987 until 1996 has lost his bid for a new trial and will continue to serve his 25 to 30 year state prison sentence, according to Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey.

“Richard Aspen was convicted in March 1998 by a jury of his peers of raping this victim starting when she was 14 or 15 and then forcibly raping her again when she was in her 20s,” District Attorney Morrissey said. “There are very disturbing facts in this case, and I am pleased that Judge Thomas F. McGuire, Jr. denied this motion for new trial.”

The motion focused on Aspen's contention that his trial and first appellate attorneys provided ineffective assistance, that some of the victim's testimony should have been excluded and several other issues, according to court documents.

“It is important to remember that without the courage and resolve of the victim in this case, to come forward and testify against someone she had known since she was a little girl, these crimes would have gone unpunished,” District Attorney Morrissey said. “And this defendant would still be free and at-large in the community.”

“The Franklin Police department put together a strong case corroborating the victim's statement, and that was effectively used at trial by prosecutor Michele Armour, who now heads the office's Special Victims Unit,” District Attorney Morrissey said. “Assistant District Attorney Marguerite Grant's 41-page brief refuting the arguments for new trial has secured a just result and will keep a dangerous sexual offender in prison for many more years.”

Several of the rapes were at the defendant's home and other locations between 1987 and 1990. Starting in 1990, the victim was able to largely avoid Aspen and keep a distance from him. In January and March of 1996, he sought her out again and again assaulted her. She disclosed to a family member in May. The defendant was subsequently arrested. The denial of the motion for new trial was issued July 17, 2012.

All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.