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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: April 14, 2023
Re: Raymond Lee Dewitt
Serial Sexual Predator Denied Parole

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Jeff Laugero announced today that Raymond Lee Dewitt, age 58, of Modesto was found unsuitable for parole during a March 15, 2023, hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings held at the Correctional Training Facility in Soledad. Deputy District Attorney Holly MacKinnon appeared at the hearing on behalf of the People.

Between 1993 and 1998, Dewitt repeatedly molested, orally copulated, sexually penetrated, and attempted sodomy on 12 different children, all boys between 4 to 15 years of age. Dewitt used his position of trust as a friend and neighbor to many of the victims' families to commit these offenses by force and threat of bodily harm. To gain access to the victims, Dewitt would invite his own children's friends over for play dates, talk his friends into leaving their children with him, and even offered them jobs with his construction business.

Dewitt pled not guilty and not guilty by reason of insanity to the charges. In August of 1999, as part of a negotiated plea and bifurcated proceeding, Dewitt agreed to waive his right to a jury trial on the sanity phase. He then pled no contest to sixteen counts of lewd and lascivious conduct on a child under the age of 14 years, four counts of forced oral copulation, four counts of lewd and lascivious conduct by force on a child under the age of 14 years, three counts of sending harmful material to a minor with the intent to seduce, one count of attempted sodomy, one count of sexual penetration with a foreign object, one count of attempted lewd act with a minor, and one count of using a minor in a prohibited act.

On February 18, 2000, Dewitt was found sane during a court trial on the issue before Judge Edward M. Lacy. On April 17, 2000, the Judge Lacy sentenced Dewitt to serve a total of 54 years to life in state prison. In 2001, the Fifth District Court of Appeals affirmed inmate Dewitt's conviction.

Dewitt has spent the last 24 years in prison and was recently made eligible for parole pursuant to California's extended "Elderly Parole Program" enacted on January 1, 2021. This change in the law provides that qualifying inmates who have served 20 years in continuous custody and are over

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the age of 50 are eligible for a parole hearing. In addition, the Board is required to give special consideration to whether age, time served, and diminished physical condition, if any, have reduced the elderly inmate's risk of violence.

One of Dewitt's victims and several victims' parents appeared at the hearing and expressed to the Board how horrific and life altering Dewitt's crimes were on the victims, their families and on the entire community.

Prosecutor MacKinnon asked the Board to deny parole, pointing out that Dewitt's insufficient amount of sex offender programming while in custody made him an unreasonable risk of danger to the community. She argued that the circumstances surrounding many of his sexual assaults exhibited a high degree of cruelty and viciousness. MacKinnon also argued that Dewitt's ability to sexually violate so many children over an extended period showed he was extremely manipulative, callous and criminally minded. She urged the Board to consider how those characteristics were still very much present and, coupled with his lack of insight, made him a current threat to public safety if released.

The Board agreed and denied parole for five years, finding that Dewitt needed to understand the causative factors that led him to commit these heinous and cruel crimes. The Board stated he continued to minimize his conduct and they found his answers to their questions manipulative. The Board found Dewitt has still not come to terms with the fact that he is a pedophile and continues to minimize his conduct while exhibiting only shallow remorse.

This was Dewitt's first parole hearing. Due to his age, he is eligible for elder parole consideration and may petition the Board for another hearing earlier than five years should his circumstances support it.

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