



AG MARSHALL ANNOUNCES CONVICTION OF MONTGOMERY DAYCARE OFFICE MANAGER FOR ELECTRONIC SOLICITATION OF A CHILD

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Steve Marshall announced that the office manager of a Montgomery daycare center has been convicted for electronic solicitation of a child. Deggi Hardwick, 34, pleaded guilty this morning in Montgomery County Circuit Court to the class B felony.

The daycare center, JAAD's Child Care, is owned by Hardwick's family. The Attorney General's Office had obtained a court order to bar him from this or any daycare facility while the charge was pending and he remains barred upon his conviction.

The Court ordered a presentence investigation and sentencing is set for April 25. Hardwick faces a penalty of two to 20 years and a fine for up to \$30,000, and is subject to the requirements of Alabama's Sex Offender Notification and Community Registration Act.

The Attorney General's Criminal Trials Division prosecuted the case and presented information in court this morning about the crime.

Hardwick had known the victim, who was 15 at the time of the crime, since she was in care at the facility when she was two years old. In August of 2016, Hardwick began sending sexually graphic texts to the victim, including requests for the child to text nude pictures, offers to perform oral sex with each other, and sexual intercourse.

"Deggi Hardwick held a position of authority and trust for this victim since she was a baby, and his violation of this is a contemptible crime," said Attorney General Marshall. "As Attorney General for Alabama, I will do everything within my power to protect our children from vile predators, and I am proud of the outstanding work by my Criminal Trials Division to prosecute these crimes and bring justice to the victims."

Attorney General Marshall commended Assistant Attorney General Andrew Arrington of his Criminal Trials Division; Sarah Green, director of the Attorney General's Office of Victim Services, and Jackie Fowler, victim service officer; and thanked Detective Zhong Zhu of the Montgomery Police Department for their skill and dedication in bringing this case to a successful conclusion.

