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**NEWS RELEASE**

**NO FURTHER PROSECUTION TO BE PURSUED AT THIS TIME  
AGAINST FORMER SWIMMING COACH**

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom announced that after two criminal trials resulting in hung juries, his office will be dismissing the criminal charges previously filed on September 13, 2018 against Alfred John O'Neill (also known as "Rocky" O'Neill), age 63, of Savage. In May of 2018, the U.S. Center for SafeSport, a nonprofit organization charged with investigating and preventing sex abuse within youth and amateur sports, received a report that during 1988-1989 a female swimmer had been sexually abused on multiple occasions by her former swimming coach, Alfred O'Neill. In their role as a mandated reporter, this information was forwarded to the Burnsville Police Department who began a criminal investigation. The charges alleged that O'Neill used his position of authority over the then 17-year-old swimmer in order to repeatedly engage her in sexual contact. O'Neill had coached for the Burnsville Swim Club and had been her swimming coach from the time she was 14-years-old.

After O'Neill pled not guilty, this case was tried before two juries in Dakota County in April of 2019 and November of 2019. On both occasions, the juries failed to reach a verdict.

Backstrom commented: *"We have concluded at this time to dismiss these criminal charges and will not pursue a third trial of Mr. O'Neill on the evidence currently available to us in this case. It is rare that a jury is unable to reach a verdict in a criminal case, but it does occasionally occur. I want to commend the woman for her courage in talking about these extremely difficult circumstances after so many years and assisting us in two separate criminal trials, which is never easy in cases of this nature."*

**SECOND CRIMINAL PROSECUTION AGAINST FORMER SWIMMING COACH  
HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY DISMISSED**

A second criminal case was filed against former Burnsville swimming coach Alfred "Rocky" O'Neill on October 19, 2018. This second case, in which the reporter claimed that she had been subject to sexual abuse by O'Neill on multiple occasions while she was coached by him in 1997-1998 when she was 16-17 years old, was brought to the attention of the Burnsville Police Department after the first criminal charge was filed against O'Neill on September 13, 2018. Based upon evidentiary issues that arose in this second case following the initial filing of these charges, we determined that we could no longer prove the allegations beyond a reasonable doubt. When that occurs, it is the ethical obligation of a prosecutor to dismiss the case, which we did prior to any trial on January 3, 2019.