

# Detroit lawyer jailed on sex charge

By WILLIAM HART  
Free Press Staff Writer

A 42-year-old Detroit lawyer and former priest accused of sexually fondling a 12-year-old boy in the city's Patton Park pool last month was ordered Friday to stand trial in Recorder's Court on charges of second-degree criminal sexual conduct.

Gerard Vesnaugh, who is facing two similar cases in Detroit plus a third in Hillsdale County, was ordered to jail by Judge Geraldine Bledsoe Ford after he was unable to post a \$50,000 bond.

Ford raised the bond from \$25,000 at the request of Assistant Prosecutor Nancy Alberts, who told the court that Vesnaugh is currently on probation for a similar 1978 conviction in Novi. The Prosecutor's Office has "written statements from seven boys" alleging that the defendant molested them in the same manner, Alberts said.

Ford raised the bond over the objections of Vesnaugh

and his attorney, Albert Kramer. "No one has the right to have five or six cases pending all over the state without people asking, 'Is he a responsible person?'" the judge said.

The 12-year-old in the Patton Park case testified in a closed hearing Friday.

Vesnaugh, who left the priesthood in 1975, faces a probation violation hearing next week in Oakland County, triggered by his arrests in Detroit. He was placed on probation after pleading guilty in 1978 to fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct in a case involving two youths at a riding stable, Alberts said.

Vesnaugh's license to practice law was suspended for 120 days in 1979 after the Novi conviction.

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