

Judge gives man life for rape

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A convicted sex offender was sentenced to life in prison on Wednesday by a Geneva County judge for raping a woman at knifepoint.

Assistant District Attorney Bill Filmore said Circuit Court Judge P.B. McLauchlin gave Jimmy Wells, 34, of Samson, the life sentence after he pleaded guilty to felony first-degree rape earlier this year. Samson police arrested Wells in January 2009. He has been held in the Geneva County Jail on a

\$250,000 bond.

Filmore said Wells faced either life in prison or life in prison without parole at the sentencing hearing because he had three prior felony convictions. Filmore said he argued for life without parole because he'd already prosecuted one rape case against Wells, for which a jury acquitted him. He said prosecutors did not have any DNA in that case, but they did on the more recent charge.

Wells had three prior felony crimes, which Filmore said were first-degree sex abuse, a violation of the

state community notification act and promoting prison contraband.

"I didn't think he needed to be out of prison because he couldn't conform himself to society," Filmore said. "It was a pretty brutal rape. The one thing that really affected me was that she was actually walking to work that day when he grabbed her off the street in broad daylight."

Filmore said the woman was raped at knifepoint inside an abandoned building in Samson.

"She really believed she was about to die," Filmore said.