

# Teacher Guilty In Sodomy Case

By Lisha Gayle

Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

A former history teacher at Bishop DuBourg High School pleaded guilty Thursday to a charge that he sodomized a 16-year-old male student.

The former teacher — Jerome B. Robben, 45 — also pleaded guilty to pornography charges involving videotapes he made of sexual acts among teen-age boys.

Another former teacher at DuBourg, the Rev. James A. Funke, 38, has yet to face charges of deviate sexual assault. Those charges involve two male students and are pending against him in St. Louis County.

Robben and Funke were suspended from their positions when they were arrested in October.

Judge Thomas W. Challis of St. Louis Circuit Court accepted Rob-

ben's pleas of guilty to one count of sodomy and 17 counts of promoting child pornography in the first degree.

The charges involve three victims who were ages 15 to 17 at the time, said Robert A. Margulis, assistant circuit attorney. All three were students or former students at the school, 5850 Eichelberger Street in south St. Louis.

Prosecutors have recommended that Robben serve six years in prison, Margulis said. Challis scheduled sentencing for June 12.

Challis ordered a pre-sentence investigation and asked that the victims and others involved in the case give him their recommendations for Robben's sentence.

Margulis said police had brought the pornography charges against Robben after police found nine videotapes at his home in the 5100 block of

Pennsylvania Avenue.

On the tapes, Robben's voice could be heard directing the boys, Margulis said. Robben's only action shown on tape was to spank the boys, Margulis said.

Authorities found no evidence that Robben had reproduced the tapes or sold them for profit, Margulis said.

In St. Louis County, one count of deviate sexual assault is pending against Robben. Funke faces 10 counts of deviate sexual assault in the county.

Charges brought by the city were for incidents that occurred at Robben's home or another residence in the city, Margulis said. Charges brought by the county involve incidents that occurred in the county, including Funke's rectory at St. Bernadette Church in Lemay.