

Court Used For Adult

The former director of a privately-financed program to provide scholarships for several youths attending Duluth colleges has been convicted in juvenile court of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

David J. Hemmerling, 33, director of New Directions Inc., pleaded guilty to the charge at a recent appearance in the court, and was released without fine or sentence. The file, which normally would be sealed, was released today by a special court order.

Hemmerling was charged with inducing a scholarship recipient to come to Duluth, where, court records show, Hemmerling "did practice sodomy" on the youth.

Hemmerling operated the scholarship program out of his living quarters at the Highland Village Apartments, he has since resigned his post.

He was released without fine or sentence on recommendation of both his attorney and the county attorney, the records show.

Though Hemmerling is an adult, his case was taken to juvenile court as the result of negotiations between his attorney and the county attorney, the record shows.

The case was properly in juvenile court, St. Louis County Atty. Keith Brownell said, because the youth was a minor when he came to Duluth, although he was an adult when the alleged acts occurred.

Brownell said he agreed to take the issue into juvenile court, because, "I felt, rightly or wrongly, that this really wasn't that big a crime. I entered into plea negotiations myself because I felt the program (New Directions, Inc. was of sufficient merit to justify my interest in it rather than going the normal course."

The "normal course", he said, would be to assign the case to one of his assistants, where it would have been tried in district court.

Brownell confirmed the negotiations were largely to avoid publicity on the case, juvenile records normally are not open. However, he said, the arrest record and search warrant in the case are both on record at Duluth Municipal

Court + open to the public