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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**BALTIMORE MAN SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS IMPRISONMENT
FOR FIREARMS OFFENSE**

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Allen F. Loucks, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that today U.S. District Court Judge Catherine C. Blake sentenced James Edward Simms, age 40, of Baltimore City, Maryland to 15 years in prison followed by 3 years supervised release for his conviction of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

On the evening of March 1, 2003, Simms's car overturned as he was driving along Gwynns Falls Parkway in Baltimore City, knocking him unconscious. A paramedic placed Simms in an ambulance and was examining him for injuries when he discovered a fully loaded .32 caliber Smith & Wesson long caliber revolver in the waistband of Simms's pants, which he confiscated and turned over to Baltimore City police officers at the scene. Later, medical personnel at Shock Trauma discovered another 16 rounds of ammunition in one of Simms's pants pockets.

Based upon Simms' prior convictions, Judge Blake found that Simms qualified as an armed career criminal under the federal firearms laws and sentenced him to a mandatory sentence of 15 years incarceration without parole.

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jefferson M. Gray.