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Infamous Retriever Euthanized

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WATERTOWN -- One of Connecticut's best-known dogs - for all the wrong reasons - was euthanized Thursday after he bit and severely injured a 7-year-old boy.

Max, a golden retriever who in November 2003 bit the 12-year-old son of the family that owned the dog, caused severe facial and skull injuries to another youngster Thursday afternoon, Watertown police Sgt. David Schepis said.

Schepis did not identify the boy or provide details of Thursday's attack. He said the boy will need cosmetic surgery.

After the 2003 attack, Max spent time in a pound. His owners, the Pyon family, appealed a town order to euthanize their pet after their 12-year-old son was bitten when he startled the dog with a hug as it slept.

The case drew statewide attention, with "Save Max" signs appearing in pet stores and on vehicles and an online letter-writing campaign urging people to support sparing the dog's life. The attention prompted a state law that speeds up the appeals process over dogs.

The decision to euthanize Max involved the local animal warden and state officials. The family did not object this time.

"This is a case that's received a lot of attention in the past and, as a result, with this case we want to make sure that everything was done in the most expeditious way possible," Schepis said.

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