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Solicitor, Ninth Judicial Circuit

20 YEAR PRISON SENTENCE OF FAMILY MEMBER IN CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE CASE

For Immediate Release
November 1, 2025

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Charleston, S.C.— Solicitor Scarlett Wilson announced that Sheldon Bennett, 54, of North Charleston, has been sentenced to 20 years in a child sexual abuse case. Bennett chose to plead guilty to seven counts of Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, 2nd Degree, prior to going forward with a jury trial set to begin on Monday, November 3. The Honorable Jennifer McCoy sentenced Bennett to 20 years in prison, giving credit for time served on house arrest. The charge of Criminal Sexual Conduct, 2nd Degree carries a maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment.

Solicitor Wilson stated, “Delayed disclosure cases are often tough to prove but when victims work with us, we can get results. In this case, the Victims were relieved and comforted by the guilty plea. Judge McCoy’s compassion for and recognition of their pain helped assure them it was worth it to come forward and to finally close this chapter.”

In June 2021, one adult Victim notified law enforcement of sexual abuse committed by the defendant when she was a child, from the ages of approximately three to twelve years old. The abuse was committed routinely and when the defendant, a family member, would take care of her. During the course of the investigation, it was learned that the defendant also sexually abused another family member, from the ages of approximately five to fourteen years old.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant Solicitors Lauren Frierson and Andrew Hulshult. Frierson said, “These Victims were forced to endure years of horrific sexual abuse and threats at the hands of someone they loved and trusted. Children who experience this type of abuse at such a young age often do not even recognize it as abuse, which leads to their confusion and delayed disclosure of the abuse. We understand this is only a piece of their ongoing recovery and appreciate the Court’s recognition of this as evidenced by the strong sentence.”

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