

News Release

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Pedophile sentenced to Thirty-Five years in prison.

Moncks Corner, S.C. – Solicitor Scarlett Wilson announced that a Berkeley County Jury found Dale Edward Hicks guilty of sexually abusing a young child on Friday after a three day trial in Moncks Corner. Judge Carmen Mullen sentenced the defendant to thirty five years on Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor and fifteen years on Committing a Lewd Act Upon a Child. The sentences will run concurrently. Solicitor Wilson stated, “We are pleased that the jury really focused on the child’s testimony and that the judge gave such a strong sentence. These are the most challenging cases that we try, which is why our Special Victim’s Unit is critical—it helps children through the grueling process of the criminal justice system.”

The eleven year old victim testified about years of sexual abuse at the hands of the defendant which occurred at his Berkeley County home. There was no DNA evidence available due to the delay in the child’s disclosure, but the State relied on experts to educate the jury about the dynamics of child sexual abuse and the difficulty in collecting DNA after a time lapse. The abuse began when the victim was five years old and continued until a disclosure was made at the age of nine. “This case boiled down to the testimony of one very brave child” said Assistant Solicitor, Anne Williams. “We knew if the victim was able to get through the testimony that the jury would see the truth; we are just so proud of this child and hopeful that the family can finally move past this.”

The defendant had a prior record of an armed robbery, theft and assault in the past. The victim had been frequently left in the defendant’s care but began to find excuses to avoid going there. She finally disclosed the abuse when she feared the defendant was abusing her two year old sister. The Berkeley County Sheriff’s Department conducted a thorough investigation and also arranged for the child to have a forensic interview at the Dorchester Children’s Center. In addition to the child’s testimony at trial, the jury viewed a tape of that interview which was conducted when the victim was nine years old. Criminal Sexual Conduct carries a sentencing range of twenty five years to life while the lewd Act charge carries a maximum of fifteen years. The fifty-two old year defendant will have to serve eighty-five percent of his sentence before being parole eligible.