

News Release

For Immediate Release
April 11, 2012

Jury convicts former City of Charleston Recreation Department Coach of 1st Degree Criminal Sexual Conduct with Minor

Solicitor Scarlett A. Wilson announced that a Charleston County jury found Keith Gadsden (DOB: 2/15/63) guilty of 1st Degree Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor for molesting one of his former basketball team players between 1985-1987 when the child was 7 to 8 years old. The jury deliberated for approximately forty-five minutes Wednesday morning before handing down their verdict. Judge Roger Young sentenced Mr. Gadsden to 30 years in prison, the maximum term allowed under the statute. Wilson stated, "Both the victim and Detective Melvin Magwood of the City of Charleston Police Department brought us strong evidence. Delayed reporting cases are among the toughest we have but their resolve to get the truth out made this verdict possible."

In court, the victim testified that the defendant asked him if he wanted to be a starter on the basketball team. The victim thought the defendant was taking him to the gym to practice basketball, but instead the defendant had the child take his pants off and lay on the floor of the bathroom while the defendant sexually assaulted him.

As an adult, the victim returned to the City of Charleston Recreation Department as an employee. The victim finally came forward in 2009 after he realized that the defendant had returned to work at the Recreation Department as well and that the victim's step-son was hanging out with the defendant.

Once the victim came forward to law enforcement, Detective Magwood arranged for the victim to confront and record the defendant about the past sexual abuse. In the recording which was played for the jury, the defendant asks the victim not to put him in jail for something he did 30 years ago and that he doesn't "deal" like that anymore because he has a girlfriend, a wife and babies.

The victim described how the sexual assault had taken a toll on his life and that he still had nightmares about it. In the audio recording, the defendant admits that he knew he messed up and that he had been like a father figure to the victim.

The victim's mother testified that her son quit basketball as a child and became withdrawn, but he would never tell her what happened.

Assistant Solicitor Elizabeth Gordon stated, "It took a great deal of courage for the victim to come forward with the secret he had held so long. It was clear from the beginning how what happened to him as a child had profoundly affected his life in ways the victim wasn't even aware. We are thankful for the jury's verdict and that Judge Young saw fit to sentence Mr. Gadsden to the maximum term. I hope it has brought some peace to the victim and his family knowing that the defendant will finally have to answer for the crime he committed."

###