

## Former Spotsylvania man gets 12 years for repeated molestation that tore family apart

Keith Epps

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**A** former Spotsylvania man whose molestation of two young relatives has ripped a family apart was ordered Monday to serve 12 years in prison.

Allan Dale Witham, 72, was previously convicted of three counts of aggravated sexual battery and two counts of indecent liberties. As part of a plea agreement, 12 years was the maximum time he could have received in the Spotsylvania cases; Witham is already serving five years for related charges in Georgia.

According to the evidence presented by prosecutor Alice Sheridan, one victim was 5 and 6 and the other was 8 and 9 when the attacks took place over an extended period of time at Witham's residence in the Lake Anna area of Spotsylvania. The girls are first cousins.

The abuse came to light in March of 2016, when the older girl told her mother that Witham had been "sexing" her. The child explained the Witham had repeatedly touched her private parts and made her touch his. The child explained that she didn't come forward earlier because Witham had convinced her not to.

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The mother immediately called Witham, court records state, and told his wife about the allegations. When confronted, Witham went into his bedroom and locked the door. He eventually came out but had a gun in his hand.

After being convinced to put the gun down, court records state, Witham apologized for what he'd done to the child and said he didn't know why he'd done it. He asked the girl's mother to wait a few days before reporting him to police.

Detective Kelly Mills' investigation resulted in the identification of the younger victim. As was the case with the first victim, the girl told police about repeated attacks that had taken place in Witham's home office known as the "Redskin Room" because of extensive Washington Redskin football memorabilia in there.

Numerous family members were in Spotsylvania Circuit Court for an emotionally charged sentencing hearing. Parents of both victims urged Judge Ricardo Rigual to give Witham 12 years.

The father of one girl said Witham's actions have "shattered our world. He has brought a lot of anger and sadness to our home."

The man said he has taught his children about "stranger danger," but never thought that would apply to someone so close to the family.

The mother of the older victim said, "No words can express what this has done to our children. You stole their innocence in the most cruel and perverted way."

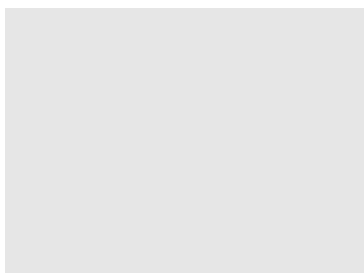
Defense attorney Jonathan David put on several witnesses, including a priest, who vouched for Witham's good character and willingness to help others. There was an audible gasp in the courtroom when one witness said in response to a question from Sheridan that she would still let Witham babysit her grandchildren.

Bernadette Witham, Witham's wife of nearly 50 years, said she still does not believe Witham did what he's admitted to and expressed hope that the family might reconcile.

Allan Witham made a statement in which he expressed remorse and asked for forgiveness from the victims and their parents. He said he had "back slid" in his relationship with Jesus and "succumbed to the temptations of Satan."

Rigual replied that Witham "did more than succumb. You embraced that evil." The judge added that Witham should thank God that the plea agreement only calls for a maximum of 12 years.

Witham has already been convicted of two counts of child molestation in Gwinnett County, Ga., where one victim lives. He will finish his sentence there before being brought back to serve the Spotsylvania sentence.



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