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### **DUVAL COUNTY JURY FINDS WILLIAMSON GUILTY OF CAPITAL SEXUAL BATTERY**

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that a Duval County jury found Vernon Williamson guilty of four counts of Capital Sexual Battery. After the verdict, the Honorable Mark Borello sentenced Williamson to four consecutive life sentences for his crimes against children.

On Sept. 16, 2020, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office received reports of multiple sexual batteries that occurred at a church off Old Kings Road in Jacksonville dating back decades. The crimes occurred between 1976 and 2001. Victims came forward to report ongoing sexual abuse by the head pastor Paul Dyal, the church landlord Vernon Williamson, and church member Jerome Teschendorf.

In the late 90s, a family with children was living on the church property. Williamson was the landlord, and, at that time, he was in his 60s. Williamson assumed custody of the children to facilitate access to the victim. Multiple times, while Williamson was watching the children, he would sexually abuse and rape the victim. Two additional victims of Williamson were also identified during the investigation and testified at trial.

Dyal and Teschendorf are being tried separately.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and was prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Adair Newman and Marleigh Gulliford.