

WELLFORD MAN RECEIVES 75-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE FOR LEWD ACTS ON CHILDREN

A Wellford man received 75-year prison sentence today for molesting four children between the ages of 3-13.

Paul Mash, 44, pleaded guilty to five counts of lewd act on a minor. Circuit Judge Mark Hayes issued 5 consecutive 15-year prison sentences, the maximum penalty allowed under state law.

The crimes occurred between December 2002 and May 2005 while Mash served as a volunteer for his Greenville County church. He cared for the children at his Wellford-area home.

The mother of the 3-year-old victim reported the crimes to the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office in January. Mash admitted to inappropriately touching the boy on two separate occasions in an interview with deputies. The other victims were identified through assessments at the Children's Advocacy Center. At one point during the investigation, Mash admitted to taking photos of 10 sleeping boys who were either naked or scantily clothed.

One of the victims, the 13-year-old boy, spoke during the guilty plea. The victim's mother and the parents of the other victims added their comments during the proceeding.

Mash's criminal record includes a 1995 conviction on five counts of lewd act with a minor. He received a 10-year prison sentence that was suspended to 3 years of service and 5 years probation. His name was listed on the sex offender registry.

"This is a horrendous crime," Assistant Solicitor Susan Reese said. "He never should have been in a position of being allowed to care for children considering his criminal history."

"Judge Hayes, with his sentence today, kept any other children from having contact with the defendant," Reese added. "There is no telling how many lives this decision will impact."