

## **GRANDFATHER QUICKLY CONVICTED OF MOLESTING MULTIPLE GRANDDAUGHTERS**

### **State of Georgia v. Thurman Coleman 2021-SU-CR-749**

On Wednesday, September 21, 2022, Thurman Carl Coleman, a 79 year old man from Ringgold, Georgia was convicted by a Catoosa County jury for the charges of Aggravated Sexual Battery, Aggravated Child Molestation (2 counts), Incest (2 counts), and Child Molestation (5 counts). The evidence presented over the course of a three day trial, presided over by Judge Ralph Van Pelt, Jr., showed that Coleman engaged in a pattern of molesting his young granddaughters for over a decade. Coleman's family, including his son, daughter-in-law, and their children moved into his residence to assist him with care after his wife passed away in 2011. The family moved into their own residence in the summer of 2021 and shortly thereafter, two of Coleman's granddaughters disclosed that he had been molesting them for several years. One of the victims disclosed the abuse to a counselor at a summer camp, and another victim disclosed to her mother. Coleman had been exposing himself to the victims, digitally penetrating the children, and performing oral sex on them on a regular basis for a number of years when the family was living with and caring for Coleman. The Catoosa County Sheriff's Office was notified of the disclosure of abuse and an investigation was conducted, wherein the victims were interviewed at the Children's Advocacy Center in Ft. Oglethorpe.

Over a three day trial, both victims bravely took witness stand to confront Coleman and described in heartbreaking detail the sexual abuse he had inflicted on them for years. One of the victims detailed how Coleman would take her for ice cream and then demand she submit to his abuse as "payment" for the ice cream. Evidence was also presented of Coleman previously molesting another family member. The jury deliberated less than an hour before convicting Coleman.

The State of Georgia was represented by Assistant District Attorney Deanna Reisman during a three day trial. Victim Advocate Amber Armstrong provided invaluable care and assistance to the victims and their family during the course of the trial. The case was investigated by Detective Brittany Gilleland with the Catoosa County Sheriff's Office. District Attorney Arnt praised the team effort in prosecuting this case. "We are proud to work with dedicated professionals like Holly Kittle at the Children's Advocacy Center and Detective Brittany Gilleland of the Catoosa County Sheriff's Department. Ms. Reisman worked diligently to prepare and present a powerful and compelling case to the jury which enabled them to quickly reach a verdict and bring an end to the Defendant's sexual predation. This case is another example of my office's dedication to pursuing justice for the most vulnerable victims. If you choose to molest children in the Lookout Mountain Circuit by prepared for a very long stay in a Georgia Prison."

Coleman remains in the Catoosa County Jail awaiting sentencing scheduled for October 26, 2022. He faces a minimum sentence of life with at least twenty-five (25) years without parole.

