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Following Oregon Supreme Court ruling, jury convicts pastor of sexually assaulting a child

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced that a jury convicted North Clackamas Bible Community Senior Pastor Michael Sperou, 69, of two counts of unlawful sexual penetration in the first degree for using his finger to penetrate the vagina of a child, who was under the age of 12, on two separate occasions between 1993 and 1996.

Multnomah County Deputy District Attorneys Melissa Marrero and Charles Mickley prosecuted this case.

In 2015, the court imposed a 20 year prison sentence after a previously empaneled jury convicted Sperou. However, in June 2019, the Oregon Supreme Court reversed the convictions and remanded the case back to Multnomah County Circuit Court.

The second trial in State v. Sperou commenced on January 13, 2020 with jury selection. During the state's presentation of evidence, the victim named in the indictment testified about the abuse she suffered at the hands of Sperou, who was in a position of trust and authority over her due to his role as senior pastor in the church she was born into.

Furthermore, two other women testified that Sperou also sexually assaulted them while they were children within the church. Due to the statute of limitations, the state was barred from prosecuting Sperou for those criminal offenses.

According to court documents: Sperou serves as pastor of a group – founded in 1980 – that initially identified itself as the Southeast Bible Church. The members gathered and lived among rental homes they shared. The group now calls itself the North Clackamas Bible Community. Sperou has led the group since its formation.

The jury found that Sperou committed the crime of unlawful sexual penetration in the first degree against a child who was under the age of 12 on two separate incidents.

As part of its evidence presentation, the state showed Sperou had a sexual interest in children; that he allowed minors to spend time with him in his bed; that he provided alcohol to minors; that he emotionally and financially manipulated church members; that he abused alcohol; and controlled nearly every aspect of church members lives, including how they raised their children.

Prior to closing arguments, the court granted a judgment of acquittal on Count 1 of the indictment, which charged Sperou with one count of unlawful sexual penetration in the first degree because of a legal technicality discovered by the state and then presented to the defense counsel and the court.

Multnomah County Circuit Court Judge Andrew M. Lavin ordered that Sperou be taken into custody pending sentencing, which is scheduled for January 31, 2020 at 9:30 a.m.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office will have no additional comment on this case.

Resources:

- [Multnomah County District Attorney's Office Victim Assistance Program](#): 503-988-3222
- [National Sexual Assault Hotline](#): 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
- [Call to Safety](#): 503-235-5333

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