

JOE GRIFFITH LAW FIRM, LLC
Joseph P. Griffith, Jr., Esquire
Seven State Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29401
843.225.5563 (tel)
843.810.8172 (cell)
843.722.6254 (fax)
joegriffithjr@hotmail.com
www.joegriffith.com

PRESS RELEASE

TO: ALL MEDIA OUTLETS
FROM: Joe Griffith Law Firm, LLC
DATE: November 15, 2011
SUBJECT: Berkeley County Judge Awards Over \$14 Million in
Child Sexual Molestation Case
Kelly Waldron Bowles v. Donald Baxter; Case No. 2009-CP-08-3509
Berkeley County Court of Common Pleas

Attorney Joseph P. Griffith, Jr. announced today that Circuit Court Judge Stephanie McDonald has awarded plaintiff Kelly Waldron Bowles over \$14 Million Dollars in damages against her former step-father arising from repeated acts of sex abuse and sexual molestation against Mrs. Bowles during her childhood. Judge McDonald presided over the non-jury trial in August, 2011, in the Berkeley County Court of Common Pleas. A copy of the Order is attached hereto. This is believed to be one of the largest trial verdicts in South Carolina for a child molestation case.

The Court found defendant Donald Baxter guilty of sexual assault, sexual battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress (sometimes called the tort of "outrage"), and gross negligence. The Court awarded the plaintiff actual damages as follows:

Past and future pain and suffering:	\$3,500,000
Past and future mental anguish	\$3,500,000
<u>Future medical expenses</u>	<u>\$ 162,145</u>
Total Actual Damages	\$7,162,145

The Court also awarded the plaintiff \$7,000,000 in punitive damages against the defendant. The Court found that punitive damages were justified under the Gamble v. Stevenson factors.

Griffith stated that the "award cannot replace the childhood and innocence that Kelly lost. Kelly suffered unimaginable trauma during her youth, and she still suffers adverse consequences of her step-father's despicable acts." Griffith further noted: "I'm proud of Kelly for standing up for her rights

and fighting for justice. She was truly inspirational in court, and, hopefully, her courage will inspire other victims to speak out and fight against child molesters.”

In 2003, defendant Baxter had pleaded guilty in General Sessions Court of assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature by taking indecently liberties against the plaintiff. He received a six year sentence of imprisonment, which was suspended upon 2 years’ probation.

Griffith warned all parents and care-givers to be extra vigilant against child sexual predators. “As we can see with the allegations of child abuse which appear to have occurred at Penn State and the local charges that have been brought against former Citadel summer camp counselor Mr. ReVile, child sexual molestations are a nationwide problem. Hopefully, the Court’s award to Kelly will act to deter future potential child sex predators by showing them that their pocketbook will be affected as well as their liberty.”

Griffith is a former federal prosecutor who handles civil and criminal litigation. He has offices in Charleston and Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina. Jerry N. Theos, another Charleston attorney, assisted in the prosecution of the case.