

## Ariton Man Convicted of Child Sex Abuse

By Sarah Gilbert

A 63-year-old Ariton man was convicted of sexually abusing a four-year-old girl in Dale County Circuit Court last week.

Darrell Snellgrove was charged with first degree rape and first degree sexual abuse of the girl, who attended the Sandy Creek Daycare, which was owned and operated by Snellgrove and his wife for more than 25 years before it closed some six months ago.

Assistant District Attorney Bill Filmore said it took the jury less than four hours to return a verdict of guilty on the sexual abuse charge, and a not guilty verdict on the first degree rape charge. First degree sexual abuse is a Class C felony and carries a sentence of one to 10 years in prison.

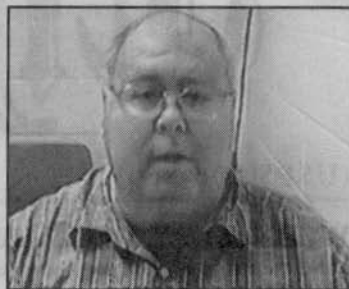
Circuit Judge P.B. McLaughlin continued

Snellgrove's \$50,000 bond while he awaits sentencing, which will be in a few months.

"God does a miracle when we get a conviction on these types of cases because the crimes are done in secret and we have to begin with the testimony of a four-year-old victim," said Filmore, who tried the case. "It takes a team effort to bring forth the corroborating evidence the jury needs to find the defendant guilty."

The charges were the first ever filed against Snellgrove.

Filmore credited Sabra Parker with the Department of Human Resources, Hal Cox with the Dale County Sheriff's Office, Liz Martin of the Child Advocacy Center, and Cindy Woodham of Flower's Hospital for the conviction, saying that with their help, "we were able to



**Darrell Snellgrove**

show that the little girl was consistent with her testimony and support her testimony with physical evidence."

Filmore also said he also appreciates the jury's effort in looking at the evidence seriously "in their search for the truth."

"There is no way to undo the damage that this little girl had to suffer, but this district attorney's office, under Kirke Adams, will always do all we can to protect the innocence of our youth in Dale County."