

Former Alexandria officer's incest convictions upheld

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The Louisiana 3rd Circuit Court of Appeal has affirmed the incest convictions of a retired Alexandria police officer, but it ordered a review of part of his sentencing.

Walter Urena, 66, was found guilty on five of six counts of aggravated incest in a jury trial in 2013. He was sentenced to two consecutive 20-year terms and three concurrent 10-year prison terms.

Urena, who was arrested in July 2011, appealed the convictions and the sentences on the grounds of insufficient evidence and that the two 20-year sentences were excessive.

On May 7, the appellate court sent the case back to the trial court to reconsider the consecutive 20-year sentences.

According to the appellate court's opinion, written by Judge Billy Howard Ezell, Urena "is not one of the worst of offenders when it comes to child sexual abuse."

The opinion also states that "while the victim in the current case was a minor, five or six when the abuse began, it did not escalate from touching and ended when the victim told him to stop. Without sufficient justification, we find that the two consecutive sentences totaling forty years is nothing more than cruel and unusual punishment."

Rapides Parish Assistant District Attorney Monique Metoyer prosecuted the case.

She said prosecuting a public figure, such as a former police officer, carries with it a different level of expectations.

"There's a level of disappointment you don't have otherwise," she said. "It's almost incomprehensible. You think you know someone, and you don't. It's a total violation, and it's a selfish, selfish act."