

Chair of NC Baptist Children's Homes resigns after arrest

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WASHINGTON (RNS)—A Baptist leader in North Carolina resigned last week after he and his wife were charged with three counts of felony animal cruelty and a misdemeanor offense of communicating threats.

James David “Jim” Goldston III, 71, and his wife, Agnes, 73, are accused of poisoning their neighbor's three dogs. Two of the dogs, Labrador retrievers, died. A veterinarian confirmed all three dogs were poisoned, according to the Wake County Sheriff's Office.

Goldston had been chairman of the board of trustees for the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, a faith-based nonprofit. He also was a board member of an animal rescue organization.

The Goldstons also are accused of threatening their neighbor. A handwritten letter tossed into their neighbor's yard read “Your Daughter is Next. B Careful,” arrest warrants obtained by *The News & Observer* newspaper showed.

Goldston had served on and off the board of the Baptist Children's Home of North Carolina since 1990, a spokesperson for the Baptist State Convention said. He resigned as chair on May 21.

In a statement, Goldston said that he and his wife had been falsely accused.

“After more than 35 years of involvement with Baptist Children's Homes of NC, and personally investing and helping raise millions of dollars to further this great ministry, I sadly hereby resign as a BCH Trustee,” Goldston wrote in a statement to the *Biblical Recorder*, the Baptist State Convention

media site.

“My wife and I have been falsely accused of some horrible acts and I do not want this to be a distraction or hindrance to the work done on behalf of BCH as the truth plays out within the justice system.”

The Christian children’s home, which is affiliated with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, operates group homes for children as well as a foster and adoption ministry.

The Goldstons attended Bay Leaf Baptist Church in Raleigh. The couple runs a family foundation that contributed \$40,000 in 2019 to various Baptist churches, as well as Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The foundation’s biggest charitable gift—\$10,000—was to Saving Grace Animals for Adoption in Wake Forest, N.C. The Goldston’s daughter, Molly, is the founder and owner of Saving Grace.

James Goldston also served on the animal rescue’s board since at least 2017 but has since resigned, *The News & Observer* reported.

The Goldstons each posted a \$30,000 bond.

The couple was allegedly having a dispute with their neighbor, Philip Ridley, according to local news reporters. One of those letters, shared with WRAL News, read, “If one or both of these dogs put their paws on my property I am going to blow their brains out.”