

Patterson and seminary dismissed from Rollins abuse case

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HOUSTON (BP)—Paige Patterson and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary have been dismissed from the abuse related case involving Paul Pressler.

Patterson and the seminary reportedly reached a settlement with Gerald Duane Rollins.



Former Judge Paul Pressler, who played a leading role in wresting control of the Southern Baptist Convention from moderates starting in 1979, poses for a photo in his home in Houston on May 30, 2004. (AP Photo /Michael Stravato / Distributed by RNS)

Pressler, a former SBC Executive Committee member, former SBC first vice president (in 2002 and 2003) and former Texas legislator and judge, is being sued by Gerald Duane Rollins.

In the suit originally filed in October 2017, Rollins alleges Pressler raped him in 1980, when Rollins was 14 years old and attending a Bible study at Pressler's church. According to the affidavit, Pressler continued to rape Rollins, "over the course of the next 24 years or so" as Rollins progressed into his 30s.

The case had been dismissed in 2018 on grounds that the statute of limitations had expired, but the Appellate Court ruled in 2021 Rollins had suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, thus modifying the statute of limitations for reporting the alleged abuse.

Rollins is seeking \$1 million in damages.

The case also names Pressler's wife Nancy, Jared Woodfill, Woodfill Law Firm, the Southern Baptist Convention and First Baptist Church in Houston as defendants.

The terms of the settlement were not disclosed.

"Dr. Patterson is grateful that he has been removed from a suit that he should never have been included," J. Shelby Sharpe, Patterson's attorney, said in a statement to *The Tennessean* in Nashville. "No money was paid on Dr. Patterson's behalf or by him to have him non-suited."

Southwestern Seminary declined to comment.

The case is scheduled to go to trial on May 15.