



Ex-minister won't face rape charges

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The 7th Circuit Solicitor's Office dropped rape and kidnapping charges against a former Pauline minister Thursday. Prosecutors made the decision after meeting with the 37-year-old Pauline woman who accused the Rev. Mark Arrington of assaulting her last year. Concerns about the woman's ability to testify credibly against Arrington prompted prosecutors to drop the charges. According to testimony in Arrington's August preliminary hearing, the woman had a history of psychiatric problems. Arrington was charged in May with first-degree criminal sexual conduct and kidnapping. "They (prosecutors) realized they weren't going to get that case to a jury," Arrington's attorney, Kevin Miller of Spartanburg, said. "It was ridiculous. This man's life was ruined." The woman accused Arrington in May of raping her on April 9 and forcing her to perform oral sex. At the hearing, she said Arrington tried to have intercourse with her but did not. Arrington, 45, is former pastor at Friendship Baptist Church, which the woman attended. After his arrest on the charges of sexual misconduct, the woman accused Arrington of harassing her, and he was charged with intimidating a witness. All charges were dropped Thursday after Arrington and his Greenwood attorney, C. Rauch Wise, met with 7th Circuit Assistant Solicitor Beverly Jones. Miller said Wise and Arrington came to his office Thursday afternoon to tell him all the charges had been dropped. Deputy Solicitor Trent Pruett confirmed Thursday evening that the charges had been dropped. Jones could not be reached for comment Thursday. After his arrest, Arrington and his family left Spartanburg and returned to the Abbeville area, where he grew up. "His whole life's been on hold," Miller said. At the hearing in August, Miller said the woman had fabricated the assault story to ruin Arrington's life because he confronted her about a lesbian relationship. The woman denied Arrington's claims, and Arrington maintained his innocence throughout the case. "I hope he'll be able to go on with his life," Miller said. "He won't be able to do it in Spartanburg." Original Atex file name: AIRY1

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