

Dr. William Ayres: Timeline of a notorious sex abuse case

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Dr. William Ayres, once a pillar of the child psychiatry community, died April 20 at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville, three years into an eight-year sentence for molesting five young boys during physical exams in his San Mateo office. Here is a timeline recounting the legal saga that led to Ayres' imprisonment in 2013.

1960s

Ayres allegedly molests his first victim, according to the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office.

1987-2002

Four alleged victims report to San Mateo County authorities that they were molested by Ayres. No charges are brought.

2002

Ayres receives a lifetime achievement award from the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors hailing his work "to improve the lives of children and adolescents."

2004

A former Ayres patient files a lawsuit claiming the psychiatrist molested him six times when he was 13 years old.

2006

San Mateo police seize Ayres' patient records in a hunt for potential victims.

2007

The District Attorney's Office files criminal charges. Ayres pleads not guilty to committing 21 counts of lewd and lascivious acts on seven children

under the age of 14. The number of charges is eventually reduced.

July 2009

A mistrial is declared after the jury hangs on nine felony molestation charges.

August 2009

The DA's office announces it will retry the case.

March 2010

Ayres' second criminal trial is delayed after the psychiatrist's attorney raises doubts about Ayres' mental competence. The defense argues Ayres suffers from Alzheimer's-related dementia.

June 2011

A San Mateo County jury hangs 8-4 in a trial over Ayres' mental competency.

August 2011

The DA's office decides against pursuing a second competency trial.

September 2011

San Mateo County Superior Court Judge John Grandsaert orders Ayres to Napa State Hospital for treatment and evaluation.

May 2012

Prosecutor Melissa McKowan argues Ayres is not cooperating with doctors.

October 2012

After a four-day trial, Judge Grandsaert finds that Ayres is mentally competent to withstand a second trial on sex abuse charges. He concludes the psychiatrist was misleading Napa State Hospital doctors in order to avoid prosecution.

May 2013

Ayres pleads no contest to eight felony counts of lewd and lascivious acts with five children under the age of 14.

June 2013

The Board of Supervisors rescinds Ayres' lifetime achievement award.

August 2013

Ayres is sentenced to eight years in prison.

April 20, 2016

Ayres, 84, dies of natural causes at a prison hospital in Vacaville.