

## Abuse lawsuit cites Episcopal church, school

### County man tells of alleged sexual assault by a coach when he was a boy

By DALE LEZON Copyright 2008 Houston Chronicle

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A Harris County man and former student at an Episcopal school in Houston has sued the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Texas, alleging he was sexually abused by a school coach who was later convicted on multiple charges of sexual abuse of a child.

The suit, filed in state district court late Wednesday, states that officials with Holy Spirit Episcopal School and the diocese did nothing even though they had received complaints that the former boys athletic director and coach had inappropriately touched students and sent them sexually suggestive text messages.

The lawsuit states that the coach sexually assaulted the plaintiff.

Diocese officials said they could not comment on the lawsuit because they had not seen it.

Named in the suit are the school, the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit Houston, the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Texas, the Protestant Episcopal Church Council of the Diocese of Texas and Carolyn Trozzo, the school's former head.

Trozzo could not be reached for comment.

The coach, Christopher Williams, 35, is not named in the suit, but he pleaded guilty to multiple charges of sexual abuse of a child related to incidents at Holy Spirit School and to possessing child pornography.

"This is a case not necessarily about criminal responsibility, but this is about civil responsibility," said Derek Hollingsworth, the plaintiff's attorney.

The suit alleges that school and diocese officials were negligent when they did not investigate complaints about Williams, who was hired in 1999. He left in 2003 and was hired at a school in Las Vegas.

"We have information that Ms. Trozzo and the school had complaints about the coach and his behavior with boys," Hollingsworth said. "They failed to properly investigate those complaints and remedy them."

The man alleging the abuse was between 11 and 13 years old at the time of the attacks. He now is 20.

The Houston Chronicle is not identifying him because he says he is a victim of sexual abuse.

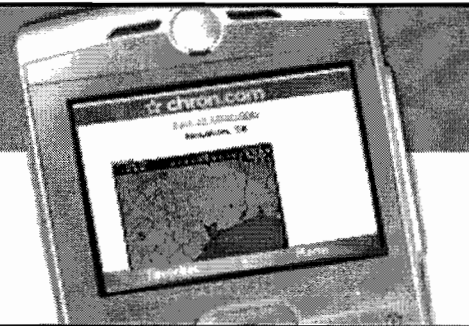
### 2 prison sentences


Williams was arrested in Las Vegas in December 2003 on multiple federal and state child pornography and sexual abuse charges,

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according to the lawsuit. He pleaded guilty.

A Houston federal judge sentenced him in 2005 to 12 1/2 years in prison and lifetime supervision on charges of receiving and possessing child pornography.

He also was sentenced to 12 1/2 years in state prison on multiple charges of sexual abuse of a child in Harris County stemming from allegations made at Holy Spirit, law enforcement officials have said.

His state and federal sentences will run concurrently, they added. He must register as a sex offender.

The suit requests no specific dollar amount but seeks exemplary and punitive damages as well as court and attorney fees.

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