

Saturday, November 18, 2000

Pardon asked for preacher

LOUISA, Ky. — The attorney for an elderly Baptist preacher convicted of sexually abusing boys from his congregation has asked Gov. Paul Patton to pardon his client.

Eldred "Bud" Adams confirmed that he had made the request on behalf of 83-year-old Gallie Isaac, who is serving a 25-year sentence in a nursing facility at the Kentucky State Reformatory in LaGrange.

Unlike most communities that fight to keep convicted sex abusers out, numerous Louisa residents have stepped forward in support of Mr. Isaac, a longtime pastor of Isaac Park Free Baptist Church who now has to use a wheelchair.

Lawrence County Jailer Farris Bush, who took Mr. Isaac into custody following his conviction in 1996, is among those supporters.

"What could a man at his age do?" Mr. Bush asked. "I don't see how he could be any harm to anyone. Let the man out of prison."

The state attorney general's office, which prosecuted Mr. Isaac, disagrees.

Investigators charged that Mr. Isaac invited boys to spend nights on his farm, where he would use a gorilla costume and a coffin to frighten the boys into his bed. Eight victims came forward to testify that Mr. Isaac had fondled them.

"It was all made up," Mr. Isaac said in a telephone interview Friday. "At the trial, I pointed my finger right at the investigators and said they were the ones who helped do it. I'm in here for nothing. Those boys were hired to do what they did."

The special prosecutor on the case, Luke Morgan, has said he wants Mr. Isaac to serve at least half of his sentence before being considered for release. Mr. Isaac would be nearing 100 years old at that time.