

Pastor Found Guilty of Taking Over \$100,000 From Elderly Woman

A North Carolina pastor was found guilty of embezzling more than \$123,000 from an elderly woman five years ago, according to a district attorney.

Thomas Steele, 63, of Concord was convicted on four counts of exploitation of an elderly adult as well as a charge of embezzlement of more than \$100,000, District Attorney Scott Thomas said in a news release on Wednesday.

The 85-year-old victim testified in a Pamlico County court that she didn't authorize Steele to take her money and did not know until much later that he had used his access to her accounts and a power-of-attorney she had given him to take her life's savings, according to the news release.

Bank records showed that in 2015, the money was embezzled from the victim in the 13 months following her husband's death, the news release said. Thomas noted that suspicious activities were noticed by a relative and reported to law enforcement.

Steele, who was convicted last Friday, was sentenced to 73 to 100 months in prison and ordered to pay restitution of \$123,367. {eo}

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