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## Graham Pleads Guilty; Judge Orders Removal Of Boarders

By NICHOLAS HANCOCK  
Editor

Mildred Graham, operator of Graham's Boarding Home, pleaded guilty to a December 1981 charge of operating a rest home for the aged and disabled without a state license Wednesday in Madison County District Court.

As a result of a plea bargain between the state and the defense, Judge Robert H. Lacey sentenced Graham, 56, to six months in jail but deferred the sentence and placed the defendant on supervised probation for three years and ordered her to meet several conditions while on probation.

Graham, who faced a maximum two-year sentence on the charge, was also ordered to pay a \$200 fine and court costs, in addition to being ordered to cooperate with the local Department of Social Services and state agencies in carrying out the terms of the plea bargain.

Those terms included removing all aged and disabled residents from the Graham Boarding Home in the Sandy Mush area within 10 days and to stop

operating the establishment as a rest home.

DDS and state Division of Facility Services officials went to the home Thursday to determine which residents would have to be removed and relocated to licensed facilities.

The terms also stipulated that the home would be monitored regularly over the next three years by DSS and DFS officials, and that Graham would have to get written approval from DSS and DFS before placing any person in the Madison County facility. Graham will also have to furnish DSS and state officials a list every six months of residents boarding at the home during her probation period.

The December charge stemmed from an investigation of the home conducted in August 1981 by DSS and state officials who said they found several residents in need of medical and high-skill care at the facility composed of

one house and six trailers.

Testimony at Wednesday's trial showed cases of residents deprived of food, clothing, and medication and others secretly sent to the rest home from another in Buncombe County.

Assistance District Attorney Forrest Ball dismissed two similar misdemeanor charges in exchange for Graham's guilty plea. She had entered a plea of not guilty in the January 1982 term of District Court.

Graham did not testify during the two-hour trial.

The court case drew considerable attention locally after a 57-year-old resident wandered from the rest home on Nov. 30 and died. Dean Roger's body was found on Dec. 4 and the state filed charges against Graham on Dec. 7. The warrant accused Graham of operating the facility without a license on Nov. 1.

Graham had operated the rest home for 17 years and testimony Wednesday showed that relatives of residents had

complained over a period of years of mistreatment and mismanagement at the facility.

Graham Boarding Home had been the subject of "a number of investigations" over the past 11 years, according to Elaine Armstrong, head of the Group Care Facilities Branch of the North Carolina Department of Human Resources.

"Complaint reports were received from another state agency," Ms. Armstrong said, and a letter was sent to Graham on Dec. 31, 1980 advising her to cease operation, she said.

The facility was never licensed as a rest home, Armstrong said, and never could be because the trailers used to house residents are substandard under state regulations. No doctors or nurses were on duty, although residents there required substantial medical care, she said.

Another letter was sent to Graham on Sept. 1, 1981 ordering her to cease operation, but Graham never complied with state orders to stop running a rest home, Armstrong said.



Mildred Graham Leaves Courthouse

Photo by N. Hancock

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## Businessman Starts Scholarship Fund

A new scholarship fund has been established at Madison High School by R.D. Williams, president of World of Clothing of Hendersonville.

Williams, a native of the Spill Corn area of the county, presented a letter of commitment for a \$10,000 scholarship fund to the school's scholarship committee Thursday.

"This is not a one-time deal; we plan to do this annually, and hope to continuously provide the scholarships for Madison High School students," Williams told the committee.

The \$10,000 gift, which will be given to the school in July, will be parceled out to student recipients in the class of 1982, Williams said. He emphasized the money is to be awarded to "needy and deserving students" who plan to go to college. Williams stressed the "Needy" criteria in his letter to the committee.

Williams, whose company donates some \$100,000 annually for college scholarships, said Wayne McDevitt, director of the governor's Western Office in Asheville and a resident of Marshall, influenced him in his deci-



Photo by N. Hancock

**SCHOLARSHIP COMMITMENT** — R.D. Williams (second from left) presents a letter of commitment for establishing an annual \$10,000 scholarship fund at Madison High School for 1982

graduates. Receiving the letter for the school's scholarship committee are (l-r) Wayne McDevitt, Superintendent Robert L. Edwards and Principal David Wyatt.

sion to add Madison High to the list of schools which receive scholarship grants from his company.

Williams said he was pleased to make the scholarship commitment to Madison County and happy that

he could make a contribution to the school and county.

"I feel like any businessman who doesn't put something back into the society and community is a leech on the community," he said.

### At Boarding Home Trial

## Witnesses Tell Court Of Patient Abuse

State witnesses in Mildred Graham's trial Wednesday told of mistreatment of patients and of residents being secretly transferred to Graham Boarding Home in Madison County from other in Buncombe County without authorization.

The testimony was solicited by Judge Robert H. Lacey in Madison County District Court to support the terms of a plea-bargained arrangement in which Graham pleaded guilty to operating a rest home without a state license and agreed to stop operating the facility as such.

Sue Steele-Correll of Salisbury testified that her 27-year-old son, Carroll Anderson Steele, who suffered from psychiatric problems, began living at the Wayne Wells Family Care Home in Arden in August 1980.

She said her son was not there when she went to visit him a month later. Steele was moved to Graham's Boarding Home in Madison County "without my knowledge and without my approval," Mrs. Steele-Correll said.

Wells told her that Steele had been moved to the Graham rest home because he had been going to a nearby convenience store and causing a nuisance, she said.

Mrs. Steele-Correll said she searched for her son at Graham's rest home, a place she described as "a godforsaken isolated place out in the middle of nowhere," but police located him in October 1980 at Mrs. Graham's son's trailer. She said her son was unclothed, underfed, unkempt and lacking medical care.

She said she began sending money to Mrs. Graham when

she threatened to cut off Steele's medications, even though she was supposed to pay her share of \$280 a month to the state.

"She said if she didn't get the money, then he wouldn't get medication," Mrs. Steele-Correll said. She added that Graham assured her that the Graham Boarding Home was a licensed facility.

Jay Markley, a Haywood County Department of Social Services official, detailed the case of Dean Rogers, the 57-year-old man who suffered from emotional problems who wandered away from Graham's rest home last November and was found dead four days later.

Markley said he authorized Rogers moved from a Haywood County rest home to Havon Rest Home in Candler

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### Bobby Ponder Re-elected Chairman

## School Board Hears Request To Expand Band Program

By NICHOLAS HANCOCK  
Editor

Madison County 7th and 8th grade students may get the opportunity to take band lessons in preparation for joining the Madison High School band beginning next fall if the board of education approves a request heard Wednesday.

The request came in the form of a letter from Madison High Principal David Wyatt, but the board tabled the request until it hears a more detailed proposal from Wyatt and high school band director Harry Overby.

Wyatt's letter proposed a beginners band program for 7th and 8th grade students by having Overby visit the elementary schools on a scheduled basis to provide music instruction. However, the letter also requested that the board of education pick up the tab

for salary supplements for both the band director and the high school and elementary school coaches for fiscal year 1982-83; a point which caused the board to balk at taking any action.

Wyatt, who also serves as athletic director at the high school, stated in his letter that the sum needed to provide supplements for the coaches would amount to \$13,000 for the coming fiscal year. He said the gate receipts at athletic events, which are used to pay coaches supplements, have not been covering the supplements lately.

The board, which went on record as "very much in favor of a band program," indicated it would have to consider the proposal closely since it lumped coaches supplements into the deal.

The board also questioned whether or not a feasible schedule could be worked

out for the band director's traveling to all six of the elementary schools. Board member Ed Gentry tentatively proposed consolidating 7th and 8th grade band students at Spring Creek and Hot Springs schools when informed that only seven students had indicated an interest in taking band at Spring Creek. He said much of the band director's time could be wasted on the road traveling between the two schools, but pooling the students could make the program more cost effective.

In other business the board:

• Unanimously re-elected Bobby Ponder as chairman for another year.

• Approved a request by Madison High Principal David Wyatt to hire two additional secretaries at the high school in order to meet all personnel requirements for accreditation by the

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### Bentley Addresses N.C. 2000

Dr. Fred Bentley will be the featured speaker for the Mars Hill N.C. 2000 community meeting set for Friday, April 16 at 7:30 p.m. in the Mars Hill town hall.

Resources, population and economics are some of the subjects to be discussed at the meeting which is open to the public.

Residents will be asked to participate in a forum discussion and to express their opinions on Mars Hill community needs. The Community Development board of directors have discussed needs, among which are an adequate sewer system for the town and community.

Dr. Bentley, president of Mars Hill College, is a member of the state N.C. 2000 Committee.

Saying she thought her daughter had been threatened "because she wouldn't smoke marijuana," a parent told members of the Madison County Board of Education Wednesday that she wanted them to know "some of the things going on at Madison High School" in hopes that similar incidents would not happen to other students.

Mrs. Jerry Maney of Mars Hill said her daughter, a sophomore, had received threats, "both on the bus and at school," of being beaten up by a group of students. The threats and an incident in which paper and rulers were thrown at her daughter on a school bus occurred two weeks ago, Mrs. Maney said. She also complained that while some of the students involved had been taken before the principal, nothing was done to them.

"They were threatened to be expelled if anything happened again, but nothing was done to them," Mrs. Maney told the board.

Responding to questions from board chairman Bobby Ponder, Mrs. Maney said she felt the incidents involving her daughter "have been straightened out" at the school, but she added, "I don't want it to happen to other students."

Ponder told Mrs. Maney "threats are just idle words, and nobody has ever been physically hurt by words," and he told her that such matters should be handled with the principal and assistant principal at the school.

Mrs. Maney said following the incident on the bus, her daughter received a telephone call in which she was told by the caller that some students were planning to slip her drugs, "LSD and speed," in over-the-counter quantities and then beat her up.

She said she reported the matter to Principal David Wyatt at his office and when the students were called in to discuss the matter with her

and her daughter received threats from the students in the presence of witnesses. Later, the students "left school without permission" and followed her to a shopping center, Mrs. Maney said.

"I think there ought to be a way to get parents more involved with what their kids are doing at school," she said. Board member Gerald Young asked Mrs. Maney if she thought there was a drug problem at Madison High School.

"Yes, I've seen that for myself," she said, and explained that on one occasion she went into a girls' bathroom and saw what she identified as marijuana smoke in the room. She said she didn't actually see anyone smoking marijuana.

Ponder told Mrs. Maney that he and the board members would talk with the principal about the problems which occurred with her daughter.

## Mother Says Daughter Was Threatened At School