

Contact: Debra Shniderson  
Director, Recruiting & Marketing  
Beck, Redden & Secrest L.L.P.  
1221 McKinney, Ste. 4500  
Houston, Texas 77010  
Phone: 713.951.6230  
Fax: 713.951.3720  
dshniderson@brsfirm.com



---

# PRESS RELEASE

## Eric Nichols and Fields Alexander Successfully Prosecute Polygamist Leader Warren Jeffs for the State of Texas

**August 12, 2011 – Houston**

Attorneys **Eric J.R. Nichols** and **Fields Alexander** returned to their regular practices at Beck, Redden & Secrest, L.L.P. this week after securing sentences of life plus twenty years in prison for FLDS polygamist leader **Warren Steed Jeffs**.

Both Alexander and Nichols served as deputized assistant prosecutors for the 51<sup>st</sup> Judicial District of Texas in the guilt/innocence and punishment phases of the Jeffs trial, which concluded earlier this week in San Angelo, Texas.

“It was very fulfilling, personally and professionally, to assist the State in ensuring that this master manipulator and convicted child molester will never again walk the streets of our communities,” said Alexander, who was participating in his first criminal trial.

According to Nichols, Jeffs will not be eligible for parole until he serves 45 years on the two stacked sentences, one for aggravated sexual assault involving a 12-year-old girl, and one for sexual assault involving a victim who was 15 years of age at the time of the assault found by the jury.

The conviction and sentence resulted from a three-plus-year investigation, which followed the execution of search warrants at the YFZ Ranch in Schleicher County, Texas in April 2008. At the time, Nichols had taken a leave of absence from the Firm to work as Deputy Attorney General for Criminal Justice for **Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott**. Although he rejoined the Firm in February 2011, Nichols remained on as an assistant prosecutor for the local district attorney, and Alexander joined him in the Firm's pro bono effort to secure justice for Jeffs.

Nichols and Alexander represented the State at both the guilt/innocence and punishment phases of the trial, which spanned three weeks in late July and early August. Trial highlights for Nichols included engaging in a back-and-forth questioning of a witness called by Jeffs, who was representing himself during the guilt/innocence portion of the trial, over religious teachings governing the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. "Jeffs called the witness to try to support his theory that all of his activities with his 'celestial wives' were part of his religion," Nichols said. Nichols patiently sat through over four and a half hours of direct examination by Jeffs of this witness, in which they read numerous portions of religious texts. Nichols then asked the witness, on cross examination, whether he had used any of these religious doctrines, which the witness considered to be "holy and pure," to engage in sexual activities with underage girls, group sex with "celestial wives," or other types of sexual activity engaged in by Jeffs. "The witness got a shocked look on his face and said, 'Who, me?'" Nichols said. "The jury got the message loud and clear, from Jeffs' own witness. Jeffs used these religious concepts and perverted them for use in conditioning these young girls into having sex with him and each other."

One of Alexander's trial highlights was presenting testimony, through an FBI agent, relating to Jeffs' creation of what Jeffs himself described as a "quorum" of 12 underage wives. At the end of "heart-wrenching" evidence, including Jeffs' own written accounts and audiotapes of his sexual activities with these underage girls, Alexander produced one of Jeffs' own writings. In this writing, which Jeffs dictated as he took the first of the 12 underage wives, Jeffs said that if people learned about what he was doing in engaging in these underage marriages, they would "hang him from the highest tree."

Nichols then referred to that writing in closing arguments on punishment, telling the jury: "Yes, Mr. Jeffs, this is Texas. But no, Mr. Jeffs, we don't hang convicts from the highest tree anymore, not even child molesters. We choose instead to isolate and incapacitate them, to keep them away from their past and future victims."

The Tom Green County jury took less than 30 minutes to assess the maximum terms of life and twenty years, respectively, on the two counts of conviction. Jeffs was immediately transported to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to begin serving these sentences.

Alexander and Nichols appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to work on behalf of the State in cooperation with and under the leadership of Steve Lupton, the elected District Attorney for the 51<sup>st</sup> Judicial District of Texas. They also appreciated the opportunity to work with a "first-class" team of law enforcement officers from the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Office of the Attorney General, along with prosecutors such as **Assistant Attorney General Angela Goodwin** and staff from the Criminal Prosecutions Division of the Attorney General's Office.

In addition to their regular practices at the Firm, both Nichols and Alexander plan to continue assisting Texas law enforcement, local district attorneys, and the Texas Attorney General's Office when called upon to help.

“This type of pro bono effort is necessary to ensure that lawyers in private practice are also working in the public interest. I am very proud of our lawyers for their exceptional effort,” said Firm founding partner **David J. Beck.**

**Beck, Redden & Secret L.L.P.** is a litigation firm that handles a wide range of disputes including commercial, oil and gas, product liability, antitrust, securities, environmental, insurance coverage, legal and accounting malpractice, and patent and other intellectual property cases.

For additional information, contact Debra Shniderson, Director of Recruiting & Marketing at [dshniderson@brsfirm.com](mailto:dshniderson@brsfirm.com) or 713-951-6230.

**# # #**