

LULA MAE BATTLE

Public lewdness charge dropped

► Woman, 81, said she was in dire straits when she urinated in bushes downtown

By **ROBERT McCLENDON**
Staff Reporter

City prosecutors moved Wednesday to dismiss the public lewdness charge brought against 81-year-old Lula Mae Battle for urinating in Bienville Square.

Larry Wettermark, Mobile's city attorney, said that upon further examination of her case, "it made no sense to prosecute her."

Still, Wettermark did not condemn the officer's decision to arrest her, saying public urination is an ongoing problem in the downtown square and that the officer was just doing his best to enforce the law.

Prosecutors filed the motion to dismiss the charge following public outcry over her arrest, which was first detailed in Saturday's Press-Register.

"Thank you, Jesus. Glory Hallelujah!" Battle cried out Wednesday after learning the news.

Battle, at her home near downtown Mobile, said she hadn't heard yet from her attorney.

In anticipation of her trial and potential fine, Battle said, she had been saving money and hadn't been able to pay her phone bill, so the service was cut off.

"I was trying to save," she said.



VICTOR CALHOUN/Staff Photographer

Lula Mae Battle lifts her hands in joy Wednesday at her home in Mobile as she discusses the events that led to her arrest on charges of public lewdness June 3.

Charge dropped

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Battle has said that she was at her bank, adjacent to the park, on June 3 when she asked the teller if she could use the restroom. She said she was told there was no restroom available to the public.

Battle then said she tried to make it to the restroom across the park but couldn't get there in time and began urinating, so she jumped in the bushes next to a small building to finish.

The building turned out to be a one-room police sub-

station manned by a cadet.

The cadet called for an officer and had her arrested. Battle was taken to Mobile County Metro Jail, booked on a charge of public lewdness and released on \$500 bail.

Public lewdness is a Class C misdemeanor punishable by up to three months in jail.

Battle said the charge has been weighing heavily on her.

"I ain't never been in trouble before," she said. "All I do is pray and go to church."