



April 30, 2014: Former L.A. County Contractor, Two Others Plead Guilty to Embezzlement, Other Charges

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The former administrator of Peace and Joy Care Center, a Carson-based nonprofit organization that provided services for domestic violence victims under a contract with Los Angeles County, pleaded guilty today in a case involving the theft of more than \$700,000 in public funds.

Wilma Wilson, 62, pleaded guilty to nine counts: four counts of grand theft by embezzlement; two counts each of embezzlement by a public or private officer and misappropriation of public funds; and one count of embezzlement by a trustee, executor or administrator.

Co-defendant and husband William Wilson, 74, pleaded guilty to three counts of grand theft by embezzlement and two counts of embezzlement by a public or private officer.

The Carson couple also admitted excessive-taking allegations of more than \$500,000. The case was prosecuted by Marian Thompson, deputy-in-charge of the Internal Welfare Fraud Unit of the District Attorney's Public Integrity Division.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge M.L. Villar de Longoria scheduled a sentencing hearing on July 15 in Department 41 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center.

Wilma and William Wilson are each expected to be sentenced to four years in state prison. She was ordered to pay \$2.6 million in restitution while her husband was ordered to pay \$1.1 million to the County of Los Angeles.

Longtime employee Melanie McAllister, 51, of San Pedro also pleaded guilty today to one count of grand theft by embezzlement. She is expected to be sentenced to three years of formal probation and 100 hours of community service. McAllister additionally was ordered to pay \$5,000 in restitution.

Lisa Corona, a fourth defendant and former employee, pleaded guilty in September 2013 to one count of grand theft by embezzlement. Corona of Cerritos is expected to be sentenced to three years formal probation and 100 hours of community service on June 12 in Department 50 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center.

While serving as executive director of Peace and Joy Care Center, Wilma Wilson directed Corona and McAllister and several other employees to gather names and personal

identifying information of public benefit recipients at Department of Public Social Services offices.

Wilma Wilson purportedly used that information to bill the county for domestic violence supportive services for individuals who never received services from Peace and Joy Care Center. She also extensively over-billed the county for domestic violence victims who received limited services from the nonprofit, according to prosecutors.

Under Wilma Wilson's orders, Corona and McAllister and other employees allegedly created fraudulent files with forged signatures and bogus case notes for the purpose of backing up the bills to the county and deceiving county auditors, prosecutors said.

A joint investigation by the District Attorney's Bureau of Investigation and the Office of the Auditor- Controller of Los Angeles County with assistance from the Department of Public Social Services revealed that the defendants' alleged practices of fraudulent billing and over-billing occurred from 2003 to 2008.

The investigation further revealed other criminal offenses by Wilma and William Wilson, including the use of public monies for personal gain; the conversion of real estate assets owned by Peace and Joy Care Center to the Wilsons; and the forgery of a will and the theft of the estate of Wilma Wilson's uncle.

Wilma and William Wilson also pleaded guilty to charges involving these crimes.