



# Genesee County Prosecutor's Office

## David Leyton, Prosecutor



### TAX PREPARER CHARGED WITH STEALING MORE THAN \$1 MILLION FROM HIS ELDERLY CLIENTS SENTENCED TO PRISON

November 24, 2008

**FLINT** -- Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton said that he was pleased with the prison sentence handed down today against John Benjamin III who stole more than \$1 Million from his elderly clients who had gone to him for tax preparation services.



The Prosecutor's office had asked the court to exceed sentencing guidelines and Circuit Court Judge Judith Fullerton agreed, sentencing Benjamin to a minimum of 3 years and a maximum of 10 years in prison for embezzling money from his clients.

Benjamin, 39, of Chandler, Arizona, operated John Benjamin Tax and Financial Services at 2811 E. Court Street in Flint. All of the victims initially went to Benjamin for tax preparation services. During the course of his dealings with these individuals, Benjamin persuaded each of them to invest their money in a real estate investment opportunity that, he promised, would return upwards of 22.5% on their investments.

Investigative reports revealed that Benjamin's clients would frequently request information about their investments but they were never given truthful information. It eventually became apparent that they would never see a return on their investments when they were notified that Benjamin was filing for bankruptcy. Subsequently, a U.S. Bankruptcy Court Order denied Benjamin's attempt at discharging his debts through a Chapter 7 bankruptcy.

"Several of the victims were widows who turned to John Benjamin for professional guidance on how to handle their assets after their husbands passed away," Prosecutor Leyton noted at the time he charged Benjamin. "Some of these victims trusted him with their life savings and he ended up exploiting their vulnerabilities for his own advantage.

"I am satisfied in knowing that justice has been served in a court of law and that John Benjamin will have plenty of time in prison to think about the turmoil, difficulties, and anguish he has caused his victims," said Prosecutor Leyton.

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