



## AG ANNOUNCES JAIL SENTENCE FOR FORMER CORONER

(MONTGOMERY)— Attorney General Luther Strange announced that a former Elmore County coroner will serve time in jail for his felony ethics and theft convictions. Timothy Ellison was sentenced this morning in Elmore County Circuit Court to four years for the ethics violation, four years for second-degree theft and 12 months for third-degree theft. The sentences were partly suspended, and he was ordered to serve nine months in jail followed by 24 months of supervised probation.

Ellison pleaded guilty on March 9 to a felony violation of the state ethics law by using his official position for personal gain, to second-degree theft, also a felony, and to third-degree theft, which is a misdemeanor. Ellison's guilty plea included \$7,913 in restitution to be made to the various public entities from which he stole. Under state law, a public official convicted of a felony is ineligible to hold public office and he was automatically removed from office upon his conviction.

Also convicted on March 9 was Yancey Joe Mitchell III, director of Hillside Mortuary in Wetumpka. Mitchell pleaded guilty to third-degree theft of property by aiding and abetting Ellison in his crimes. He was sentenced that day to 12 months probation and ordered to pay a \$250 fine and court costs. The convictions stem from Ellison submitting inflated charges to the county, state and several municipal entities for reimbursement in transporting bodies. Mitchell assisted Ellison by providing false paperwork.

Under state law, a coroner has the responsibility to transport bodies from a crime scene to the Department of Forensic Sciences or to a funeral home. The coroner may be reimbursed for actual expenses in doing so. Ellison submitted inflated invoices for his costs, and Mitchell aided and abetted him with false invoices to support Ellison's wrongful claims.

"I am pleased that this prosecution put an end to the crimes of a corrupt public official who betrayed the public trust and stole taxpayers' money," said Attorney General Strange. "It is appropriate that Ellison has been held to account for his wrongdoing, will serve jail time, and will be required to repay stolen funds to their rightful public entities."

Attorney General Strange commended those involved in bringing this case to a successful conclusion, noting in particular Assistant Attorneys General Bill Lisenby and Pete Smyczek, and Special Agents of his Special Prosecutions Division. He also thanked the Elmore County Sheriff's Office and the police departments of Wetumpka, Millbrook and Tallassee for their assistance, and the State Ethics Commission for its referral of this matter.

