



AG MARSHALL ANNOUNCES SHELBY COUNTY WOMAN SENTENCED BY STATE COURT AFTER PLEADING GUILTY TO FRAUDULENTLY SOLICITING DONATIONS WHILE FAKING CANCER

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Steve Marshall announced that Jennifer Flynn Cataldo, of Sterrett, pleaded guilty in Shelby County Circuit Court Thursday to two counts of first-degree theft of property by deception for fraudulently soliciting \$38,080 from two GoFundMe accounts while falsely claiming to have cancer. She was sentenced to serve two years in prison.

Under the sentencing, Cataldo will serve two years for each count, running concurrently. Her state prison sentence will also run concurrent with her federal prison sentence of more than 25 months, handed down by a U.S. District Court on November 8, 2017.

“Those who prey upon the charitable intentions of good Samaritans not only do a tremendous disservice to those truly in need but also betray the trust of the community,” said Attorney General Steve Marshall. “This sentence should send a strong signal to others who may harbor similar intentions of deceiving the public’s generosity that there will be a price to pay for breaking the law.”

On April 13, 2017, the Attorney General's Office began conducting a joint investigation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation into Cataldo’s solicitation of donations. The investigation of Cataldo centered around her use of two online GoFundMe fundraising campaigns through which she received more than \$38,000 from donors wishing to assist her with medical bills and a family vacation to Disney. The investigation of Cataldo uncovered that her claim of having terminal cancer was false. With the assistance of the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, Cataldo was arrested May 4, 2017, on warrants from the Attorney General’s Office. The Attorney General’s Office also assisted the U.S. Attorney’s Office in their investigation which led to a separate guilty plea and sentencing earlier this month.

Attorney General Marshall thanked the Attorney General’s Office Investigations Division as well as Assistant Attorney General Brittney Bucak of the Criminal Trials Division for their hard work in this case. Attorney General Marshall further expressed appreciation to representatives of GoFundMe for their assistance in the investigation. He also thanked the Shelby County Sheriff’s Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Attorney’s Office North District of Alabama for their close cooperation in this case.

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