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Steve Marshall
Alabama Attorney General



For **press** inquiries only, contact:
Amanda Priest (334) 322-5694
Cameron Mixon (334) 242-7491

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Former DeKalb County Attorney and Judicial Candidate Sentenced for Multiple Felony Convictions

(Montgomery) – Attorney General Steve Marshall announced the conviction and sentencing of a DeKalb County attorney. Teresa Darwin Phillips, 43, of Sylvania, a former attorney and candidate for DeKalb County District Judge, was sentenced by Circuit Court Judge Jeremy Taylor to 20 years in prison for her involvement in multiple crimes.

The charges against Phillips come from her work as an attorney practicing in Sylvania, where she used her position as an attorney to access, steal, and spend approximately \$250,000 from multiple clients. The 2020 investigation led by the DeKalb County District Attorney’s Office revealed Phillips’ scheme to use the funds given to her by clients and other elderly individuals for whom she had been appointed as legal guardian or conservator for her own personal gain. Phillips previously pled guilty on November 7, 2022, to nine felony offenses.

“Trust is fundamental to the attorney-client relationship. Once a lawyer has gained the trust of a client, particularly an elderly client, they owe that client the highest degree of honesty and loyalty,” said Attorney General Steve Marshall. “To see that trust betrayed on such a wide scale warrants a severe reaction from the justice system. Our team saw to that. This case should serve as yet another warning to attorneys across our state seeking to take advantage of vulnerable clients – you will be found out and held accountable.”

“Our community deserves to have attorneys who take their jobs seriously and works with integrity and honesty,” said District Attorney Summer Summerford. “My office will not stand for the intentional, premeditated targeting of vulnerable people who rely on attorneys for help in times of need. Although this sentence will not replace what the victims lost, hopefully it will provide the closure in this long case and deter other attorneys from making the same mistakes.”

Attorney General Marshall would like to commend Investigator Gary Williams and other local law enforcement for their work in the investigation of this case and Assistant District Attorney Stanna Guice and Deputy Attorney General John Kachelman for their work in prosecuting the case.

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