



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORMER BANK EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY TO FRAUD

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Kansas City, Mo., woman pleaded guilty in federal court today to defrauding her employer.

LaDana L. Gilbert, 23, of Kansas City, Mo., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith this afternoon to embezzling funds from FirStar Bank, formerly known as Mercantile Bank.

By pleading guilty, **Gilbert** admitted that, as an employee at the bank, she embezzled funds from the financial institution between May 8, 2000, and June 1, 2000. **Gilbert** was employed as a loan processor at the bank. As an employee, she had access to an Operation Center check machine and admitted that she created 16 Mercantile Bank official checks in the total amount of \$37,552.87. The checks ranged in values up to \$8,722. **Gilbert** admitted that when she misapplied the funds, she intended to defraud the bank.

Gilbert was originally charged with embezzling funds from the bank in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Oct. 23, 2003.

Under federal law, Graves explained, **Gilbert** may be subject to a maximum sentence of up to 30 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$1 million. **Gilbert's** sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing has been scheduled for April 14, 2004.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Linda Parker Marshall and Kenneth E. Weinfurt. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow