



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KC WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT OF PUBLIC MONEY

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Kansas City woman pleaded guilty in federal court today to illegally spending more than \$9,000 from retirement benefits deposited into the bank account of her deceased grandmother.

Donna M. Pierson, 59, of Kansas City, Mo., pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge Robert E. Larsen this morning to a federal information charging her with the theft of public money.

Pierson admitted that she embezzled retirement benefits paid to her deceased grandmother by the Railroad Retirement Board. Although the information charges **Pierson** with the theft of \$913.78, representing a single month's retirement payment, **Pierson's** plea agreement acknowledges that the total amount of improper benefits was \$13,543.94.

Graves explained that **Pierson's** grandmother died on June 3, 2000, at which time her railroad retirement benefits should have been terminated. **Pierson** failed to notify the Railroad Retirement Board of her grandmother's death, so that retirement benefits continued to be direct deposited into a checking account. **Pierson**, using her power of attorney, wrote checks on that bank account from June 2000 through August 2001, Graves said. **Pierson** admitted that she tried to disguise her fraudulent theft of the retirement benefits by back dating the checks to June or July 2000.

When the bank learned of the theft, Graves said, it closed the account and removed the balance of \$4,525.36. As a result of **Pierson's** theft, the bank suffered a loss of \$9,018.58. **Pierson** agreed to pay restitution of that amount to the bank for its loss.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Frances Reddis. The case was

investigated by the Railroad Retirement Board, Office of Inspector General.

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