



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow

NOVEMBER 18, 2003
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORMER JUDGE SENTENCED FOR BRIBERY

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a former Associate Circuit Court Judge in Sullivan County was sentenced in federal court today for soliciting a bribe while he was on the bench.

Jeffrey D. Sayre, 37, of Milan, Mo., was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs this afternoon to four years in federal prison without parole. **Sayre** had served as an associate circuit court judge for the 9th Judicial Circuit in Sullivan County, Mo. **Sayre** has resigned from that position and has surrendered his license to practice law.

Graves noted that the sentence reflects an upward departure from the federal sentencing guidelines. “We asked the court to impose a harsher sentence, and we are pleased the court did so,” Graves said. “The unique circumstances of this case justified a sentence beyond the norm. No one is above the law, and we are satisfied that **Sayre** is being held accountable for his breach of the public trust.”

On June 5, 2003, **Sayre** pleaded guilty an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on April 3, 2003.

By pleading guilty, Graves said, **Sayre** admitted that he solicited a \$10,000 bribe from William Lance May, a defendant in his Sullivan County courtroom. Graves explained that May was arrested on March 22, 2002, on various state drug and firearms violations. After May paid the bribe, Graves said, **Sayre** issued an order to suppress the evidence against May and discharge his case.

According to Graves, Sullivan County Prosecuting Attorney James G. Spencer filed a criminal complaint on March 25, 2002, charging May with four counts of violating state drug and firearm laws. On April 19, 2003, **Sayre** met with May and accepted the \$10,000 bribe.

On July 26, 2002, Spencer filed a First Amended Complaint charging May with possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, possession of methamphetamine, possession with intent to distribute Darvocet, possession of Darvocet, possession of drug paraphernalia, and carrying a concealed weapon. A preliminary hearing was conducted before **Sayre** on that same day, at which time May's attorney filed a motion to suppress evidence. On Sept. 11, 2002, **Sayre** entered an order suppressing the evidence and discharging May in this case.

Sayre also admitted that he attempted to obstruct justice by conspiring to kill May after he learned May was cooperating with federal authorities. Under the terms of **Sayre's** plea agreement, the government dismissed this charge at the time of his sentencing. "All of **Sayre's** actions in this case, whether criminally charged or not, were considered as relevant conduct by the court," Graves said. "Although the charge was dismissed, this conduct was cited by the court in determining the severity of his sentence."

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney William L. Meiners. The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, NITRO (the Northwest Missouri Team Response Operation) Task Force, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Milan, Mo., Police Department, the Sullivan County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, and the North Missouri Drug Task Force.

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