



The United States Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Louisiana

Press Release

NEW ORLEANS WOMAN CONVICTED FOR DEFRAUDING LOUISIANA ROAD HOME AND SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

June 7, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BARBARA SIMMONS DOWL a/k/a Barbara Dowl, Barbara Lee Dowl, Barbara Simmons, a resident of New Orleans, was convicted on a five-count indictment by a Federal Jury for Theft of Government Funds, False Statements and Wire Fraud, announced U. S. Attorney Jim Letten.

According to the Indictment, the defendant, **BARBARA SIMMONS DOWL** with her ex-husband originally owned property at 8633 Zimple Street, New Orleans, Louisiana. After losing the property for unpaid taxes, in 2004, the City of New Orleans sold the property to Robinson Ventures, LLC.

On October 31, 2005, the defendant applied to the Small Business Administration for a disaster loan claiming that she owned 8633 Zimple Street. The defendant then met with Small Business Administration representative twice and falsely claimed ownership to close her loan.

On April 26, 2006, the defendant recorded a false quit-claim deed in Notarial Archives of the City of New Orleans stating that the City of New Orleans sold the property to the defendant on that date. Neither the City of New Orleans or Robinson Ventures, LLC authorized the sale of 8633 Zimple Street in this false quit claim deed.

As a result of the fraud perpetrated on the Small Business Administration, the defendant received \$75,000.00 in cash.

After the recordation of the false quit-claim deed, and receiving the SBA money, the defendant filed a Louisiana Road Home Program application falsely and fraudulently stating she was owner of 8633 Zimple Street on August 29, 2005 and that the property was her primary residence at the time of Hurricane Katrina.

As a result of the defendant's fraudulent conduct involving the Road Home Program, she was awarded a grant of \$132,000 in Federal funds from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. At the closing of her Road Home Grant, she received a check for \$85,930. Additionally, the defendant caused the agents for the Louisiana Road Home Program to send a wire transfer of \$46,000 in grant funds to the Small Business Administration Finance Center in Denver, Colorado to partially pay off a Small Business Administration loan in the name of the defendant.

At the conclusion of the case and a upon the jury finding the defendant guilty as charged on all counts, the Court ordered the defendant immediately remanded into Federal custody to begin her jail term.

BARBARA SIMMONS DOWL faces a maximum term of imprisonment of 50 years for all counts, a fine of \$250,000.00 per count and three years of supervised release per count following any term of imprisonment. Additionally, the Jury awarded a forfeiture of \$156,691.00 of the defendant's property in payment for her fraudulent conduct.

U. S. Attorney Jim Letten stated:

"The crimes of which defendant Dowl were convicted today in federal court were the product of a sinister, calculated, and sophisticated pattern of fraud, lies, and deceit with but a single purpose – to steal monies designed to assist honest citizens in re-building their lives following a great disaster. Thanks to the outstanding work of our team of prosecutors, together with the SBA, HUD Inspector General's Office, the FBI, and the Department of Homeland Security, we have sent a strong message that such abuses will neither be ignored or tolerated, and that we will fiercely protect the rights of our honest citizens to much-needed government assistance."

Kenneth M. Donohue, Inspector General for the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General stated:

"This joint prosecutorial effort the U. S. Attorney's Office, HUD's Office of Inspector General, the SBA Office of Inspector General, the FBI, and the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General has helped send a strong message that those who seek to unlawfully profit by defrauding not only the Road Home program but all programs within HUD will be vigorously prosecuted."

Sentencing is scheduled for September 9, 2009 at 2:30 pm.

The case was investigated by the Small Business Administration Office of Inspector General, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development - Office of Inspector General, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U. S. Attorney Marvin Opatowsky, W. Scott Laragy and Sharan Lieberman.