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## **FORMER OWNER OF MONROE DAY CARE SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT**

*Defendant ordered to pay restitution of over \$600,000*

**Monroe, Louisiana . . . MONICA D. TATUM McWILLIAMS**, age 40, of Monroe, Louisiana, was sentenced yesterday by United States District Judge Robert G. James to spend **87 months in prison** for committing mail fraud, making false claims on the United States, making false statements and conspiracy, United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced. McWILLIAMS was also ordered to pay **restitution in the amount of \$617,057.17**.

U.S. Attorney Donald W. Washington stated: "Those who lie and cheat to obtain funds from the government essentially steal scarce taxpayer dollars from those who have a real need for assistance. Public funds must be protected and used for their intended purpose. The consequences of not doing so in this case led to a lengthy incarceration."

McWILLIAMS and her co-defendant, KATHERINE ANN GEORGE, were indicted in December 2005. McWILLIAMS was convicted by a jury in Monroe in June on all counts of the indictment. GEORGE pleaded guilty to charges of mail fraud and making a false statement in February.

McWILLIAMS operated Kiddieland Daycare Center from 1998 to 2004 and GEORGE was the Assistant Director of the center. Between February 2001 and March 2004 McWILLIAMS received \$898,077.77 in payments under the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). This program is funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and administered by the Louisiana Department of Social Services. Under the CCAP, Kiddieland was reimbursed for each eligible child cared for by the center.

McWILLIAMS routinely billed the Louisiana Department of Social Services for children who were not at the center either because they had been removed, because they did not attend as frequently as indicated in the billing or because they never attended. Several of the mothers testified at trial that they had been paid by McWILLIAMS to keep their children enrolled in CCAP even though the children did not attend the daycare. Evidence at the trial also established that when the State withheld payment for some questionable invoices, McWILLIAMS orchestrated the production of fictitious records in support of the claim.

GEORGE was sentenced in July to 5 years probation and was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$142,142.81.

Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. United States Sentencing Guidelines established by the United States Congress and the United States Sentencing Commission are only used as guidelines by the judge in determining the appropriate sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, Investigations, Louisiana Department of Social Services, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney C. Mignonne Griffing.

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