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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MIDDLETON MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO
THEFT OF \$230,000 IN OPM FUNDS AND FILING FALSE TAX RETURNS**

GREENBELT, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced today that John Williams, of Middleton, Maryland, pleaded guilty on February 11, 2003, to six counts of theft of government property and three counts of presenting false claims to the United States in the form of false tax returns that sought tax refunds.

In a statement of facts provided to the court as part of the plea agreement, the defendant admitted that his father was an employee of the United States. When he died, the defendant's mother, Sylvia Williams, became entitled to survivor benefits paid by the Office of Personnel Management. In July 1989, Sylvia Williams died, terminating her entitlement to the survivor benefits. Nevertheless, the defendant did not inform the United States of her death and continued to receive and deposit annuity payment checks issued to her. In or about August 1998, the defendant converted these payments to an electronic funds transfer deposited directly to his bank account. He

used the funds for personal expenses such as the payment of his monthly mortgage obligation. The defendant continued to accept payments until July 1999 when he notified OPM that his mother had died. In doing so, however, he advised OPM that her date of death was July 9, 1999. In fact, the actual date of death was July 9, 1989, exactly ten years earlier. The defendant received total payments of \$230,904.46 after his mother's death.

In addition, for tax years 1996 through 1999, the defendant filed tax returns in the name of Sylvia Williams, reporting the annuity payments under her social security number. In each case, he subscribed the 1040 return at the end, either signing the name "Sylvia Williams" or signing his own name as "Attorney in Fact."

Mr. Williams faces a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and three years supervised release for each count of conviction. United States District Judge Peter J. Messitte has scheduled sentencing for May 5, 2003.

The case is a result of a two-year investigation by the Internal Revenue Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Office of Personnel Management, Office of Inspector General. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ronald J. Tenpas.