



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates  
Northern District of Georgia

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CONTACT: Patrick Crosby

(404)581-6016

FAX (404)581-6160

## **LAWYER SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR EMBEZZLING FUNDS**

ATLANTA, GA -- MICHAEL SHAW, 37, of Mableton, Georgia, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Willis B. Hunt on bank fraud charges, relating to an embezzlement scheme.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said, "This defendant is a former lawyer who betrayed the trust that his law firm and its clients placed in him by stealing from them. The evidence showed that his fraud continued over a five-year period, and was far from a one-time accounting mistake. His crimes cost him his job, his law license and now will send him to federal prison."

SHAW was sentenced to 1 year, 3 months in prison to be followed by 3 years of supervised release, and ordered to perform 100 hours of community service. SHAW pleaded guilty to the charges on October 20, 2010.

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented in court: SHAW was employed as an associate attorney at a large Atlanta law firm, specializing in bankruptcy and commercial foreclosure litigation. From 2003 to 2009, he regularly performed investigative services for clients himself, but submitted invoices in the name of an investigator who also worked for the firm. These invoices totaled approximately \$90,000. At the same time, SHAW performed title-examination services for clients himself, but submitted invoices to the firm in the name of a fictitious vendor. He obtained the vendor's social security number from federal bankruptcy filings and submitted fraudulent W-9 forms in the vendor's name. These invoices totaled approximately \$425,000. For almost five years, SHAW regularly performed work for clients, submitted fraudulent invoices to the firm's accounting department, received checks, endorsed the checks over to himself, and deposited the funds into his personal checking account. During this period, he also continued to receive his regular law firm salary as well.

In June 2009, a client's billing review caused the law firm to discover SHAW's misconduct, and he was terminated. SHAW, a member of the Georgia Bar from 1999 to 2010, was disbarred by the Georgia State Bar after his misconduct came to light.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney Kurt R. Erskine prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.justice.gov/usao/gan](http://www.justice.gov/usao/gan).