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HEADLINE: Ex-Cobo chief sent to prison in bribery case

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Detroit - Saying his actions were "a betrayal to the citizens of Detroit," a federal judge sentenced a former director of Cobo Center to one year in prison Tuesday in connection with a wide-ranging City Hall corruption scandal.

Glenn Blanton, 48, pleaded guilty last October to obstruction of justice, admitting he falsified documents in 2005 to conceal \$15,000 in bribes he accepted from a city contractor and obstructed a federal investigation.

He was the first defendant to be sentenced in a wide-ranging and long-running City Hall corruption investigation that has resulted in charges against former city officials, businessmen, a political consultant and one City Council member.

"You had a position of great trust and a high position in the city of Detroit, and clearly you abused that position," U.S. District Judge Marianne O. Battani told Blanton.

Blanton, who was Cobo director from November 2004 until February 2007, faced a sentencing guideline range of 10-16 months.

Battani said Blanton had led an exemplary life aside from demanding money from former Cobo contractor Karl Kado to pay taxes he owed and help pay for a house. She also acknowledged the assistance he gave the FBI and federal prosecutors in their corruption investigation, including testifying before a federal grand jury. But it would be "unconscionable" to give him probation, as recommended by attorney Richard Helfrick of the Federal Defender Office, she said.

Blanton had succeeded Lou Pavledes as Cobo director. Pavledes is awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty in federal court in August 2008 to a banking felony charge related to about \$100,000 in kickbacks he admitted receiving from Kado. Kado pleaded guilty in June to filing false income tax returns and is scheduled to be sentenced by Battani in December.

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