



*U. S. Department of Justice*  
United States Attorney's Office  
Southern District of Mississippi

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 6, 2012

LOCAL ATTORNEY PLEADS GUILTY TO SCHEMES TO DEFRAUD CLIENTS

*Jackson, Miss* - Vann F. Leonard, 46, of Ridgeland, MS, pled guilty today to a Criminal Information filed by the United States Attorney charging him with mail fraud and wire fraud in connection with schemes to defraud former clients, U.S. Attorney John Dowdy and FBI Special Agent in Charge Daniel McMullen announced.

Leonard admitted that from approximately June 2008 through December, 2011, he intentionally misled two of his former clients to believe that he safely held their money in his trust account for use solely in the disposition of their legal matters, when he actually spent their money for his own personal use. Leonard received approximately \$362,342.00 in varying increments from one client who believed his funds were being securely held in escrow to cover legal expenses. A second client made wire transfers to Leonard on two different occasions totaling \$4,000, believing that Leonard was settling some legal matters.

Leonard is currently detained in the Madison County Jail awaiting sentencing on March 23, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. He faces a maximum sentence of 60 years in prison and a \$750,000 fine.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Carla J. Clark.

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