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Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

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Assistant U.S. Attorney JOHN J. HOFFMAN 609-989-0579 moss0305.rel FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE March 5, 2007

Last Defendant from Asbury Park Drug Distribution Task Force Investigation Sentenced to Federal Prison Term

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TRENTON – The last remaining defendant charged as a result of a long-term task force investigation into drug distribution networks operating in the Asbury Park area was sentenced today to a long federal prison term, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

In total, 41 defendants were federally charged through the joint task force investigation, which began in the spring of 2004 when the Drug Enforcement Administration Mobile Enforcement Team (MET) was detailed to focus its efforts on narcotics trafficking in and around Asbury Park. As of today, all federal defendants have pleaded guilty and been sentenced, including the leaders of various heroin and cocaine organizations, which were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 140 to 190 months.

U.S. District Judge Garrett E. Brown, Jr., today sentenced Dyshaun Moss, 26, of Asbury Park, a.k.a."Sharkey," to 168 months in prison and ordered him to pay a \$2,500 fine for his guilty plea on Sept. 14, 2005, to one count of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute at least 100 grams of heroin. At his plea hearing, Moss admitted that during the time period of the conspiracy, he distributed a total of between three and 10 kilos of heroin.

In addition to the federally charged defendants, the 2½-year investigation by the DEA, Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office and Asbury Park Police lead to the arrest of an additional 61 defendants on state charges filed by Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office. The majority of the state defendants have also pleaded guilty and many received state prison sentences, including several mid- to high-level cocaine and heroin dealers who received prison terms ranging from five to 14 years.

In July 2005, the third phase of the investigation resulted in the arrest of Moss, Kurtis Barnes, 28, a.k.a. "Gotti," and three co-defendants. The Kurtis Barnes Organization controlled the distribution of heroin in Asbury Park and surrounding areas in Monmouth County for more than five years. Through the investigation, it was learned that Moss served as Barnes' second in command.

Over the course of the investigation, the task force was successful in dismantling one heroin and eleven powder and crack cocaine distribution networks operating in and around Asbury Park. Additionally, law enforcement authorities made federal seizures totaling four kilograms of powder cocaine, two kilograms of crack cocaine, half a kilogram of heroin, 11 vehicles valued at more than \$500,000 and weapons.

"We set out on a mission to bring greater resources to assist county and local law enforcement in their fight against drugs and violent crime in Asbury Park," Christie said. "The fact that this investigation resulted in 42 guilty pleas in federal court, and the subsequent long federal prison terms to be served far away from New Jersey, should not be lost on anyone who may consider taking up where these defendants left off." "This displays the dedication of all law enforcement agencies working together in order to provide the citizens of Asbury Park the quality of life they deserve," said DEA Special Agent in Charge Gerard P. McAleer, New Jersey Division. "We will continue to arrest violent drug traffickers that try to destroy the city."

"This highly successful cooperative investigation served to make the City of Asbury Park a safer place," said Monmouth County Prosecutor Luis A. Valentin. "We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners in our efforts to attack the problem of narcotics trafficking in Monmouth County."

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Brown consulted the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, was not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the DEA, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Gerard P. McAleer, Investigators with the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Luis A. Valentin, and Detectives with the Asbury Park Police Department, under the direction of Deputy Chief Mark K. Kinmon, with the investigation.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney John Hoffman of the U.S. Attorney's Criminal Division in Trenton.

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Defense Attorney: Harold Shapiro, Esq., Vineland