



Department of Justice

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IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY AND ASSOCIATE PLEAD GUILTY TO ENTERING INTO MARRIAGES WITH U.S. CITIZENS TO EVADE IMMIGRATION LAWS

COLUMBUS – Columbus-area immigration attorney Lilian Asante, 37, and an associate of hers, Kwadwo Asante, 39, each pleaded guilty in United States District Court here today to one count of unlawfully entering into a marriage with U.S. citizens in order to evade U.S. immigration laws.

William E. Hunt, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Brian Moskowitz, special agent in charge of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office of Investigations in Detroit (ICE) announced the pleas entered today before U.S. District Judge Gregory Frost.

In a statement of facts read into record during the plea hearings, Kwadwo Asante admitted to marrying a U.S. citizen from Youngstown in a civil ceremony in Franklin County on January 22, 2005. Lilian Asante admitted marrying a U.S. citizen from Florida in a civil ceremony in Franklin County on February 25, 2006. Each defendant admitted that they married the U.S. citizens as part of a plan to seek permanent U.S. residency status.

When the defendants were interviewed by Customs and Immigration Services (CIS) agents as part of the process of obtaining permanent residency, agents began to suspect the fraudulent marriages and referred the matter for criminal investigation.

The Asante were married to each other in Ghana in 1999, came to the U.S. legally in 2002 and dissolved their marriage in 2004.

Entering into marriage with a U.S. citizen in order to evade U.S. immigration laws is punishable by a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000. Judge Frost will set a date for sentencing.

Hunt commended the investigation by ICE agents and Assistant U.S. Attorney Salvador A. Dominguez, who is prosecuting the case.

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