



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Department of Justice filed a civil antitrust suit today charging five associations of real estate brokers in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with combining and conspiring to fix commission rates on the sale of property in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area.

Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst said the complaint was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh.

Named as defendants in the suit are the Greater Pittsburgh Board of Realtors; East Suburban Multilist Real Estate Brokers, Inc.; South Hills Multilist, Inc.; North Suburban Multilist; and the Greater Pittsburgh Multilist Council, which is composed of representatives from the three defendant organizations and other multilist groups.

The complaint alleges that the real estate brokers which are members of the defendant associations participated as co-conspirators.

The complaint charged that the defendants and their members have agreed, in violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act, to uniform rates of commissions and fees which were published, circulated and adhered to by the members.

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The complaint also said that defendants and their members agreed to persuade banks and other financial institutions to pay increased rates of commissions and fees, and agreed to boycott banks and other financial institutions which refused to pay increased rates of commissions and fees.

According to the complaint the defendants agreed to uniform splitting of commissions on cooperative sales, and agreed not to accept listings for multiple listing services at rates less than those fixed by the members of the defendants.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Walker B. Comegys, in charge of the Antitrust Division, said that the complaint sought to prohibit the fixing of brokerage commission rates and to enjoin the defendants from recommending or suggesting that any of its members or any other person adhere to any particular schedule of fees or rates of commission.

The complaint also sought to prohibit the defendants from adopting or publishing any schedule or other recommendation regarding commissions or fees to be charged by its members, and from conducting any surveys designed to determine prevailing commission rates.

In 1970 members of the defendant organizations sold, rented and managed properties with a value in excess of \$300 million.