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VIVIAN FUNERAL HOME OWNER
SENTENCED ON FRAUD CHARGES

68 Victims Lose More than \$450,000

Shreveport, La. . . . William James McGuire, 64, owner and operator of McGuire Funeral Home in Vivian, La., was sentenced today to 10 years in prison for defrauding 68 victims of more than \$450,000 in prepaid funeral and burial services, United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced. McGuire was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$463,586.84 and was also sentenced to 5 years of supervised release following the completion of his prison sentence. He was remanded to the custody of the U.S. Marshal to begin serving his prison sentence immediately. The sentence was imposed by U. S. District Judge Donald E. Walter in Shreveport.

According to court testimony, one of the services offered by McGuire Funeral Home was a prepaid funeral, which allowed a person to choose a funeral service and merchandise, including a casket, vault, and other items, prior to death. McGuire would place the customer's funeral payment into a funeral trust account in the form of a certificate of deposit at a financial institution. The certificate of deposit, including all earned interest, was intended for the exclusive use and benefit of the funeral recipient. The certificate of deposit, which was payable upon the death of the funeral

recipient, would bear the name of McGuire Funeral Home and the funeral recipient jointly.

Beginning sometime in 2006 and continuing through 2007, McGuire began fraudulently representing to AmSouth Bank and Regions Bank that a funeral recipient was deceased, thereby allowing McGuire to cash the funeral recipient's certificate of deposit for his own use. McGuire frequently provided the banks with fictitious funeral invoices showing that funeral services had already been rendered and the costs associated with the services. A total of 68 victims were defrauded out of more than \$450,000.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Robin S. McCoy.

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