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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 11, 2009

**FORMER MADISON COUNTY REAL ESTATE INVESTOR
CHARGED IN MORTGAGE FRAUD SCHEME**

Jackson, Mississippi - United States Attorney Stan Harris, Federal Bureau of Investigation Acting Special Agent in Charge Stephen F. Gomez, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation - Office of Inspector General Special Agent in Charge Thomas C. McDade, and Madison/Rankin County District Attorney Michael Guest announced today that a federal grand jury has returned a six count indictment against Earline Y. Rawls in connection with a fraudulent mortgage loan scheme. The indictment charges Rawls with one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud and six counts of bank fraud.

According to the indictment, Rawls devised a scheme which began in August of 2006, and continued through March 29, 2007, and involved the purchase of four residential properties in Madison and Hinds County. The indictment alleges that the primary objective of the conspiracy was to induce approval, funding and distribution of over \$1,000,000.00 in loan proceeds through the deceptive submission of fraudulent representations to Merchants and Farmers Bank, Community Bank of Mississippi and BancorpSouth. The indictment further alleges that Rawls, doing business as Heavenly Homes, manufactured fraudulent documents indicating business revenues of \$1,301,689 and a profit of \$271,530.00 from January 1, 2006 through November 20, 2006. Rawls allegedly submitted this information in furtherance of her scheme with unindicted co-conspirators.

This mortgage fraud investigation is a joint effort led by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and was assisted by other agencies in the Jackson Financial Crimes Task Force, including the Internal Revenue Service, the United States Postal Inspection Service, Housing and Urban Development - Office of Inspector General, Mississippi Department of Banking and Consumer Finance, Mississippi Real Estate Commission and Appraisal Board, the Madison Police Department, and the Madison-Rankin County District Attorney's Office.

Stephen F. Gomez, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Mississippi applauded the work of the Jackson Financial Crimes Task Force, stating, "By combining the assets and resources of our respective agencies, the Task Force is extremely well equipped to address this threat to the financial well-being of the citizens and financial institutions in our community."

Michael Guest, the Madison/Rankin County District Attorney, said, "Our office is pleased to have the opportunity of working with the United States Attorney's Office and other state and federal authorities in bringing perpetrators of mortgage fraud in Madison County to justice. The

fraudulent representations made to lenders in many instances may be viewed as significantly contributing to the high rate of foreclosures and economic uncertainty in Mississippi. We will continue efforts to prosecute these cases whenever and wherever wrongdoers are discovered. ”

U.S. Attorney Stan Harris commended the federal, state, and local agencies who are participating in the Jackson Financial Crimes Task Force. Harris said, “This is a good example, on the anniversary of September 11th, of the excellent work that law enforcement agencies can accomplish when they partner together.”

United States Attorney Stan Harris stressed that this indictment represents an accusation only and all defendants are entitled to a presumption of innocence until proven guilty in a court of law.

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