

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Former Officer of 100 Black Men of New Jersey
Gets 21 Months for Defrauding Charity of More Than \$156,000

(More)

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NEWARK – A former officer of the non-profit charity “100 Black Men of New Jersey” was sentenced today to 21 months in prison for defrauding the organization of more than \$156,000 during his tenure as executive vice-president, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Judge William H. Walls also ordered Keith DaCosta, 44, of Newark to make \$156,000 in restitution to 100 Black Men of New Jersey (100BMNJ). Judge Walls ordered DaCosta to surrender to the federal Bureau of Prisons by Sept. 4 to begin serving his prison sentence.

The court found that the eligible sentencing range for DaCosta under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines was 15 to 21 months in prison, and Judge Walls sentenced DaCosta at the top of that range.

“It’s an appropriate sentence,” said Christie. “DaCosta took money and resources away from a charity he professed to serve but instead used the organization to serve himself.”

DaCosta pleaded guilty on Dec. 6 to one count of wire fraud and admitted that he improperly used the name and credit of 100BMNJ and affiliated organizations to lease and obtain property for personal ventures, and took money from the bank accounts of 100BMNJ and other affiliated entities for his benefit. The conduct occurred between March 2001 and February 2004, while DaCosta served as executive vice-president of 100BMNJ, an unpaid, volunteer position.

The 100BMNJ is a non-profit, charitable organization operating in New Jersey. The mission of the social services organization is to improve the quality of life and enhance the educational opportunities for African-Americans. The organization is funded by various grants, memberships, and fund-raisers. 100BMNJ is a chapter of a national organization known as the 100 Black Men of America, Inc. The national chapter has regional affiliates throughout the United States, including a chapter in Atlanta known as the 100 Black Men of Atlanta, Inc.

DaCosta admitted at his plea hearing that he improperly entered into leases binding the 100BMNJ and 100 Black Men of Atlanta, Inc., causing those organizations to incur liabilities. DaCosta admitted that he entered into the leases to obtain office equipment and rebate checks for the benefit of DaCosta and his personal, for-profit, home health services company, No Barriers Home HealthCare Services, Inc., in New Jersey.

DaCosta also admitted that he used two bank accounts affiliated with the 100BMNJ’s prostate cancer awareness initiatives for personal expenses including hotel stays, meals, dry cleaning, a \$275 pair of Pelle shoes purchased at The Mall at Short Hills, a \$374 fedora and pocket money.

DaCosta acknowledged that, as a result of his fraudulent activity involving the three leases and two bank accounts, he defrauded the 100BMNJ and affiliated organizations of more than \$156,000.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI Newark Division, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Pedro Ruiz, Jr., for developing the case against DaCosta.

The government was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Judith H. Germano.

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Defense Attorney: Richard M. Roberts, Esq., West Caldwell