



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

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TAX RETURN PREPARER FOUND GUILTY AT TRIAL

Orlando, FL - U.S. Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announces that a federal jury yesterday found Thiele Wetzel (73, Daytona Beach) guilty of six counts of assisting in the preparation of six false tax returns. Wetzel faces a maximum penalty of three years in federal prison on each count. His sentencing hearing is scheduled for November 2, 2011.

Wetzel was indicted on April 6, 2011.

According to testimony and evidence presented at trial, Wetzel was a tax return preparer in Daytona Beach for thirty years. He promoted the use of a "common law trust," advising clients that they were not required to pay income taxes if their income was paid to their trusts. Wetzel then prepared false tax returns for those clients that reported approximately \$292,000 in income, when, in fact, those clients had earned about \$3.7 million.

This case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Katherine Ho.