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FOUR INDIVIDUALS INDICTED ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID FRAUD CHARGES

Indictment alleges falsification of GED certificates

Shreveport, Louisiana . . . United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced today that **ANITA D. MORRIS**, age 35, and **KEVIN MORRIS**, age 29, both of Coushatta, Louisiana, along with **DORRIS MORRIS**, age 67, and **RUTH FRAZIER**, age 56, both of Marthaville, Louisiana, have been indicted for committing financial aid fraud and bank fraud in connection with a scheme to defraud the U.S. Department of Education.

A federal grand jury sitting in Shreveport, Louisiana, returned the 16 count indictment charging ANITA MORRIS, DORRIS MORRIS, KEVIN MORRIS and RUTH FRAZIER with 1 count of conspiracy, 8 counts of financial aid fraud and 7 counts of bank fraud.

The indictment alleges that from on or about June 30, 2002 until on or about April 29, 2004, ANITA MORRIS, DORRIS MORRIS, KEVIN MORRIS and FRAZIER participated in a scheme to falsify or direct the falsification of financial aid paperwork and violated regulations in order to receive funds from the U.S. Department of Education by falsifying General Educational Development (GED) certificates and high school

transcripts. The funds that the U.S. Department of Education provided were used for purposes other than to further student education. The amount of loss to the government was approximately \$79,803.

If convicted, the defendants face 5 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both, on the conspiracy count; 30 years in prison, a \$1,000,000 fine, or both, on each count of bank fraud; and 5 years in prison, a \$20,000 fine, or both, on each financial aid fraud count. Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. United States Sentencing Guidelines established by the United States Congress and the United States Sentencing Commission are only used as guidelines by the judge in determining the appropriate sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

An indictment is merely an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. Defendants are entitled to a presumption of innocence under the law, and the government has the burden of proving every element of the charges beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Inspector General, and Northwestern State University Police Department, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert W. Gillespie, Jr.

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