

Disbarred Real Estate Attorney Sentenced to Federal Prison for Stealing Millions from Clients

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Georgia

ATLANTA - Matthew Allen Dickason, a disbarred attorney who was previously licensed to practice law in the State of Georgia, has been sentenced to federal prison for embezzling more than \$3 million from his clients. Dickason used the money for personal purposes and created phony accounting records to cover up his theft.

"Dickason engaged in a long-running and shameful practice of abusing the trust placed in him by his clients and will now serve a prison sentence as a result of his crimes," said U.S. Attorney Ryan K. Buchanan. "This office will continue to work closely with its law enforcement partners to protect the public from attorneys who steal money from their clients."

"As a lawyer, Dickason swore an oath to uphold the law and represent his clients with integrity. Instead, he violated their trust and defrauded innocent victims," said Keri Farley, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Atlanta. "Hopefully, this sentence sends the message that the FBI will doggedly work to protect American citizens and the real estate market from predators who drag down our economy by deception for their own personal gain."

"Closing attorneys serve a vital role for all real estate transactions in Georgia. They are entrusted with protecting their clients during the real estate transaction process. Dickason's actions violated that trust and put many taxpayer-insured FHA mortgages at risk of default. HUD-OIG and our law enforcement partners consider this conduct egregious and hope that today's sentence will deter anyone who contemplates engaging in this conduct," said Tyrone Hardy, Acting Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General, Southeast Region.

"As a mortgage industry insider and attorney, Dickason had a fiduciary duty to his clients and the banks funding the mortgage transactions, but instead he illegally siphoned funds for himself and his mortgage-closing company," said Edwin Bonano, Special Agent-in-Charge of FHFA-OIG's Southeast Region. "Today, justice was served. We are proud to have worked alongside our partner agencies on this case to arrive at today's conclusion."

According to U.S. Attorney Buchanan, the charges and other information presented in court: Matthew Allen Dickason was an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of Georgia and was the owner of Matthew A. Dickason, P.A., a law firm located in Atlanta, Georgia. Dickason specialized in real estate law and was responsible for overseeing hundreds of real estate sales transactions totaling tens of millions of dollars.

While employed as an attorney, Dickason knowingly devised and conducted a scheme to defraud and obtain money from clients under false pretenses. Specifically, Dickason misappropriated millions of dollars belonging to clients who trusted him to handle their real estate transactions. To conceal his scheme, Dickason took one client's money and used it to pay his own or another client's expenses. He used this deceptive practice again and again. This allowed the scheme to go undetected for years. Dickason also hid his fraud by causing false and misleading information to be entered into his law firm's accounting system to make it appear that the firm had paid a client's mortgage when, in fact, Dickason had used the money for fraudulent purposes.

Dickason, 48, formerly of Atlanta, Georgia, and now living in Wellington, Ohio, was sentenced to 27 months of imprisonment, to be followed by three years of supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$3,005,159.19. Dickason was convicted on these charges on October 16, 2023, after he pleaded guilty.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-Office of Inspector General, and the Federal Housing Finance Agency-Office of Inspector General.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Russell Phillips prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact the U.S. Attorney's Public Affairs Office at USAGAN.PressEmails@usdoj.gov or (404) 581-6280. The Internet address for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is <http://www.justice.gov/usao-ndga>.

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