

Former Atlanta attorney convicted of stealing millions of dollars from clients

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For Immediate Release

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

ATLANTA - Matthew Allen Dickason, who was the owner of an Atlanta law firm, has pleaded guilty to federal charges arising from a scheme to defraud the firm's clients.

"It is shameful for an attorney to abuse the trust placed in him by his clients, but that is exactly what Dickason did," said U.S. Attorney Ryan K. Buchanan. "He misappropriated millions of dollars belonging to his clients for his personal benefit with no regard for how his clients would be affected."

"Wire fraud is an offense that the FBI takes very seriously, especially when innocent victims are being defrauded. In this case, it is especially troubling that the crime was orchestrated by a lawyer who swore an oath to uphold the law and represent his clients with integrity," said Keri Farley, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Atlanta. "Dickason was in debt through his own fault and chose to steal from his clients and firm to pay back that debt and finance his business. Now he will pay back his debt to society in prison."

"We remain steadfast in our commitment to working with the U.S. Attorney's Office and our law enforcement partners to aggressively investigate those who threaten HUD programs," said HUD OIG Special Agent in Charge Jerome Winkle. "The criminal actions by this former attorney violated his clients trust and his oath to uphold the law. His actions put many taxpayer-insured FHA mortgages at risk of default through his scheme."

"FHFA-OIG aggressively investigates mortgage fraud schemes, and this one was especially egregious," said Edwin Bonano, Special Agent in Charge of FHFA-OIG's Southeast District. "The victims lost millions as a result of the scheme perpetrated by someone — an attorney, no less — who should have followed all the tenets of the law."

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.C., a law firm located in Atlanta, Georgia. The firm specialized in real estate law and was responsible for overseeing hundreds of real estate sales transactions totaling tens of millions of dollars.

Dickason accepted funds on behalf of clients seeking to purchase real estate. He was not permitted to use his clients' money to pay his own debts and expenses. Nevertheless, Dickason misappropriated millions of dollars belonging to his clients. The majority of the misappropriated funds were used to pay his law firm's operating expenses. After misappropriating client funds, he used new client funds to complete prior real estate transactions.

To hide his fraud, Dickason caused fabricated information to be uploaded into his law firm's accounting system to make it appear the firm was paying off a seller's mortgage when, in fact, Dickason was misappropriating client funds for his own use.

Dickason continued to misappropriate client funds until it became impossible to continue. By that point, victims had suffered millions of dollars in losses.

Matthew Allen Dickason, 47, formerly of Atlanta, Georgia, and now living in Wellington, Ohio, pleaded guilty to wire fraud. Sentencing is scheduled for January 17, 2024 before U.S. District Judge Leigh Martin May.

This case is being 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 is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact the U.S. Attorney's Public Affairs Office at USAGAN.PressEmails@usdoj.gov or (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is <http://www.justice.gov/usao-ndga>.