

NEWS

Ex-judge, three others sentenced in vote fraud

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LEXINGTON, Ky. — A former judge and three other officials in Eastern Kentucky have been sentenced to time served after pleading guilty to charges alleging widespread vote fraud.

A federal judge said during a sentencing hearing Tuesday that three of the defendants — former Clay County Circuit Judge R. Cletus Maricle, former school superintendent Doug Adams and former election officer William Stivers — must serve 100 days of home incarceration.

The Lexington Herald-Leader reports they were also placed on supervised release for two years, along with the fourth defendant, former county clerk Freddy W. Thompson.

Prosecutors said the men used the Clay County Board of Elections to buy or steal votes in 2002, 2004 and 2006.

The U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals last year overturned their convictions after determining that a jury heard evidence it shouldn't have during a trial. They later pleaded guilty in exchange for shorter sentences.

U.S. District Judge Karen Caldwell described their actions as “nothing short of despicable.”

Caldwell gave each man a chance to speak during the hearing. Adams and Maricle chose to do so.

“I am not making any excuses. I am sorry,” Adams said.

Maricle said he hoped for “a new beginning,” saying that “what has been in the past will not be in the future.”

Prosecutor Jason Parman asked the judge to give the men longer sentences, saying they tried to take away voting rights from residents.

“If we don’t stand for democracy, everything else this court does is pretty much meaningless,” Parman said.

Four others who pleaded guilty in the case are scheduled to be sentenced later this month.