

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County Employee Sentenced for Theft

(Fort Worth) – Today Shelly Denise Ables, former court manager for Tarrant County Justice of the Peace Precinct 6, was sentenced to 42 months in prison by Judge Mike Thomas for Theft, \$20,000 - \$100,000 by a Public Servant.

Ables pled guilty to 7 felony counts in all, stemming from stealing money from the court between April 2015 and October 2016. Ables pocketed small amounts of cash at a time to avoid detection. The Tarrant County Auditor's Office was ultimately able to account for 126 individual incidents of theft of taxpayer money paid to the JP court. The Auditor's findings led to a criminal investigation by the Criminal District Attorney's White Collar/Public Integrity Unit.

In all, Ables pled guilty to the theft of more than \$65,000. She pled guilty to all 7 counts and paid full restitution in April of 2018, at which time a pre-sentencing investigative report was ordered by the judge. At today's hearing she received her sentence.

"Ms. Ables was in a position of great public trust in Tarrant County and she abused that trust in one of the worst ways imaginable," said White Collar/Public Integrity Chief Matt Smid. *"This prosecution was a great team effort between the Criminal District Attorney and County Auditor, and yet another example of how white-collar crimes will not be tolerated in Tarrant County."*

In addition to the Theft charge, Ables pled guilty to Misapplication of Fiduciary Property, and 5 counts of Tampering with a Government Document.

She worked for Justice of the Peace Gary Ritchie in Precinct 6 for 23 years. She was terminated in November 2016 after a county audit reported inefficient procedures and money shortages.

END