



Former Pa. judge guilty of corruption

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SCRANTON, Pa., Feb. 18 (UPI) -- A federal jury in Scranton, Pa., Friday found former Luzerne County Judge Mark Ciavarella guilty of racketeering, mail fraud and money laundering.

Ciavarella faces a possible prison sentence and must repay \$997,600 to the government for his role in a kickback scheme in which he sent young offenders to a juvenile detention center run by a private company, WNEP-TV, Scranton, reported.

Ciavarella was charged with 39 counts of racketeering, fraud, money laundering, extortion and filing false tax returns; he was found not guilty on 10 counts of receiving a bribe, eight counts of extortion and four counts of wire fraud, the station said.

The jury deliberated for more than 11 hours in the trial that began Monday, hearing testimony from Internal Revenue Service agents, Luzerne County attorney Robert Powell, former Luzerne County Prothonotary Jill Moran and the defendant, who denied the extortion charges but admitted filing false income tax returns.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 2009 ordered that criminal records be cleared for juveniles sentenced by Ciavarella between 2003 and 2008.

Ciavarella and another judge, Michael T. Conohan, agreed to plead guilty in 2009 to wire fraud and conspiracy, acknowledging they got about \$2.6 million from the owners of two detention centers. But U.S. District Judge Edwin Kosik rejected the plea agreement.

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