

Ex-Sumter County Sheriff Pleads Guilty to Criminal Charges

Tyrone Clark Was Removed from Office in 2016 for Corruption and Neglect of Duty

LIVINGSTON, Ala. (Nov. 27, 2018) – Former Sumter County Sheriff Tyrone Clark, who was removed from office in 2016 for corruption and willful neglect of duty, pleaded guilty Monday to eight criminal charges resulting from an investigation into the operation of the county jail and his dealings with inmates, 17th Circuit District Attorney Greg Griggers announced.

Clark will go before Circuit Court Judge Eddie Hardaway Jr. for sentencing on Jan. 9.

Clark was impeached and removed from office by the Alabama Supreme Court in July 2016. A grand jury indicted him on criminal charges in August 2016.

On Monday, Clark pleaded guilty to eight of the 10 counts for which he was indicted. Six of the eight are felonies that each carries an agreed-to sentence of five years in prison, Griggers said. The other two are misdemeanors that carry a 12-month sentence. However, it will be up to Judge Hardaway to determine the actual sentence.

“We have been dealing with this case for three years,” Griggers said. “It was never my goal to send Tyrone Clark to prison. My goal was to remove him from office, hold him accountable for his crimes and to get rid of what had become a sickness on law enforcement in Sumter County.”

Clark pleaded guilty to the following charges:

- Two counts of unlawful employment of county inmates. The inmates did work on two houses owned by Clark.
- Three counts of ethics violations for using his office for personal gain. These include, among other things, charging inmates a portion of their earnings from working outside of jail without having an authorized work release program, with Clark pocketing the money; the work on his home; and pocketing money from the sale of phone cards to inmates.
- Promoting prison contraband, first degree. This includes providing an inmate with a gun and keys to the jail that would allow the inmate to escape.
- Promoting prison contraband, second degree. This includes allowing the inmate to come and go, and access to a room where he could run a drug operation and engage in other illicit activities.
- Conspiracy to commit a controlled substance crime.

Griggers said his office agreed to drop two charges, human trafficking in the first degree and perjury. “In these kinds of deals, you don’t necessarily get everything you want, but you get what’s most important,” Griggers said. “We gave up on two counts in order to get a deal done that had him plead guilty to eight crimes.”

The next step for Clark is a pre-sentencing report from the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles. Griggers expects Clark to request probation. His office, he said, agreed not to take a position for or against probation.

The district attorney said his main goal already has been accomplished – to remove Clark, hold him accountable and to restore confidence in law enforcement.

"I am very pleased with the direction the Sumter County Sheriff's Office is now moving," Griggers said. "Clark was such a sickness on law enforcement. Getting rid of that problem has allowed the people of Sumter County a chance to get the sheriff's office they deserve."

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