



BCPO News

Robert D. Bernardi, Prosecutor

Raymond E. Milavsky
First Asst. Prosecutor

Frederick A. D'Ascentis
Chief of Investigators



Joel Bewley, Public Information Officer
609-265-5777 c: 609-820-4407
jbewley@co.burlington.nj.us

September 18, 2014

CHARITY GOLF EVENT ORGANIZER CHARGED WITH STEALING PROCEEDS

MOUNT HOLLY, N.J. – Burlington County Prosecutor Robert D. Bernardi announced that a Point Pleasant man who established a charity golf tournament to honor the memory of a deceased friend was charged with theft and other offenses after an investigation revealed that he kept the proceeds from the event for personal gain.

Michael Nelson, age 44, of 612 Rispo Drive in Point Pleasant, N.J., was charged with Theft By Deception (Third Degree), Failure to File a Tax Return (Third Degree), four counts of Filing a Fraudulent Tax Return (Third Degree) and four counts of Failure to Pay Taxes (Third Degree).

The investigation revealed that Nelson, formerly of Maple Shade, N.J., established the tournament in 2000 to raise funds and create a scholarship in the memory of James Limmer Kundrotas, who died in 1996. The scholarship was to be given annually to a graduate of Holy Cross High School in Delran, where Nelson and Kundrotas attended. Publicity materials for The Limmer Open, as the tournament was known, pledged that in addition to the scholarship fund the proceeds would also benefit the American Heart Association. The events were held at courses in Burlington County.

The investigation revealed that Nelson discontinued funding of the scholarship in 2009 and it was abolished by school officials in 2011. Furthermore, no contributions were made to the American Heart Association from 2009 to the present in the name of Kundrotas.

Instead, tournament profits during that time totaling at least \$20,202 were kept by Nelson and used for personal expenses. He failed to establish a separate bank account for the proceeds and comingled the tournament funds with his personal funds. He failed to register the tournament with state or federal authorities as a non-profit fundraising event.

Nelson was taken into custody September 15 at the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office and released on his own recognizance. The case will be presented to a Burlington County Grand Jury to consider whether Nelson should be indicted.

The investigation was conducted by the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office Financial Crimes Unit and the State of New Jersey, Department of the Treasury, Division of Taxation, Office of Criminal Investigation. The Maple Shade Police Department assisted with the investigation. Anyone with information that may be helpful to investigators is asked to call the BCPO at (609) 265-5035 and ask to speak to a detective in the Financial Crimes Unit.

All persons are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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