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Franklin County Man Pleads Guilty, Sentenced for Unlawful Securities Practices

Lovell Jones pleaded guilty Tuesday to one count of unlawful sale of unregistered securities, a fourth-degree felony, and was sentenced to three years community control by Judge Colleen O'Donnell in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas. He also was ordered to pay \$11,000 in restitution.

Jones was indicted in August 2016, along with Mary Hackney of Cook County, Illinois, and Philip Curtis of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Hackney pleaded guilty to one count of misrepresentation in the sale of securities and five counts of theft in September 2017 and was sentenced to four years and 11 months in prison and ordered to pay \$66,850 in restitution. Curtis pleaded guilty in March 2018 to one count of securities fraud and four counts of theft and was sentenced to five years community control and ordered to pay \$14,850 in restitution.

The original indictment alleged the defendants solicited funds between September 2011 and February 2013 from six residents of Ohio, Kansas and North Carolina to invest with Hackney Consulting Group, Inc. and its affiliated companies. Instead of using the money for investment, the indictment alleged the money was used for personal expenses.

The Ohio Division of Securities investigated the allegations and referred the case for prosecution. The case was prosecuted by the office of Franklin County Prosecutor Ron O'Brien and presented by Thomas Allen, assistant prosecuting attorney.

Before investing, the Division of Securities encourages potential investors to call the division's Investor Protection Hotline at 877-683-7841 to ask:

- Has the security been properly registered with the Division of Securities?
- Is the brokerage firm and salesperson licensed to sell securities in Ohio?
- Have any enforcement actions been taken against them?

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