

Inspector General's Investigation Leads to Everett Indictments

The Office of the Inspector General, the state Attorney General and the Massachusetts State Police on March 26, 2004 announced 41 indictments against 11 individuals and five companies charged with defrauding the Everett Public School system.

The indictments alleged that at least 63 contracts worth more the \$552,000 were obtained by fraudulent means including conspiracy, procurement fraud, bid rigging, bid splitting, presentation of false claims, larceny, receiving stolen property and kickbacks between local businessmen and City of Everett Public School employees from 1998 to 2003.

As a result of this investigation, Everett Superintendent of Schools, Frederick Foresteire, was also indicted on one count of receiving stolen property. The indictment alleges that Everett Public School maintenance manager, Lona DeFeo, and Louis Grande, Foresteire's ex-brother-in-law, allegedly stole two Everett Public School air-conditioners worth over \$1,850 and had them installed at Foresteire's home.

Grande was the largest benefactor in the alleged plan to defraud the Everett Public Schools. Grande allegedly participated in numerous bid-rigging and kickback schemes with two other "straw" companies to get around the Commonwealth's sealed bidding process and receive EPS contracts worth over \$250,000.

In the fall of 2004, three individuals and two companies pled guilty to charges arising from the Inspector General's investigation and agreed to pay restitution and fines back to the Everett Public Schools:

- Anthony Fabrizio, Sr., of Burlington plead guilty to conspiracy to commit procurement fraud;
- Roy A Meranda of Malden, individually and as the owner of Roy Merenda & Sons, pled guilty to one count each of procurement fraud and conspiracy to commit procurement fraud, and
- Victor Silva of Haverhill, individually and as the owner of United Building Services pled guilty to one count each of procurement fraud and conspiracy to commit procurement fraud.