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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KC CAB DRIVER SENTENCED FOR EMBEZZLING \$640,000 FROM WEALTHY SENIOR CITIZEN

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – John F. Wood, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a former taxi cab driver, who befriended then embezzled more than \$640,000 from a wealthy customer, was sentenced in federal court today for bank fraud.

Ringling Dan Cohn, 57, of Kansas City, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith this morning to eight years in federal prison without parole. The court also ordered **Cohn** to pay \$640,820 in restitution.

Cohn became acquainted with Griffith Coombs, a wealthy man with assets estimated to be worth several million dollars, in July 2003, and served as his caretaker and legal guardian until Coombs' death in September 2005. For many years prior to July 2003, Coombs had worked as an antiques dealer and resided alone. **Cohn** worked as a Yellow Cab taxi driver and had regularly picked up and transported Coombs to various destinations.

On July 8, 2003, Coombs was diagnosed with fluid within the brain and received a surgically implanted shunt. Given his medical condition and inability to live independently, he was admitted to the skilled nursing home care section of Bishop Spencer Place in Kansas City, Mo., and eventually transferred to an independent-living apartment. On Aug. 21, 2004, **Cohn** moved Coombs out of Bishop Spencer Place and into the basement of his own house.

On Sept. 13, 2005, the Jackson County Division of Aging contacted Coombs at **Cohn's** residence. Coombs was wearing an old knit shirt and a diaper, covered with an old, dirty blanket. Coombs, who was bedridden and unable to leave the room, was extremely dehydrated and confused. The basement was filthy and unusable. Coombs was removed from the residence and died 12 days later at the age of 87 of natural causes. A subsequent search of the residence revealed new furniture in almost every room of the home, two large-screen

television sets, new silverware, new accessories and numerous photographs of the **Cohn** family which had been taken and framed professionally.

Between July 2003 and September 2005, **Cohn** became the legal representative, guardian, attorney-in-fact, conservator and/or guardian, co-trustee, and beneficiary of Coombs and his property and financial assets, which were primarily contained in trust accounts with various banks.

During this time period, **Cohn** utilized his personal and legal guardianship relationships with Coombs to obtain money and property from those trust accounts for unauthorized purposes or self-enrichment – such as extensive personal property and automobiles, including a Hummer – rather than for the care and benefit of Coombs. **Cohn** admitted to making material false representations, possessing and negotiating unauthorized forged checks and instigating improper money gift payments to himself and others.

Cohn also admitted to defrauding financial institutions by misrepresenting or forging either his authority to write checks or his authority to withdraw Coombs' trust account funds, and/or misrepresented the use and purpose of those funds. For example, **Cohn** submitted forged and fraudulent letters, purportedly signed by Coombs, requesting 15 gift checks, each in the amount of \$11,000, be issued from Coombs' trust account and be provided to **Cohn** and others.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney K. Michael Warner. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.