

**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Michigan

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Former International UAW President Dennis Williams Pleads Guilty to Conspiring to Embezzle Union Funds**

Dennis Williams, the former President of the international United Auto Workers union, pleaded guilty today to conspiring with other UAW officials to embezzle UAW funds announced U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider.

Joining in the announcement were Irene Lindow, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, Steven M. D'Antuono, Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit, Michigan office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Sarah Kull, Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit, Michigan office of the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigations, and Thomas Murray, District Director, U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Labor-Management Standards.

Dennis Williams, 67, of Corona, California, pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Paul Borman to charges of conspiring with former UAW President Gary Jones and other senior UAW officials to embezzle UAW dues money between 2010 and September 2019.

Between June 2014 and June 2018, Williams served as the President of the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America ("UAW"). The UAW represents over 400,000 active members and over 580,000 retired members in more than 600 local unions across the United States. Prior to serving as UAW President, Williams was the Secretary-Treasurer of the UAW from June 2010 through June 2014.

During the guilty plea hearing today, Williams admitted that he had conspired with at least six other senior UAW officials in a multi-year conspiracy to embezzle money from the UAW for the personal benefit of himself and other senior UAW officials. UAW officials concealed hundreds of thousands of dollars in personal expenditures in the cost of UAW conferences held in Palm Springs, California, Coronado, California, and Missouri. Between 2010 and 2018, former UAW President and co-defendant Gary Jones and other UAW officials submitted fraudulent expense forms seeking reimbursement from the UAW's Detroit headquarters for expenditures supposedly incurred in connection with UAW leadership and training conferences. In truth, however, Williams and his co-conspirators used the conferences to conceal the hundreds of thousands of dollars in UAW funds spent on lavish entertainment and personal spending for the conspirators.

As part of his guilty plea, Williams admitted the he and other senior UAW officials used UAW money to pay for personal expenses, including multi-month long stays at private villas in Palm Springs, cigars, golfing apparel, green fees at golf courses, and high-end liquor and meals. During the course of the conspiracy, while Williams was UAW President, co-conspirators Gary Jones, Vance Pearson, and others provided themselves and Williams with thousands of dollars in such personal items.

Based on the charge of conspiring to embezzle union funds, Williams faces a maximum of five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

As part of his guilty plea, Williams has agreed to forfeit a custom-made set of Titleist golf clubs and various golf clothing and equipment seized from Williams during an August 2019 search of his

residence. In addition, Williams has agreed to pay taxes to the Internal Revenue Service on embezzled items that he personally received.

Williams is the fifteenth defendant convicted in connection with the ongoing criminal investigation into corruption within the UAW or relating to illegal payoffs to UAW officials by FCA executives. The following other individuals have already pleaded guilty to their participation in the scheme and have been sentenced: former FCA Vice President for Employee Relations Alphons Iacobelli (66 months in prison), former FCA Financial Analyst Jerome Durden (15 months in prison), former Director of FCA's Employee Relations Department Michael Brown (12 months in prison), former senior UAW officials Virdell King (60 days in prison), Keith Mickens (12 months in prison), Nancy A. Johnson (12 months in prison), Monica Morgan, the widow of UAW Vice President General Holiefield (18 months in prison), former UAW Vice President Norwood Jewell (15 months in prison), and former senior UAW official Michael Grimes (28 months). In addition, the following UAW officials have pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing: former UAW President Gary Jones, former UAW Vice President Joseph Ashton, former senior UAW official Jeffrey "Paycheck" Pietrzyk, former UAW Region 5 Director UAW Board member Vance Pearson, and former UAW Midwest CAP President Edward "Nick" Robinson.

U.S. Attorney Schneider commended the outstanding work of the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigations, the U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Labor-Management Standards and Office of Inspector General, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in conducting a comprehensive criminal investigation into labor corruption activities involving a vital sector of the local and national economy.

"Former UAW President Dennis Williams has accepted responsibility for his conduct and, in that way, has contributed to our efforts with the union's current leadership towards reforming the UAW to better serve its members and their families," said United States Attorney Matthew Schneider. "Today's conviction demonstrates that we will continue our drive forward to provide ethical and honest leadership for the UAW's membership."

"Today's conviction is another step towards combatting corruption within the UAW. Williams conspired with other senior UAW officials to embezzle over \$1 million in union funds. Williams spent the embezzled funds on extravagant meals, liquor, golf, and travel for personal enrichment. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to investigate corrupt union officials who betray the union members they are entrusted to represent," stated Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

"Years of fraud and corruption by the UAW's elected officials continue to be exposed through the diligent and collaborative work of law enforcement," said Steven M. D'Antuono, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Detroit. "As I have often said, the hard-working men and women of the UAW deserve so much better. It is my sincere hope that the convictions obtained over the course of this investigation have begun the process of ensuring honest leadership takes the helm of one of the most important labor unions in this country."

"Today's guilty plea further illustrates the systemic corruption at the UAW's highest levels," said Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation Special Agent in Charge, Sarah Kull. "IRS-CI is committed to prosecuting anyone who illegally diverts funds from the UAW."

"Dennis Williams' guilty plea today shows that instead of fulfilling his fiduciary duty to his fellow union members, Williams chose to betray their trust and embezzle hundreds of thousands of dollars from the UAW for the personal benefit of himself and other high-ranking UAW officers," said Thomas Murray, District Director, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor-Management Standards. "OLMS will continue to work with its fellow law enforcement partners and the U.S.

Attorney's Office to remove corrupt union officers and other officials within the UAW International Union."

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys David A. Gardey, Steven Cares, and Adriana Dydell.