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September 29, 2008

MADIGAN: ROCKFORD ATTORNEY CONVICTED OF STEALING FROM CLIENTS

Chicago — Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that a Rockford attorney has pled guilty to stealing more than \$70,000 in client funds for personal use.

Daniel A. Cwynar pled guilty to one count of theft, a Class 2 felony, and one count of deceptive practices, a Class 4 felony. The court sentenced him to two years of felony probation and 50 hours of community service. The Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission previously suspended Cwynar from practicing law for three years as a result of his offenses.

"This individual violated the great trust given to attorneys by their clients," Madigan said. "His conviction should signal that no one is above the law.

In October 2003, Cwynar represented a client in divorce proceedings and the court in that case ordered him to hold approximately \$332,000 in a client trust account. In April 2004, when a settlement was reached, Cwynar's client trust account showed a balance of approximately \$262,000, revealing he had spent more than \$70,000 for his own business and personal purposes.

Cwynar's deceptive practices charge was based on his conduct in depositing a \$2,500 check written from a previously closed client trust account into a new savings account in July 2004. At the time that he did this, Cwynar knew that the old client trust account had been closed due to overdraft activity and understood that no funds would be available to honor the \$2,500 check.

Assistant Attorney General Neal Goodfriend handled the case for Madigan's Financial Crimes Bureau.

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