



# Jesse White

---

## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

### ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**November 17, 2000**

- CONTACT: Dave Druker  
or
- CONTACT: Randy Nehrt

#### **Secretary White Announces Two Scam Artists Sentenced for Securities Fraud in Two Separate Cases**

**SPRINGFIELD** - Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White announced today that Richard D. Ronne was sentenced to serve 51 months in jail for securities fraud. This case came as a result of an investigation by the Secretary of State's Illinois Securities Department.

"I am pleased with the sentence handed down by the court," said Secretary White. "We are committed to cracking down on these scam artists and we are working to send a strong message: if you take advantage of Illinois investors, you will go to jail."

The Secretary of State's office worked in cooperation with U.S. Attorney Scott Lassar's office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Illinois State Police.

Richard D. Ronne, 58, of 227 E. Benton St., Stockton, IL was sentenced to serve 51 months in jail and to pay restitution of \$189,000 after being charged with four counts of transporting investment checks obtained by fraud across state lines, three counts of wire fraud, and two counts of mail fraud.

Beginning in 1994, Ronne defrauded over \$240,000 from 18 investors (seven from Illinois, 10 from Wisconsin and one from California).

Ronne told investors that their money would be invested in a night club/restaurant in Florida, a wholesale meat packing company in Rockford and other unspecified business ventures. After Ronne received the money, he used the money for personal expenses (payments on his home mortgage and credit card bills), paid previous investors with later investor's funds in a ponzi scheme and invested in a high risk venture where he lost all the money. Ronne conducted the scheme through two

businesses he formed: Richard D. Ronne Realty and Investments, Inc. located in Janesville, WI and Creative Financial Network located in Stockton, IL and Beloit, WI.

He was convicted after a five-day jury trial in Rockford. Ronne, a former police officer, and his companies have been permanently prohibited from offering or selling securities in the State of Illinois and in Wisconsin.

In another unrelated case, William C. Grabowski, 54, of 209 S. Arlington Heights Rd. in Arlington Heights pled guilty to one count of Securities Fraud and was sentenced to 30 Months Probation and to pay restitution of \$64,000.

Grabowski defrauded a Des Plaines woman out of \$70,000 while acting as her accountant. Grabowski told the woman that her money would be invested in an "Earnings Enhancement Program" offered by William Ronald McAtee and McAtee & Associates. The woman was promised a five percent rate of return on her investment and also that her investment would be guaranteed by a Prime Bank. Grabowski never invested the money as promised.

In this case the Secretary of State's office worked with Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan's office.

Secretary of State White's Securities Department has permanently prohibited Grabowski, William Ronald McAtee and McAtee & Associates from offering and/or selling securities in Illinois.

Secretary of State White's Securities Department regulates the Illinois securities industry. Illinois requires that all securities dealers, salespersons and investment advisers and their securities offerings register with the department unless exempt by law. The department investigates consumer allegations of fraud and improper practices in the securities marketplace. People who believe they have been a victim of securities fraud should contact Secretary White's Illinois Securities Department at 1-800-628-7937.