



## **AG ANNOUNCES ARRESTS OF FORMER STATE SENATOR & STAFFER FOR ETHICS LAW AND FAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICES ACT VIOLATIONS**

(MONTGOMERY) –Attorney General Luther Strange announced the arrests today of former State Sen. Lowell Ray Barron and Barron’s former campaign staffer, Rhonda Jill Johnson, for Ethics Law and Fair Campaign Practices Act violations. Johnson, 47, was arrested by the DeKalb County Sheriff’s Office and agents of the Attorney General’s Office. Barron, 71, surrendered this afternoon at the DeKalb County Sheriff’s Office.

Attorney General Strange's Special Prosecutions Division presented evidence to a DeKalb County grand jury, resulting in the indictment\* of Barron and Johnson on April 19.

The indictment charges Barron and Johnson with six total counts of Ethics law violations and violations of the Fair Campaign Practices Act. Specifically:

Count 1 charges Lowell Barron and Jill Johnson with violating State Ethics law by converting a \$2,000 check written on the Barron for Senate campaign account to Jill Johnson, to personal use;

Count 2 charges Barron and Johnson with violating State Ethics law by converting a \$50,000 check written on the Barron for Senate campaign account to Jill Johnson, to personal use;

Count 3 charges Barron and Johnson with violating the Fair Campaign Practices Act for improper use of excess campaign contributions for a \$2,000 check written on the Barron for Senate campaign account, to Jill Johnson for non-campaign purposes;

Count 4 charges Barron and Johnson with violating the Fair Campaign Practices Act for improper use of excess campaign contributions for a \$50,000 check written on the Barron for Senate campaign account, to Jill Johnson for non-campaign purposes;

Count 5 charges Barron and Johnson with violating the Fair Campaign Practices Act for improperly transferring campaign property, a 2007 Toyota Camry, to Jill Johnson for non-campaign purposes; and

Count 6 charges Barron and Johnson with violating the Fair Campaign Practices Act for improper use of excess campaign contributions for a \$6,000 check written on the Barron for Senate campaign account, to Jill Johnson for non-campaign purposes.

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No further information about the investigation or about Barron's or Johnson's alleged crimes other than that stated in the indictment may be released at this time.

If convicted, both face a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and fines of up to \$30,000 for each of the six counts in the indictment.

The Attorney General commended Special Prosecutions Division Chief Matt Hart, Assistant Attorneys General Bill Lisenby Jr. and Pete Smyczek, and agents of the Attorney General's Special Prosecutions Division.

*\*Note: An indictment is merely an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.*