

SF To Hold Graduation Ceremonies June 4

The graduation ceremony for Southern Fulton will take place on Thursday, June 4, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in the high school auditorium. The doors will open at 6:00 p.m.



Daniel Wolfe

The valedictorian of Southern Fulton's Class of 2009 is Daniel Franklin Wolfe, son of Dennis and Linda Wolfe of Warfordsburg. He is an active participant and leader in many school activities, serving as captain of the Scholastic Scrimmage team, band president, chorus vice president, Student Forum treasurer, National Honor Society Web master, drama club member and a part of the morning announcement team. In addition to being selected as the outstanding senior bandsman, Daniel has received scholastic awards in the subjects of math, history, physics, chemistry and Spanish. On June 4, Daniel will deliver his speech, "Taking Care of Your Dreams," to the Class of 2009, faculty, administration and parents. His speech will emphasize that "while dreams and goals are important, they fall apart without hard work and perseverance." Daniels' post-secondary plan is to attend the University of Pennsylvania, majoring in economics.



Elaina Truax

Southern Fulton is pleased to call Elaina Blessing Truax, daughter of Larry and Sue Truax of Needmore, the salutatorian of the class of 2009. Elaina has held various leadership positions, serving as the president of the National Honor Society and president of the senior class. She is a member of the girl's varsity basketball and track teams and is on the school's Scholastic Scrimmage team. Elaina participates in chorus and Ensemble and has been involved in several school musicals. She has been honored by receiving the Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizenship award, winning the VFW school essay contest, and was recently named the 2009 prom queen. Elaina is also very active in her church and community, and has discovered that her passion is working with children. Following the June 4 graduation, Elaina plans to attend Elizabethtown College in Lancaster County, majoring in preliminary medicine with an emphasis on pediatrics. Elaina will address the graduates with her speech, entitled "Remembering Our Heritage," emphasizing the benefits of growing up in a close-knit community and the fact that "while our lives may grow in different directions, our roots will always remain as one."

Jesse Smartt, son of Scott and



Jesse Smartt

Karen Smartt of Needmore, has earned the honor of being ranked third in the 2009 graduating class of Southern Fulton High School. His activities include varsity football, baseball and basketball, Art Honor Society, Student Council, Honor Guard, and attending Needmore Bible Church. His speech, "The Potential of Potential," will address the ability everyone has in life and what may result if this ability is applied in the most productive manner. Jesse has a profound interest in the anatomy of the human body and a passion for helping the injured return to full strength. It is his hope that these qualities will propel him in the future as a physical therapist. He plans to attain his degree at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, beginning this fall.



Elizabeth Hartman

Elizabeth Gwen Hartman, daughter of Larry and Carla Hartman of Warfordsburg, has achieved the rank of fourth in Southern Fulton High School's Class of 2009. Elizabeth has been very involved in several groups, including National Honor Society, chorus, ensemble and band. She has also been involved in track, earning a varsity letter. Elizabeth participates in her church youth program and also leads the music in the Sunday morning meetings. She has been honored with awards in district and regional choir and district band, as well as holding lead roles in "The Sound of Music" and "Oklahoma." Because of her love for children and her passion for music, she has decided to pursue a career in music education at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Earning this rank has given Elizabeth the opportunity to deliver the "Class History" speech.

Cycling Race Canceled

ALTOONA, Pa. (AP) - A western Pennsylvania bicycle race that had been held for 22 consecutive years is canceled this year for lack of sponsorship money.

The Altoona-based Tour de Toona race would have been held in July if not for the cancellation.

The race was scaled back in 2008 from its seven-day format to a one-day race. Tour media director Bob Leverknight says race organizers plan to return to a multi-day event in 2010.

Leverknight says this is more than a regional economic loss but also harms the development of world-class cyclists.

Ex-Aide To Gov. Ridge Pleads Guilty In 2nd Theft

By MARK SCOLFORO
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) - A woman who admitted stealing thousands of dollars from Gov. Tom Ridge's re-election campaign funds nearly a decade ago pleaded guilty Wednesday to stealing about \$1.1 million from the Harrisburg real estate and investment company that later hired her.

Lauretta S. "Laurie" Simmons, 44, spent the money on real estate in the Caribbean island of Aruba, vintage automobiles, bicycles worth \$6,000 apiece and a \$41,000 wine collection, she said in court records.

Simmons also said she bought designer furniture, a Cartier watch and a Vespa scooter - and stocked her modest home in Lemoyne with hundreds of gold and silver coins.

Simmons was ordered to relinquish all of those goods and more as part of a plea deal that is likely to result in a federal prison sentence of about four years, Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Brandler said during a 20-minute hearing during which she pleaded guilty to wire fraud.

Simmons went to work in 1999 as an administrative assistant to Joseph V. Sweeney, head of the firm that bears his name, after the Ridge campaign fired her. In the earlier case, she pleaded guilty to mail fraud and was ordered to pay \$94,000 in restitution.

She also was sentenced to a year and a day in prison but was released after spending a short time in a Harrisburg halfway house, Brandler said.

Her embezzlement from Joseph V. Sweeney and Associates - which does business as Public Affairs Consultants - and a related company, Arcus Properties LLP, occurred over a three-year period that began in January 2006. She handled bank business, including writing checks and making deposits.

"She was virtually unsupervised in this activity during the years she handled these responsibilities," Brandler told U.S. District Judge William W. Caldwell.

A bounced check and questionable wire transfer alerted Sweeney, who notified police, Brandler said. The FBI secretly recorded a subsequent meeting between the two.

"She admitted during that meeting that she stole the funds and she admitted she betrayed Mr. Sweeney," Brandler told the judge.

Simmons and her lawyer, Terry McGowan, declined comment after Wednesday's plea hearing. A phone message left for Sweeney was not immediately returned.

Brandler said her plea deal depended on her cooperating in a criminal investigation not related to the theft from the business. He declined to elaborate.

Federal sentencing guidelines will probably generate a range of 46 to 57 months, although the maximum possible sentence is 20 years and a \$2.2 million fine, Brandler said.

McGowan told Caldwell the precise amount of the theft was still being calculated, but he agreed that \$1.1 million was "in the ballpark."

Caldwell ordered a pre-sentence report due by mid-July, after which she will be sentenced. Simmons told the judge she is currently unemployed.

Simmons provided prosecutors with an account of her possessions that were obtained with Sweeney's money. They include a \$225,000 property in West Punt, Aruba, as well as real estate in Florida, Arizona, Colorado and Texas. She also listed a 1979 Chevrolet Corvette, a 1973 Ford Bronco, a 1965 Ford Mustang, a

2004 Range Rover and five bicycles that together she valued at \$23,000.

She said a \$145,000 property in Chincoteague, Va., was not subject to forfeiture, but Brandler said it might be sold to pay restitution.

Simmons helped raise about \$24 million during Ridge's two runs for governor before she was fired as a \$78,000-a-year deputy campaign manager in August 1998. During her October 2000 sentencing - also before Caldwell - she expressed remorse, and her lawyer said she had been affected by the end of a 12-year relationship and needed to pay debts.

Probation For McCain Volunteer In Fake Pa. Attack

By JOE MANDAK
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PITTSBURGH (AP) - A former John McCain campaign volunteer who falsely claimed she was attacked in Pittsburgh because she had the candidate's bumper sticker on her car will spend nine months on probation in a special program for first-time offenders.

An Allegheny County judge accepted Ashley Todd, 21, of College Station, Texas, into the program along with about 120 others - mostly drunk drivers - in a group court appearance Friday.

"This is a privilege to be in this program," Senior Common Pleas Judge Robert Gallo told the group. "In normal language, you're getting a break today."

In October, Todd claimed a Barack Obama supporter robbed and assaulted her near an automatic teller machine in Pittsburgh, and then scratched a "B" on her cheek after noticing the McCain sticker on her car. Police said they doubted her story from the start - in part because the "B" on her face was backward - and eventually determined she made it up. She was charged with a misdemeanor false report count.

Todd didn't speak during her 30-second appearance before the judge. She declined to comment as she left the building, saying, "I didn't have any (comment) before, and don't have any now."

A male friend escorted her out of the courthouse, showing a local television cameramen in a hallway.

Todd must also perform 50 hours of unspecified community service. If she completes the probation without incident, her criminal record will be expunged.

When Todd was freed on bond in October, she was required to stay with an uncle in New York, but also provide the court with her Texas address and one for her mother. She also had to prove she was receiving mental health treatment every two weeks.

A probation officer explained the continuing terms of Todd's release to her, but they were not made public.

Erie Mom's Baby-Swinging Sentence Upheld On Appeal

ERIE, Pa. (AP) - A northwestern Pennsylvania woman who swung her infant like a baseball bat at her boyfriend in a 2006 fight has lost her appeal and must return to prison.

Erie County Judge William Cunningham on May 5 released 29-year-old Chytoria Graham on \$20,000 bond pending her appeal.

But now the judge says Graham must surrender by Wednesday so she can resume serving her five- to 10-year sentence, after the state Superior Court affirmed

the penalty Friday.

Graham was sentenced in 2007 for aggravated assault and other charges, but appealed claiming her public defenders were ineffective.

Graham confessed to police that she swung her then 4-week-old son like a baseball bat and hit her boyfriend with the baby in October 2006. The baby has recovered from a fractured skull.

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