

District Attorney Marc Bennett  
18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Kansas



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**Wichita, Kansas** - A woman convicted at jury trial of financially abusing an elderly person was sentenced to probation Friday before Sedgwick County District Court Judge Bruce Brown.

Laurie Fernandez, 39 of Wichita, was convicted on June 1, 2016, of taking about \$18,000 in gifts, loans and payments for lawn services from a 90-year-old Wichita man during a three-month period in 2015. The man's family reported the losses to the Kansas Department of Children and Families and Wichita Police, who presented the case to the District Attorney. The case was charged after investigators learned that many of the statements made to the victim to induce the payments were false or misleading. Some of the lawn services were never completed as well.

The victim testified at jury trial that he thought Fernandez was his friend who needed help because she was attending Wichita State University and working for a local hospital. Evidence at trial contradicted that claim. The victim testified that he met Fernandez when she was going door-to-door soliciting landscaping work.

Judge Brown ordered a 13-month prison sentence and payment of \$10,000 in restitution to the victim. Because of her lack of criminal history, the prison sentence was suspended and Fernandez was placed on probation for two years to allow for repayment to the victim. Fernandez must make a minimum payment of \$100 a month.

Judge Brown told Fernandez that he would extend the probation until the case is paid off. Fernandez told the judge that she intends to pay all the money back to the victim.

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