

## **Notice**

### **FRAUDULENT TRANSFER OF REAL ESTATE**

Common Pleas Court President Judge C. Darnell Jones II today announced a new court program to quickly resolve cases for victims of fraudulent real estate title transfers.

Cases involving this type of fraud will be specially identified upon filing of an “Action to Quiet Title” and assigned for an expedited hearing to resolve the matter. This program assures that after a 30 day period in which parties are required to be served with notice of a hearing on the matter, it will be listed immediately for a hearing before President Judge Jones or his designee for resolution.

A critical element of the new program is that a pro-bono attorney will be appointed for citizens who cannot afford an attorney to assist them in this legal matter. To provide legal representation to victims of these real estate scams, Judge Jones will call on established pro bono attorneys and will also enlist students from the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel and Temple law schools to assist in case resolution.

Jones noted the importance of this new program as a way to protect real estate ownership, a key foundation of Philadelphia’s economic stability. He explained that victims of fraudulent title transfers tend to be vulnerable citizens such as the elderly, ill or absentee owners who have inherited property. “The court system is here to serve the public, and this is a proactive approach to do just that,” he said.

Prior to this program, a victim could be subjected to lengthy legal proceedings in order to resolve the matter or have their property returned to them. Real estate thieves able to forge deeds and secure fraudulent notarization of such documents then sell off the properties to both knowing and unknowing purchasers. The matters are often complicated by the time they reach the court and traditionally have been slow to obtain a hearing. The major benefit of the new program is that cases will be resolved in less than two months, rather than the traditional 12 month period.

Judge Jones advised that people who believe they are the victims of the “Fraudulent Transfer of Property” can call a special number for assistance: (215)-686-2907. Citizens should leave their name, address where they currently reside, and the address of the property in question