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# S&L owner faces prison term

DALLAS (AP) — A federal jury late Tuesday found former Western Savings Association owner Jarrett Woods guilty of bank fraud in the use of thrift funds to pay gambling debts and assist a Houston developer.

Woods, 48, faces up to 175 years in prison and \$8.2 million in fines when he is sentenced by U.S. District Judge Robert Maloney on June 18.

Jurors deliberated for three days before reaching the verdict. "We're gratified by the jury's verdict," said prosecutor Susan Greenberg.

Woods' attorney, Shirley

Baccus-Lobel, could not be reached for comment.

Woods is one of the last major thrift figures in North Texas to be tried for wrongdoing in connection with the collapse of a savings and loan. Western's failure in 1986 is estimated to have cost taxpayers \$1.7 billion.

In December, prosecutors brought a second case against Woods, seven charges of misapplication of funds and making false statements to regulators, for a 1985 real estate transaction designed to inflate the thrift's net worth. His attorney tried unsuccessfully to have the

cases consolidated.

In the just-finished trial, Woods was accused of illegally taking \$18 million from Western in four separate transactions in 1984, 1985 and 1986.

Two of the transactions involved complex loan schemes, including use of Western profits, to help Houston developer James Reagin pay delinquent loans at Western and other thrifts.

The other transactions were to pay off debts Woods accrued playing a gambling game called "Stack 'Em," in which participants bet whether the next quarter in a stack will have heads

or tails facing up.

During the trial, Ed McBirney III, former chairman of failed Sunbelt Savings, testified under a plea arrangement with government prosecutors that he won \$5 million in a "Stack 'Em" game with Woods. Prosecutors said Woods took \$510,000 from Western to put a down payment on a home McBirney sought a payoff for the debt.

McBirney, accused in 1987 of 17 counts fraud in connection with Sunbelt's failure, agreed to plead guilty to four counts in return for a maximum possible punishment of 15 years in prison.

# Residents unite to rescue community

AUSTIN (AP) — When H.V. and Mary Williams moved to the Truman Heights neighborhood in East Austin 33 years ago, it was a quiet rural community.

Their home was only the second to be built on Samuel Huston Avenue. But more people followed, and schools and churches sprang up. The community thrived with a vibrant mixture of middle- and working-class couples.

Some who moved here in the 1950s and 1960s have died of old age while others are retired now. And scared.

Crack cocaine, which police say made its debut in Austin about three years ago, changed the face of this neighborhood. And residents have been forced to change with it. They mobilized a "Save Our Neighborhood" association, met monthly with police, even went to court to obtain injunctions against the owners of two alleged crack houses.

But despite innovative methods of fighting drug activity, residents fear the war is being

lost.

"We never knew of drugs. There were no drugs. This was a nice community, and we felt real good about it," said Mary Williams, a retired Austin schoolteacher.

But as the community aged, its face began to change. Homes once occupied by homeowners are now rented out by absentee landlords. Police sirens pierce the roar of planes overhead.

Down the hill from Williams' home, crowds gather near the corner of Samuel Huston Avenue and Webberville Road and the corner of Samuel Huston and Bunche Road. Cars stop in the middle of the street and people approach them, while other traffic waits. Money changes hands and the drivers move on.

Police and residents agree the transactions likely are drug deals.

The Samuel Huston and Webberville intersection is one of 31 places noted on a list of major street-level drug markets made public by

the Austin Police Department in a report explaining a 72-person street-level drug task force being formed.

Residents hope the task force will help. "Last night, it was terrible. We always go out at night. I was coming home last night and they just flag you down, trying to sell drugs. It's not a good feeling," Mary Williams said one night last week as the crowds once again began to gather.

She tells a story of the man who got away. It's the story of how "Save Our Neighborhood" was born about one year ago.

"The officers were chasing a car right in front of me," Mrs. Williams said, pointing out her front room window. "The suspect jumped out of the car and ran behind the neighbor's house. . . . It was exciting. It was a white car. A nice late-model car. It stopped right in the middle of the street. The suspect got out and left the car. The officer got out and ran too. It was scary to look at."

Wishes of wildlife services go ignored

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — The federal agencies that manage coastal fish and wildlife resources need the power to veto potentially destructive developments, a National Marine Fisheries Service biologist said Monday.

Without that veto, NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can only make recommendations to other agencies that make decisions about development, said James R. Chambers, acting director of NMFS's Office of Habitat Protection. He conceded in a later interview such a veto power would never be given to a wildlife resource agency.

Those decisions have led to mass destruction of coastal habitat and coastal resources, Chambers told the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. The pressure for more development along the nation's coasts is increasing, he said.

"By the year 2010, an estimated 54 percent of the U.S. population will live within 50 miles of the coast," he said.

This trend, and its threats to living marine resources, is growing particularly fast on the southern east Atlantic and Gulf coasts, he said.

On those coasts, fish species valued by both recreational and commercial fishermen "are almost completely dependent upon estuarine and coastal habitats for their survival," Chambers said.

Habitat destruction may be as important as overfishing to the destruction of those fish stocks, he said.

In Chesapeake Bay, he said, the number of striped bass fell 70 percent from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, while the number of hickory shad fell 96 percent, alewife and blueback herring fell 92 percent and 66 percent of American shad disappeared.

Meanwhile, the bay's oyster population has declined by more than 96 percent, he said.

"Half the bay's wetlands and 40 percent of its forested areas have been destroyed," Chambers said. "Ninety percent of its seagrass meadows, the prime nursery habitat have been lost."

"More oil washes down the watershed's storm drains each year than was spilled by the Exxon Valdez."

The Southeast has more than 300 estuaries containing 17.2 million acres of coastal marsh, major commercial fishery landings on the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts have decreased 40 percent since 1982, he said.

# Senator's contributions live, thrive despite untimely death

WASHINGTON (AP) — A quarter of a century ago, a young Republican senator from Texas named John Tower was swept up in a Senate ethics battle over a Yankee Democrat.

Sen. Thomas Dodd of Connecticut stood accused of misusing campaign funds and faced certain censure by his colleagues. Tower, however, supported him.

On the eve of the showdown vote, one of the old Senate lions approached Tower. "Son," he said, "what you're doing is admirable. It's good that you realize we're a closely knit club."

"But," he reminded him, "we shoot the wounded."

Tower nonetheless cast a dissenting vote the next day when the Senate condemned Dodd by a vote of 92-5.

Some 22 years later, the Senate shot down Tower himself. Wounded by rumors of strong drink and a weakness for women, he was rejected by three votes as President Bush's Secretary of Defense.

"He got a taste of that early lesson," says former U.S. House Speaker Jim Wright, a Texas Democrat who likewise was banished by his colleagues. "They do indeed shoot the wounded."

"But I think he got a bum rap."

Wright's recollections preceded the anniversary of Tower's death April 5, 1991. Tower, 65, and a daughter, Marian, 35, were among 23 killed when a commuter plane crashed in Georgia.

Tower was en route to a party promoting his book, "Consequences," a ferociously defensive account of the Senate confirmation brawl.

Some suggest the suddenness of his death, coming as it did on the heels of the Senate debacle, obscured Tower's unique contributions to his party, state and his country.

As a member and later chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Tower was the architect of the American military buildup that Ronald Reagan used to end the Cold War with the Soviet Union.

Sen. Minority Leader Robert Dole of Kansas insists the U.S. victory in the Persian Gulf could also be traced to Tower's stewardship of the nation's defense.

The war showcased the

weaponry of Tower's arsenal.

In times of national crisis, President Reagan twice turned to Tower. First as a strategic arms negotiator and later as chairman of the Special Review Board on the Iran-contra scandal.

Associates say Tower hired the best and brightest aides, including women and minorities, and most are sprinkled now through all levels and branches of government.

"Washington is John Tower's town," former Texas Congressman Tom Loeffler, himself a Tower alumnus, said when his mentor left the Senate in 1985.

At the time, another former aide, Republican Cyndi Krier of San Antonio, was the only woman in the Texas Senate.

Tower was the first Republican to win a statewide Texas race since reconstruction, snatching Lyndon Johnson's old senate seat in a 1961 special election.

Short and stiff with slicked-back hair, tailored suits, starched shirts and French cuffs, Tower seemed the least likely person to lead Texas Republicans out of the political wilderness.

But he did.

Tower helped mold the GOP into a competitive force from the courthouse to the statehouse, and even the White House.



Tower

# Agencies need veto power, says director

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- Environmental Issues Committee of Student Government
- ExCEL (Excellence uniting Culture, Education, and Leadership)
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