



**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY PROSECUTOR**

**MERCER COUNTY  
COURT HOUSE  
P.O. BOX 8068**

**JOSEPH L. BOCCHINI, JR.**  
*Prosecutor*

**TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08650-0068**  
**PHONE: (609) 989-6350**  
**(609) 989-6305**  
**FAX #: (609) 989-0161**

**ANGELO J. ONOFRI**  
*First Assistant Prosecutor*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
May 9, 2013

**CONTACT:** Casey A. DeBlasio  
(609) 989-6379

## **Hightstown Funeral Director Pleads Guilty to Stealing \$750,000 from 96-Year-Old Woman**

**TRENTON** – A Hightstown funeral director under indictment for taking approximately \$750,000 from a 96-year-old relative pleaded guilty Thursday morning, Mercer County Prosecutor Joseph L. Bocchini Jr. announced.

Joseph Barlow, 69, of North Main Street, Cranbury, pleaded guilty before Mercer County Superior Court Judge Thomas Brown to a second-degree charge of misappropriation of entrusted funds.

Barlow became the 96-year-old victim's power of attorney in March 2010. Over a two-year period, he wrote and endorsed multiple checks, closed out the victim's life insurance policy, and liquidated various other assets. The stolen funds, totaling approximately \$750,000, were used for Barlow's funeral home business. He was arrested and charged on June 20, 2012.

Under the terms of the plea agreement, Barlow will receive a five-year suspended sentence conditioned on serving 10 days in jail. He will have to repay the stolen monies, starting with a \$50,000 payment at the time of sentencing, followed by \$70,000 per year until the victim is fully reimbursed. The victim will also receive a twenty percent interest in Barlow's funeral home business. Sentencing is scheduled for July 19.

Bocchini credited Detective Michele Russell of the prosecutor's Economic Crime Unit and Detective Benjamin Miller of the Hightstown Police Department with the investigation leading to the guilty plea. Assistant Prosecutor James Scott, chief of the Economic Crime Unit, represented the state.

###