

Couple who ran Waterford medical marijuana business gets probation

Published: Tuesday, October 11, 2011

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Of The Oakland Press



A husband and wife who ran a business that served medical marijuana patients and caregivers said they fully believed they were acting within the law.

William and Candace Teichman were each sentenced Tuesday to one year of probation after pleading guilty to various drug charges.

“I’m truly remorseful that this happened,” an emotional William Teichman told Oakland Circuit Judge Phyllis McMillen.

The Teichmans operated Everybody’s Cafe and Herbal Remedies in Waterford Township. The facilities were raided in August 2010, thrusting the couple into the center of a public dispute with the Oakland County law enforcement community involving the state’s medical marijuana law.

Officials have said that before the raid took place, undercover officers were sold marijuana at the cafe.

The Teichmans were each charged with several counts, including delivery/manufacture of marijuana and conspiracy to deliver marijuana.

In August, they pleaded guilty under a deal that included the dismissal of a felony firearms charge against William Teichman, the main factor in their decision to enter pleas.

Defense attorney Michael Komorn said in court Tuesday that William Teichman, a 52-year-old Oakland University graduate who works at Chrysler, purchased Everybody's Cafe as part of his retirement plan. He was later approached by members of a compassion club who wanted to meet there.

William Teichman said he wouldn't have gotten in trouble if the laws surrounding medical marijuana had been clearer. He said he had researched the law thoroughly and consulted with attorneys, and believed what he and his wife were doing was legal. He was sentenced on a total of nine counts.

At her sentencing later in the afternoon, Candace Teichman, 47, echoed her husband's comments. "I believed in my heart I was following the law," she said.

Komorn told both McMillen and Oakland Circuit Judge Rae Lee Chabot, who presided over Candace Teichman's sentencing, that a fine would be sufficient and there was no need for a sentence of probation. Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor Cindy Brown asked that the judges follow the probation department's recommendation and give them probation.

Komorn said the Teichmans, unlike other people with a criminal intent, operated their businesses in transparency. He said at the time of the raid, there was some confusion regarding the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act. The first related state Court of Appeals case didn't come out until after the Teichmans were arrested, he said.

Komorn said the raid and subsequent events damaged the Teichmans spiritually, emotionally and financially. They lost their house, he said.

The Teichmans used to live in White Lake Township, but now reside in Gaylord in what used to be their second home.

Candace Teichman told Chabot that she has lived "13 months of hell" since the raid. She said she has had to take strong painkillers for her scoliosis and arthritis since she is not allowed to ingest marijuana, which she views as medicine.

Brown asked each judge to order that each defendant surrender their medical marijuana patient or caregiver cards while on probation.

McMillen ordered William Teichman to surrender his cards, while Chabot said she had an issue with that and did not order Candace Teichman to surrender her cards.

William and Candace Teichman must follow a number of rules while on probation. One probation condition is that they cannot use a controlled substance without a prescription.

After both sentencing hearings, Komorn said the Teichmans were “victims of the lack of clarity, or at least the various ways in which this law was being interpreted.”