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Shakopee attorney sentenced for tax evasion

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Attorney Sam McCloud, known for his outsized personality and his ability to get clients and himself out of legal jams, showed little of his trademark brashness in federal court in Minneapolis on Thursday as he quietly accepted an 18-month prison sentence for tax evasion.

McCloud, 68, of Shakopee, wearing a dark suit, his white hair flowing to his shoulders, opted to say nothing to U.S. District Judge Patrick Schiltz before he was sentenced.

His attorney, Ryan Garry, told the judge that his client, a father of 10 who for 37 years has fought for clients and worked for free on nearly all of the 150 appeals he argued, is remorseful for failing to report nearly \$600,000 in income from 2004 to 2006.

McCloud pled guilty in December to a single count of felony tax evasion.

Garry asked for five years probation instead of the 24- to 30-month sentence recommended by guidelines. Garry, in a 61-page memo to the court, sketched details of McCloud's life, including a stay in an orphanage, five failed marriages, an esteemed career as a legal trailblazer, and the looming home foreclosure that Garry said led McCloud to commit his crime.

Garry told Schiltz that the humiliation McCloud feels has been a punishment of its own.

"He's a legend that has fallen, but he will once again rise," Garry said. "He will win the respect of his family and colleagues once again."

The sentence includes two years of supervised release after confinement. McCloud also was ordered to pay back taxes, with interest, to the government.

Schiltz said the responsibility McCloud took for his crime merited a slightly shorter sentence than recommended, but he added that he wouldn't spare the lawyer from prison.

Schiltz said tax evasion is an underpunished crime that makes taxpayers cynical and threatens the country's stability.

"If he controlled his gambling and lived more modestly, perhaps he wouldn't be in this position," the judge said. "And because he is an officer of the court, it makes the crime worse."

McCloud was allowed to remain free until July 5, when he must report to federal prison, likely in Duluth. He and Garry declined to comment afterward.

McCloud was convicted of fleeing a police officer in 1996 and fifth-degree assault on three separate occasions since 2002.

He was charged in 2007 with illegally possessing hydrocodone pills. He claimed his ex-wife, who tipped off authorities, mailed him the pills in an effort to frame him. A judge threw out the case. A DWI charge against him in 2009 also was dismissed.

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