



RIVERSIDE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
**NEWS RELEASE**  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MAY 23, 2022

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**FORMER TEMECULA ATTORNEY SENTENCED FOR EMBEZZLING MONEY  
FROM CLIENTS AND BAR ASSOCIATION**

**RIVERSIDE** – A now-disbarred Temecula attorney has been sentenced after pleading guilty to embezzling money from clients and the Southwest Riverside County Bar Association.

Edward J. Nowakoski, DOB: 6-1-52, pled guilty on May 20, 2022, to two felony counts of grand theft and was sentenced to three years of felony probation. He was previously disbarred by the California Bar Association and cannot practice law of any type or reapply to the bar during his probation.

As part of a plea agreement with the DA's Office, Nowakoski agreed to pay restitution – plus interest -- to the victims. At the time of the plea, he paid a total of \$562,854 in victim restitution.

The charges stem from Nowakoski's work as a trusts and estates attorney and from his time as treasurer of the Southwest Riverside County Bar Association (SWRCBA).

In one instance, he was appointed as the trustee of the estate of a client but upon that client's 2016 death, Nowakoski transferred a significant portion of the estate funds to his own accounts instead of disbursing it to the client's family as directed in the trust. During 2016 to 2018, he used that money for personal expenditures including bills and tuition for someone else.

While the long-time treasurer for the non-profit SWRCBA, Nowakoski had sole control over accounts that held membership dues and fees associated with networking events.

His schemes unraveled when Nowakoski was unable to justify why he had not made required distributions in the client probate case and was disbarred. When the SWRCBA heard he had been disbarred, they removed him as treasurer and subsequently discovered he had been embezzling funds from its accounts.

The criminal investigation was conducted by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department.

The case, RIF2103763, was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney David Allen of the DA's Financial Crimes Unit.

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