

---

Published: Saturday, March 15, 2014, 12:01 a.m.

## Ex-Lynnwood lawyer pleads guilty to second-degree theft

By [Diana Hefley](#), Herald Writer

EVERETT — A Lynnwood lawyer who already lost his law license is now a convicted felon, accused of stealing thousands of dollars from a client.

Stephen Conroy has denied allegations that he [pocketed money](#) belonging to a woman he represented in a civil lawsuit. Conroy on Friday didn't admit any wrongdoing as he stood in front of Snohomish County Superior Court Judge Millie Judge. Instead, the former municipal court judge acknowledged that a jury likely would convict him if the case went to trial.

Conroy, 65, pleaded guilty to second-degree theft. A forgery charge was dropped as part of the plea agreement.

He faces up to 60 days in jail. Snohomish County deputy prosecutor Dave Hiltner told Judge on Friday he is planning to recommend community service.

Conroy is scheduled to be sentenced in June. The judge was told that he wants time to make payments to the victim.

Conroy, who practiced law for 40 years, was [disbarred in July](#). A former client filed a complaint with the Washington State Bar Association, alleging that Conroy had lied about how much money she was owed as part of a settlement reached after a car accident.

Conroy negotiated a \$25,000 settlement. The money was deposited in Conroy's trust in order to pay back the insurance companies that had covered costs associated with the crash. Conroy told the woman the entire \$25,000 went to pay the bills, including the fee he charged.

The woman later was assembling receipts for tax purposes when she discovered that Conroy had overstated the amount of the insurance bills, court papers said. She also alleged that Conroy forged her signature on a fee agreement.

The woman said she agreed to pay Conroy \$5,000 for his services. Bank records show that Conroy pocketed more than \$11,000, according to prosecutors.

The bar launched an investigation. Conroy reportedly turned over his files on the case, including memos he said were signed by the client.

The woman denied signing the paperwork and a handwriting expert concluded that the woman's signatures on a fee agreement and a memo had been forged.

Conroy denied the allegations during the bar's investigation. He argued that the client agreed to pay him more for his work.

He also claimed that the woman tampered with the case file and that original documents had been removed. Conroy blamed her for the documents being altered.

Lynnwood police detectives launched their own investigation. Prosecutors charged him in September.

Conroy was a longtime municipal court judge in Edmonds and Lynnwood until 1999. He agreed to resign after the state's Judicial Conduct Commission found evidence that he'd acted inappropriately from the bench.

Conroy had dismissed, without a legal basis, a traffic citation for a woman he had dated.

*Diana Hefley: 425-339-3463; hefley@heraldnet.com.*

© 2014 The Daily Herald Co., Everett, WA