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### **Colleyville businesswoman sentenced Spa owner gets 6 1/2 years in prison for money laundering**

*DEBRA DENNIS Northeast Tarrant Bureau*

A Colleyville businesswoman was sentenced Friday to 6 1/2 years in prison for laundering money as part of an undercover Drug Enforcement Administration sting in 2002.

Karen Lucchesi Lewis, 38, was ordered to surrender to federal authorities Jan. 30 to begin serving her sentence.

Ms. Lewis, who owned LaPlaza Wellness Center in Colleyville, was convicted in October on a charge of aiding and abetting the laundering of \$20,000. She had faced 20 years in prison.

"I never intentionally hurt anyone," Ms. Lewis said Friday. "I'm very sorry for letting down my family. I regret that I did not ask questions of my attorney. That is my fault. This life lesson has taken a tremendous toll on my family."

Ms. Lewis has blamed her legal troubles on Anand Alloju, her former attorney who also has been convicted of laundering money in the case.

Ms. Lewis told U.S. District Judge John McBryde that she has family support and could contribute to society.

The judge refuted claims that Ms. Lewis was not involved in the scheme.

"She obviously knew what she was doing," Judge McBryde said. "I have concerns that the lawyer may have had more influence than he should have."

Ms. Lewis has said that she met a federal undercover agent, who she thought was a businessman, through Mr. Alloju. She said Mr. Alloju told her the agent could help her secure a loan to keep her financially troubled spa open.

Federal prosecutors said Mr. Alloju introduced Ms. Lewis to the agent in June 2002.

Mr. Alloju, federal officials said, laundered \$239,000 in transactions in June, August, September and November 2002.

Mr. Alloju testified that Ms. Lewis assisted in the scheme.

About 15 supporters accompanied Ms. Lewis to court Friday including her father, former Texas Rangers manager Frank Lucchesi.

Before her case was called, Ms. Lewis, who has lupus, sat at the back of the courtroom holding rosary

beads and glancing over her prepared statement.

Her attorney, Marlo Cadeddu, told the judge that Ms. Lewis is ill and requires constant care.

Judge McBryde said he would ask the U.S. Bureau of Prisons to assign Ms. Lewis to Carswell Federal Medical Center in Fort Worth. The judge declined to impose a fine, saying he didn't think Ms. Lewis, who has filed for bankruptcy, could afford it.

Judge McBryde ordered her to serve three years' probation when she is released from prison.

Mr. Alloju, 37, of Bedford is to appear Jan. 20 before U.S. District Judge Terry Means in Fort Worth for sentencing.

He could receive up to 20 years in prison, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Fred Schattman.

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