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Former AL county official sentenced in vote case

Published: Sep. 1, 2010 at 2:29 AM EDT | Updated: Sep. 1, 2010 at 2:30 AM EDT



GREENSBORO, AL (AP) - Former Hale County Circuit Clerk Gay Nell Tinker has pleaded guilty to five counts of illegal absentee balloting.

In exchange for the plea on Tuesday to the misdemeanor charge, prosecutors dropped 13 felony charges related to voter fraud.

Tinker was arrested in March 2008 after an investigation that included the election of Tinker's ex-husband, state Sen. Bobby Singleton, in 2004.

A jury for Tinker's trial was struck Monday, and the prosecution and defense had been slated to deliver opening statements.

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Tinker waived her right to address the court.

Her attorney, Joe Espy, said Tinker stepped across the line but that her intentions were good.

Retired Circuit Judge Howard Bryan presided over the case and will sentence Tinker.

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