

# Election Journal

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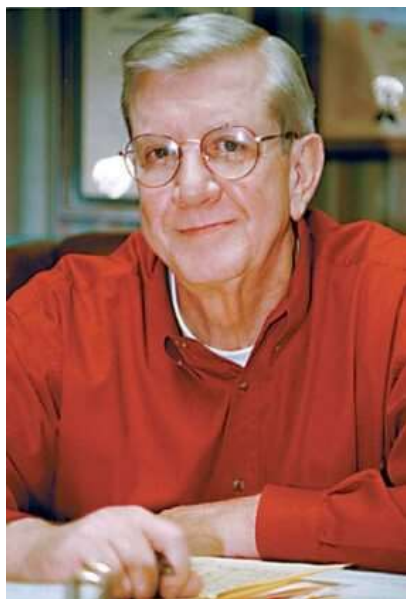
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## Former Mayor sentenced to 20 months for vote buying scheme

August 17, 2009 by [Jenn Peter](#) – [Leave a Comment](#)

Robert L. Madon, former mayor of Pineville for 18 years, must [serve 20 months in federal prison for buying votes](#).



Madon, 75, also was ordered to pay a \$4,000 fine and will be on supervised release for two years after he leaves prison. In sentencing Madon, U.S. District Judge Gregory F. Van Tatenhove said some people don't regard vote-buying, which has a storied history in Kentucky, as a serious crime.

But the judge said vote fraud can lead to other kinds of corruption and breeds cynicism.

"This is an illegal act, not merely a charming part of the culture," Van Tatenhove said.

Madon pleaded guilty to buying votes in the November 2006 election, when he was running for mayor. According to court documents, [Madon gave his son Brent money to buy votes for him](#). Brent Madon paid people \$10 to \$20 to cast early, absentee votes for his father, court documents say. Madon won the election, partly on the strength of 250 absentee votes to 55 for his opponent.

The scheme unraveled because of an accident, Assistant U.S. Attorney Pat Molloy told Van Tatenhove. The day before the election, a drug user who had sold her ballot told a voting clerk she wouldn't really be out of town on Election Day and was turned away from the polling place. When Brent Madon, who was with her at

the office, told her to go back and change her story so she could vote by absentee ballot, a Pineville police officer overheard the discussion, Molloy said.

Officers with Operation UNITE, who were doing a drug investigation, learned of the situation and that Robert Madon planned to talk to the woman later. They gave the woman a hidden recorder and she taped Madon, Molloy said. The recording, laced with expletives, shows that Madon bullied the woman, gave her \$50 and ordered her to be out of town on Election Day — not the acts of an upstanding civic leader, Molloy said, but rather of a cynical, manipulative person “cruelly attempting to cover his own tracks.”

The prosecutor sought the maximum sentence for Madon, saying vote-buying undermines democracy.

“There can hardly be a crime which does more to disillusion citizens and turn them off to the electoral process,” Molloy said.

Brent Madon was sentenced to 12 months in jail followed by three years of supervised release, with the first six months on home incarceration

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