Two plead guilty to voting twice in 2004 general election

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By Seattle Times staff

As the results of 2004's general election are being contested in court halfway across the state, two people pleaded guilty Thursday to voting twice in the election.

Doris McFarland and Robert Holmgren each admitted in King County District Court that they cast ballots for their recently deceased spouses.

Each will have to pay $490 in fines and court fees but they won't spend any time in jail. Multiple voting is a gross misdemeanor that can carry up to a year in jail and a $5,000 fine.

"My wife died just before this election," Holmgren, 59, told Judge Eileen Kato. "My judgment was clouded by the grief. I'm really sorry for what I did."

McFarland's lawyer, John Price, told the judge that she simply didn't know what to do with the extra absentee ballot after her husband of 63 years passed away.

The judge told each client the court was sorry for their losses and wished them luck.

The King County prosecutor's office is investigating another four or five cases of multiple voting in the county, spokesman Dan Donohoe said today.

In Chelan County Superior Court in Wenatchee, Republican candidate Dino Rossi and the state GOP have challenged the 129-vote victory of Democratic Gov. Christine Gregoire, alleging that election officials' errors, illegal voters and fraud stole the election from Rossi.

The case has focused particularly on King County, which has a third of the state's total votes.

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