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FLOURTOWN MAN CHARGED WITH NUMEROUS FELONIES IN THEFT OF MORE THAN $3.7 MILLION FROM ELDERLY WOMAN AND HER ESTATE

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (April 23, 2025) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele announces the arrest of James Batt, 66, of Flourtown, Pa., on numerous felony counts related to the theft of more than $3.7 million from Alice Lineman, who died at age 92 on August 29, 2019.

The thefts came to the attention of the courts and law enforcement when two of Lineman's relatives and beneficiaries filed suit in the Montgomery County Orphan's Court against Batt, who was named the executor of the will but never dispersed Lineman's funds. On March 20, 2023, Batt was removed as Trustee of the Living Trust of Alice Lineman by the Honorable Lois E. Murphy, who also ordered Batt to appear and to turn over estate assets, which he refused to do. Judge Murphy found Batt in contempt of court in 2023 and again March 19, 2025, when the Judge also issued a warrant for his arrest. Judge Murphy referred the case to the District Attorney's Office.

The subsequent investigation by the Montgomery County Detective Bureau found that Batt, who was a friend of Lineman's, was aware of her senile dementia, which required a live-in aide to help her with all daily activities. Batt was one the largest beneficiaries of her estate at 45 percent and was named the executor and trustee of Lineman's estate. The investigation found that prior to her death, Batt made $30,003 in personal expenditures on Lineman's American Express account, changed the mailing address for the account to his Flourtown residence and added his significant other as an authorized user on the account. Also prior to Lineman's death, bank records showed that Batt had withdrawn $884,743 from Lineman's Wells Fargo account and $156,068 from her Morgan Stanley account.

Following her death, between 2019 and 2022, Batt wrote 139 checks, payable to himself, from the Wells Fargo account, totaling $592,400, and made charges, transfers and wrote checks from the Morgan Stanley account, totaling $1,384,435. Additionally, transactions totaling $490,632 were made by Batt on the American Express account, after her death.

The total amount of Batt's unauthorized transactions from Lineman's account before and after her death, totaled $3,715,318. The investigation found that much of the money was spent on extravagant travel, hotels, gourmet restaurants, theater tickets, wine and spirits, shopping at high-end stores and plastic surgery.

With the exception of one $150,000 payment to a beneficiary named in Lineman's will, Batt did not distribute the estate as directed by Lineman and as required under Pennsylvania law.

"This defendant took advantage of an elderly woman suffering from senile dementia by stealing more than $3.7 million from her and from her estate, thereby draining the assets available to Ms. Lineman, her estate and her heirs," said DA Steele. "Through our prosecution of this egregious crime, we will hold Batt accountable for living extravagantly on money that should have gone to Ms. Lineman's family."

Batt is charged with multiple felonies including Financial Exploitation of an Older Adult, Theft by Unlawful Taking, Receiving Stolen Property, Misapplication of Entrusted Property and Theft by Failure to Make Required Dispositions. He was arraigned on April 21, 2025, before Magisterial District Judge Dara A. Nasatir, who set bail at $99,000 cash. At a bail review hearing, Court of Common Pleas Judge Wendy G. Rothstein left the bail unchanged and added a provision regarding the source of bail money to make sure that Batt could not use funds from Lineman's estate. Batt was unable to make bail and was remanded to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled for 10:30 a.m., May 6, 2025, before Magisterial District Judge Katherine E. McGill. The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Gwendolyn Kull, Captain of the Economic Crimes Unit.

Approved for release:
Kevin R. Steele

CRIMINAL CHARGES, AND ANY DISCUSSION THEREOF, ARE MERELY ALLEGATIONS AND ALL DEFENDANTS ARE PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL AND UNLESS PROVEN GUILTY.