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**U.S. Immigration
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Enforcement**

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

News Releases

July 24, 2009

ICE arrests Ohio immigration attorney on marriage fraud charges *Attorney entered into sham marriage to gain citizenship*

COLUMBUS, Ohio - U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents today arrested a Columbus-area immigration attorney and an associate on charges of marriage fraud.

Lilian Asante, 37, who practices immigration law, and Kwadwo Asante, 39, a businessman, were arrested in their respective offices in the Columbus area without incident. Both are nationals of Ghana.

According to court documents, the pair is alleged to have entered into separate marriages with two U.S. citizens in order to obtain citizenship. The pair currently resides together.

Lilian Asante's primary legal practice involves representing aliens in deportation proceedings and assisting those who are seeking permanent residence.

Immigration benefit fraud seriously impacts the integrity of the nation's immigration system. ICE aggressively pursues individuals who try to use marriage fraud to skirt the country's immigration laws.

Marriage fraud carries a penalty of up to a \$250,000 and/or five years imprisonment.

Last year, ICE made 238 criminal arrests related to marriage fraud schemes and was successful in handing out convictions for 198 of those individuals. ICE also seized nearly \$430,000 in assets related to these cases.

Both defendants appeared today before U.S. District Court Judge Joseph P. Kinneary.

Today's announcement was made by Brian Moskowitz, special agent in charge of ICE's Office of Investigations in Detroit and by the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio Gregory Lockhart.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Salvador Dominguez.

-- ICE --

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

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