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# The Arizona Daily Star

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## Paralegal is accused of stealing \$500,000

**By Alex Hauser**  
The Arizona Daily Star

A Tucson paralegal who sits on the Alzheimer's Association board stands accused of stealing more than \$500,000 from clients who include the disabled and elderly.

A Pima County grand jury on Tuesday indicted Marilyn Gene Summers on 24 counts of theft, fraud, money laundering and perjury.

Summers transferred money without permission from seven clients' trust and estate accounts to her business, Marilyn Summers and Associates, according to the indictment. She used the funds between August 1991 and December 1996 to pay her mort-

gage, credit card bills and other personal expenses, the indictment states.

Special Agent Robert Carstena, of the state Attorney General's Office, started investigating Summers in August 1995, according to a search warrant request filed in Pima County Superior Court.

He found that Summers acted as a conservator for several disabled clients and minors. A conservator is appointed to handle finances for people unable to do so themselves.

She also acted as a personal representative, administering money from the estates of clients' deceased relatives.

Carstena did not find any evidence that she was authorized to transfer money between estate

accounts or use the money for personal expenses, court records state.

Summers is scheduled to be arraigned Wednesday in Superior Court.

"It's a shock to me," said Maize Luna, executive director of the Alzheimer's Association of Southern Arizona. Summers was appointed to the board in September.

Summers recently served on the Greater Tucson Economic Council board of directors. She also has been on the Tucson Museum of Art board of directors for several years.

"She has been a very loyal, devoted hard-working member and volunteer of the museum," said museum spokeswoman Laurie Swanson.

Summers graduated from Salpointe Catholic High School in 1960 and attended the University of Arizona, according to a résumé she submitted to the Alzheimer's Association.

According to the search warrant request:

In one case, Summers was hired to pay bills and distribute funds from an estate.

She would write checks from the estate and deposit them into her business account. She also transferred funds into another client's account and withdrew them.

In another case, she was appointed as a trustee for a man with severe cerebral palsy. She withdrew or

### Prestigious publication backs pot for the sick

**BOSTON (AP)** — The New England Journal of Medicine has come out in favor of allowing doctors to prescribe marijuana for medical purposes, calling the threat of government sanctions "misguided, heavy-handed and inhumane."

"Whatever their reasons, federal officials are out of step with the public," Dr. Jerome H. Kassirer, the journal's editor, wrote in an editorial in today's issue. The journal is one of the world's most prestigious medical publications.

After voters in Arizona and California passed propositions letting doctors prescribe pot for medical uses, Attorney General Janet Reno said doctors who do this could lose their prescription-writing privileges, be excluded from Medicare and Medicaid and even be prosecuted.

Some doctors believe marijuana can relieve internal eye pressure in glaucoma, control nausea in cancer patients on chemotherapy and combat the severe weight loss seen in AIDS patients. However, administration officials note that such uses of marijuana



### Mired in muck

Mitchell Torres of Salinas, Calif., scratches his head and wonders how to free his truck, which was trapped in muck yesterday following mudslides caused by recent heavy rains in the area.

### Teanna said mother was drug source

**By Jon Burstein**  
The Arizona Daily Star

Twelve-year-old Teanna Neeley told a juvenile probation officer three weeks before her apparent drug overdose death that her mother was supplying her with drugs, according to records released yesterday.

Teanna admitted to Pima County Juvenile Officer Maude Payne on Dec. 31 that her mother, Ella Townsend, gave her drugs, according to records released yesterday.

In a subsequent interview with the probation officer, Teanna said she used both crack cocaine and marijuana.

Teanna died Jan. 20 of an apparent cocaine or opiate overdose and had marijuana, cocaine and opiates in her system when she was pronounced dead at St. Mary's Hospital, according to court documents.

She may have been dead as long as several hours before her family called 911, said Detective Lt. Richard Middleton of the Tucson Police Department.

Criminal charges connected with Teanna's death could be forthcoming against "one of any number of people," Middleton said last week.

Another police officer reported to CPS that less than two hours after Teanna's death, her family was "laughing and talking like nothing was wrong," according to Teanna's 17-page CPS file released yesterday.

The Arizona Daily Star requested the records under the Arizona Public Records Law.

Townsend did not return repeated phone calls yesterday.

She previously has denied CPS reports of drug use in her household, saying she kicked a 20-year heroin habit five years ago and hasn't used drugs since.

Probation officer Payne declined to comment on what Teanna told her.

At the time of her death, Teanna had been living with one of her grandmothers, but was visiting her mother's home.

### City's ethnic barriers carved into landscape, experts say

**By Jim Erickson**  
The Arizona Daily Star

It's called the tracks effect, and it refers to boundaries between racial and ethnic groups defined by steel rails.

A century ago in Tucson, railroad tracks formed the barrier that separated Anglos from Hispanics and shaped settlement patterns as the city spread east and south from downtown.

Though Tucson was named one of the nation's least-segregated cities this week, the tracks effect is alive and well here. But today's boundary line is a dry riverbed.

"The new railroad tracks are the Rillito River and the Patano Wash," said urban planner David Taylor of Tucson's planning department.

"There's no one there checking IDs, no

Bubba sheriff waving a baseball bat, but the price (of housing) goes up rapidly as you go up the hill, and many persons of minority status in the city simply don't have the money to qualify for those mortgages.

"You can see a pattern in the Rillito River and the Patano that is largely a socioeconomic barrier — it's largely not racial at all — but its effect is still starting when you look at the map."

The boundary jumps off the page when you look at 1990 U.S. Census Bureau racial and ethnic data plotted on a map of the Tucson metropolitan area. Cross River Road and you're in Anglo-land. Between 85.4 percent and 99.6 percent of Catalina Foothills residents are what the



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1990 data and City of Tucson planning department. The Arizona Daily Star

**Tomorrow in the Star**

**Altman, directly**

As filmmaker Robert Altman's "Kansas City" arrives in video stores, a time-ly peek at the director's other movies is in order.

**The Old West lives**

For the next two weeks, the Tucson Rodeo Parade Museum is again inviting the public to see — free of charge — its collection of Wild West exhibits and memorabilia.

### America Online OKs refunds to customers

**The Associated Press**

Threatened with lawsuits across the country, America Online agreed yesterday to give refunds to customers who haven't been able to log on because of the overwhelming demand created by its flat \$19.95-a-month rate.

Customers will be offered either cash or a month of free service. AOL had an immediate estimate of how much the settlement will cost. However, if every member was able to get a full refund for the two months, a highly unlikely scenario, the agreement would cost America Online about \$320 million.

The settlement was reached with 36 state attorneys general but applies to all 8 million of AOL's customers nationwide. Several states had threatened to sue America Online unless it promised refunds.

The nation's largest online service also agreed to make it easier for dissatisfied customers to cancel and said it will suspend its advertising for a month.

America Online, based in Dulles, Va., previously said it was selectively giving refunds. But it had

### WEATHER

**Gusty.** Today is expected to be sunny with winds of 20-30 mph gusting to 40 mph, diminishing to 15-25 mph by afternoon. Look for a high in the lower 70s, a low in the lower 50s. Yesterday's high was 67, the low 48. Details on Page 11A.

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### If you bounce a check, dig deep for \$25 — legally

**By Shaun McKinlon**  
The Arizona Daily Star

**PHOENIX** — If you've ever bounced a check and found your self stuck with a hefty fee, you may take some small comfort in knowing the fee was on shaky legal ground.

Better make that small and short-lived comfort.

A Senate panel voted yesterday to shore up the ground beneath returned check charges and allow anyone who accepts checks to collect up to \$25 from bad-check writers. Senate Bill 1027 was approved unanimously and sent to the full Senate.

Businesses say the fees are necessary, especially for smaller companies and mom-and-pop merchants.