



718.286.6000  
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD  
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568



MELINDA KATZ  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2023

**CONTACT:** PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315  
[QDACommunications@queensda.org](mailto:QDACommunications@queensda.org)

**BROOKLYN MAN SENTENCED FOR STEALING WIDOW'S HOME**  
**BY POSING AS HER SON**

*DA's Pioneering Use of Statute Returns Property to Deed Fraud Victim*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Christopher Williams was sentenced for stealing the home of an elderly widow by posing as her son, then selling the property and cashing in more than \$200,000.

Williams, 43, of Morgan Avenue in Brooklyn, was sentenced yesterday by Queens Supreme Court Justice Leigh K. Cheng to a term of two to four years in prison. Justice Cheng also granted a motion filed by the Queens District Attorney's office, which applied a state statute to argue for immediately restoring the stolen property's deed to its rightful owner, sparing the victim the time and expense of additional legal proceedings in civil court. District Attorney Katz's office was the first to ever use the 2019 law earlier this year, successfully [returning a St. Albans home to a disabled veteran and his family](#).

District Attorney Katz said: "We will not allow criminals to scheme and scam their way into other people's properties and we will use every tool available to ensure that victims are made whole. In communities targeted by deed fraudsters, many people do not have the means to hire an attorney to file a civil suit and litigate against deep-pocketed mortgage companies, banks and title insurers. Our use of this new tactic allows us to provide victims with one-stop justice."

Williams pleaded guilty in August to identity theft in the first degree and offering a false instrument for filing in the second degree.

According to the charges:

- In August 2021, Barbara Matthews received a notification that a new deed, mortgage and other documents had been filed without her knowledge with the New York City Department of Finance for a property she inherited after her father's death in 2011. The home, on Dunlop Avenue in Jamaica, had been empty for several years as Matthews planned to renovate it.
- An investigation was opened and revealed that Williams had submitted several documents to falsely represent himself as the sole owner of the property. The documents included phony birth certificates and death certificates identifying Matthews as her mother.
- After claiming ownership of the property, Williams sold it for \$270,000.
- After closing, the defendant received a sale proceeds check for \$214,535.64. Williams took the check to a Bronx check cashing establishment and received \$209,665.69 in cash.

Assistant District Attorney Myongjae M. Yi, Section Chief of the District Attorney's Major Economic Crimes Bureau, prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Rachel Stein, Chief of the Real Estate Theft Unit in the Housing and Worker Protection Bureau, William Jorgenson, Bureau Chief, and Christina Hanophy, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard A. Brave.

#

**Note to Editors:** Archived press releases are available at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org).

