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New lawyer appointed for Conyers' appeal

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Former Detroit City Councilwoman Monica Conyers has been appointed a lawyer to handle the appeal of her 37-month prison sentence for a bribery conviction.

Ann Arbor attorney Douglas Mullkoff has been appointed to Conyers' case. He could not immediately be reached for comment Friday.

Conyers had been represented by Detroit attorney Steven Fishman, who said his role in the case ended when U.S. District Judge Avern Cohn sentenced her Wednesday.

During her sentencing, Conyers repeatedly told Cohn she wanted to withdraw her guilty plea and wasn't going to prison for something she didn't do. Cohn refused to accept her withdrawal and sentenced her. She is to report to prison July 1.

Conyers, who is married to U.S. Rep. John Conyers, a Detroit Democrat, pleaded guilty last summer for her role in a bribery scheme involving a \$1.2-billion sludge-hauling contract between the city and Texas-based Synagro Technologies. The congressman did not attend the sentencing, but reportedly was inside his office in the federal courthouse.

Late Wednesday, Monica Conyers filed a notice to appeal and was appointed representation by the Federal Defender Office. A document filed Friday said Mullkoff was appointed as a substitute for the federal defender.

Although defendants often are allowed to appeal rulings, there is a question whether that applies to Conyers in this case because she signed a plea agreement as part of her admission of guilt on June 22. It indicates that if the sentence imposed falls at 60 months or less, "defendant waives any right to appeal her conviction or sentence."

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