

## Former first lady gets one year in jail

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The Taipei District Court yesterday handed down prison sentences ranging from six months to one-and-a-half years to members of former president Chen Shui-bian's (陳水扁) family and former Taipei Financial Center Corp (台北金融中心) chairwoman Diana Chen (陳幸妤) for perjury.

The former president's son, Chen Chih-chung (陳志中), daughter Chen Hsing-yu (陳幸玉) and son-in-law Chao Chien-ming (趙建民) each received six-month prison sentences, which were half the length of one year initially sought.

Although they do not qualify for a scheme that lets those convicted to terms of six months or less pay a fine rather than serve jail time, they will be able to take advantage of a new program that allows convicts to do community service rather than go to jail.

Former first lady Wu Shu-jen (吳淑珍), convicted for instigating perjury, received a one-year jail sentence, which was half the sentence sought by prosecutors.

As the former first family committed perjury before April 24, 2007, and because the offenses they committed were eligible for commutation, they met the requirements of the 2007 Sentence Commutation (減刑條例) and had their sentences reduced by half.

All sentences can be appealed.

Presiding Judge Chen Hsing-pang (陳幸平) said Chen Chih-chung, Chen Hsing-yu and Chao Chien-ming followed the former first lady's instructions in giving false testimony in 2005 when questioned about the presidential "state affairs fund," a public fund earmarked for the president's official use and for which Chen Shui-bian has been accused of embezzling from during his presidency.

They were listed as defendants on June 3 and indicted on July 17.

The former first lady was charged with instigating perjury for allegedly instructing her children to lie during a probe into the embezzlement charges against both herself and her husband.

Diana Chen received the full sentence of one year and six months because she committed perjury after Apr. 24, 2007, and therefore did not qualify for a reduced sentence. Her refusal to admit to the charges against her in exchange for a lighter sentence also resulted in her receiving a longer prison sentence than the others.

Prosecutors said she purposely gave false testimony during questioning last year about the former first family's alleged money-laundering activities. They also said Diana Chen bribed the former first lady with NT\$10 million (US\$300,000) to obtain her position as chairwoman of Taipei Financial Center Corp.

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Chen Shui-bian stands accused of embezzling public funds, money laundering, accepting bribes on a land deal, influence peddling and forgery.

The District Court will announce its verdict on Sept. 11.

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