

Your Honor, thank you for allowing me to address your Court regarding my sentencing today. With great respect for the Court, I offer these comments.

In the years leading up to this over yearlong nightmare, no one from the District Attorney's office ever called anyone associated with Downtown Jackson Partners. Not me, our board attorney Judge Robert Gibbs, the DJP Executive Committee or the 43 member DJP board and advisory council, BKD, our accountants, no one. No one from the DA's office ever called or contacted anyone regarding anything in the indictment. Not a single time. I was simply indicted. Had the State Auditor's Office been able to follow up on this case, I am confident we would not be here today.

I have always followed the By-laws of DJP. I have always worked at the direction of the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. Everything I have done has been for the Business Improvement District, DJP, and the city of Jackson, which I love and have called my home for over 40 years.

The DJP Board of Directors conducted a full investigation into the allegations in the indictment and found no embezzlement or other

crime by me against DJP. The documents at DJP, substantiated by BKD accountants, show that my wife's cell phone bill had been paid over a year prior to the indictment. I had actually overpaid her cell phone bill by \$80.93. The reimbursement was done in the same way as the prior year's reimbursement, and it was approved by DJP. This information was readily available in an office file simply labeled "Susie's Cell Phone". In spite of our DJP board attorney's testimony that I had reimbursed DJP for my wife's cell phone, the state claimed that DJP had "demanded" return of these monies and I refused to do so, without any evidence to support the allegation. This was simply not true then and not true now, but I stand here before you today convicted of that very thing.

During the closing arguments, the prosecution said some awful things about me. I heard one prosecutor, whom I had never set eyes on before the trial, say:

"I don't know when Ben Allen became Ben Allen and fell off into the (criminal) abyss."

I would hope that Your Honor and the prosecutors have had the time to read the 95 letters of support Your Honor has received from people

**of all socioeconomic backgrounds, genders, ages and political parties.
I think they give a clear indication of who I am as a person.**

**I did not do any of the awful things alleged by the DA. I believe I have
conducted the business of DJP with honor and dignity and in full
compliance with the law and the approval of the DJP Board of
Directors.**

**I ask only for your good judgment and wisdom in passing your
sentence upon me. With these comments, I respectfully turn my
sentencing judgment over to Your Honor's capable Court and simply
ask for fairness.**