

JOHN F. PEYTON JR. / 1944-2007

# Ex-isle official dies in crash

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*The lawyer is praised for his public service, ethics and dedication*

By Robert Shikina

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John Francis Peyton Jr., a veteran federal prosecutor in Hawaii and former director of the state Department of Public Safety, died in a car accident in Africa. He was 62.

Relatives said Peyton was driving with his wife, Eileen, on Wednesday night, Hawaii time, when the car's tire blew out, flipping the vehicle several times.

Peyton died in the crash. His wife, who escaped with minor injuries to her shoulder, will return to Honolulu in a few days, said Peyton's son John Peyton V.

Peyton was working in Malawi, a country in southeastern Africa, on a U.S. Treasury Department contract helping the Malawian government pass

legislation to crack down on money laundering and other financial crimes. He also helped create policies to apprehend criminals, said his daughter Erin Peyton.

"He was very committed to public service and to helping other people," she said by phone from New York.

Peyton served 20 years as an assistant U.S. attorney, including 18 years in Honolulu. In 2004, Peyton left after 18 months as director of the state Public Safety Department to help Bosnia establish its Rule of Law administration.

Peyton handled high-profile cases. He successfully prosecuted Ronald Rewald in 1985 for swindling about \$20 million from Hawaii residents. Rewald was sentenced to 80 years in prison but was released in 1995 after a back injury placed him in a wheelchair.

Senate President Colleen Hanabusa said Peyton was instrumental in the start-up of the federal Weed and Seed program to rid neighborhoods of drugs.



**John Peyton**

*Jr.: He was working in Africa to help with legislation to fight money laundering*

Peyton also served as chief litigator for the Central Intelligence Agency.

"He was just a great guy with a wonderful sense of humor, a great lawyer," said Hawaii Attorney General Mark Bennett, who worked with Peyton as an assistant U.S. attorney.

"John was honest, ethical and tough," Bennett said. He added, "John was the kind of person who wanted to try to make life better for people and try to do the right thing."

Gov. Linda Lingle said, "John was a good man and a dedicated public servant who always strived to ensure the safety and well-being of the people of Hawaii. His commitment to helping people extended to the international community."

In January 2006, Peyton began his contract with the U.S. Department of Treasury that would have ended this December. Peyton planned to retire and divide his time between Honolulu and another house in Idaho, his son John said.

Born Oct. 27, 1944, in New York, Peyton graduated from the University of Dayton and received his law degree from the University of Cincinnati and a master's of law from George Washington University. He came to Hawaii in 1983.

John Peyton V said he spoke to his father the night before he learned of the accident. His parents talked about their plans for a two-day drive to a game park, where they would observe wildlife and visit a nearby village.

Aside from his wife, son and daughter, Peyton is also survived by daughter Molly Peyton of Massachusetts, daughter-in-law Nicole and grandson Micah. Services at Holy Trinity Catholic Church at 5919 Kalanianaʻole Highway are pending.