

Solicitor George Bourozikas jailed for stealing \$100k from estate

A SOLICITOR who stole \$100,000 from a dead woman's estate used the cash to fund his lifestyle, including a holiday to Greece to watch soccer.

George Bourozikas fought back tears yesterday as he was ordered to spend six months in jail.

"It is reprehensible conduct of the highest order," Justice Elizabeth Curtain said. "It is conduct that brings the profession into disrepute."

In May 2006, Bourozikas wrote two \$50,000 cheques to himself from his trust account.

The account held funds from the estate of Lorraine Kate Brooks, which were to be distributed to Ms

Brooks' two children.

Instead, Bourozikas put \$100,000 of the money into his own cheque account, using it to pay a credit card debt, school fees, everyday expenses and a holiday to Greece to watch soccer with mates.

Bourozikas, 50, made false accounting entries to conceal the thefts.

He also put two unsigned letters on his files addressed to Ms Brooks' two children, stating that cheques were enclosed as partial distribution of their mother's estate.

Bourozikas later told police: "I was just a stupid idiot." He said he was under financial pressure at the time and intended to repay the cash, having spent all but \$28,000 of it.

But two weeks after notifying the Victoria Police fraud squad that he intended to plead guilty to stealing from Ms Brooks' estate, Bourozikas

stole more than \$43,000 from another couple's account.

The cash was used to pay a tax office debt.

Bourozikas later told police he was about to be declared bankrupt.

It is not the first time Bourozikas has found himself on the wrong side of the law. He was convicted of forgery offences from 1991.

Judge Curtain said he made a false declaration about the paternity of a child that a couple wanted to adopt.

The thefts from Ms Brooks' estate were uncovered during a routine Law Institute of Victoria audit.

Justice Curtain said Bourozikas's mother and father-in-law repaid the \$100,000 and will repay the \$43,000.

The Supreme Court was told Bourozikas had tried to maintain the illusion of being successful for many years.

Forensic psychologist Jeffrey Cummins described Bourozikas's behaviour as a self-destructive cry for help triggered by work-related stress. Because of his actions he was depressed, embarrassed and remorseful, Mr Cummins found.

Justice Curtain said that misappropriation of cash from a trust account was a serious breach of Bourozikas's professional obligation.

He was simply living beyond his means, she said.

Bourozikas, of Mount Waverley, has sold his practice.

A Legal Services Board spokeswoman said he no longer held a practising certificate in Victoria.

Bourozikas pleaded guilty to one count of having a deficiency in a trust account and three of theft.

After serving six months in jail he will have a one-year suspended jail sentence hanging over his head.

Market news: Greek art breaks records

Colin Gleadell digests the news from the auction room over the past week

It was not all doom and gloom at last week's auctions. In London, Bonhams held a sale of Greek art which exceeded estimates to bring £3.8 million. Fourteen artists' records were broken. The top lot was a rediscovered masterpiece by Demetrios Galanis, *The Painter's Family (1920-21)*, which sold within estimate for £264,000. The painting had been lost following the bombing of Piraeus and the German occupation during the Second World War. It was found recently in a mansion in Kifissia owned by the Greek collector George Stringos.

"Buyers at the sale were almost exclusively Greek," said Bonhams expert, Terpsichore Angelopoulou. "We did not know how the sale would do in the current economic climate, so we were delighted with the result. Greek art remains one of the most buoyant parts of the art market."

At Sotheby's, a record for a 19th-century Greek painting was set when *The Arrival of Karaiskakis at Faliro, a marine painting depicting a scene from the Greek War of Independence by Constantinos Volanakis*, sold for £1.6 million.

• In New York, a collection of African and Oceanic art formed by Frieda and Milton Rosenthal, who had been inspired by the opening of the Museum of Primitive Art in New York in 1957, surpassed expectations at Sotheby's on Friday to fetch \$10.9 million (£7.3 million).

The top price of \$4 million was paid for a pair of male and female ancestral figures from Ivory Coast, known as the *Primordial Couple*, which had previously belonged to former US Vice President Nelson A Rockefeller, who sold them in 1967 for \$7,000.

Such carvings have added value because they influenced the development of modern art in Paris at the beginning of the 20th century: Picasso's groundbreaking *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)*, bought by Rockefeller for the Museum of Modern Art, is the classic example. It is probable that Picasso had seen a work very similar to the *Primordial Couple* which is known to have been owned by Picasso's friend, the painter Andre Derain.

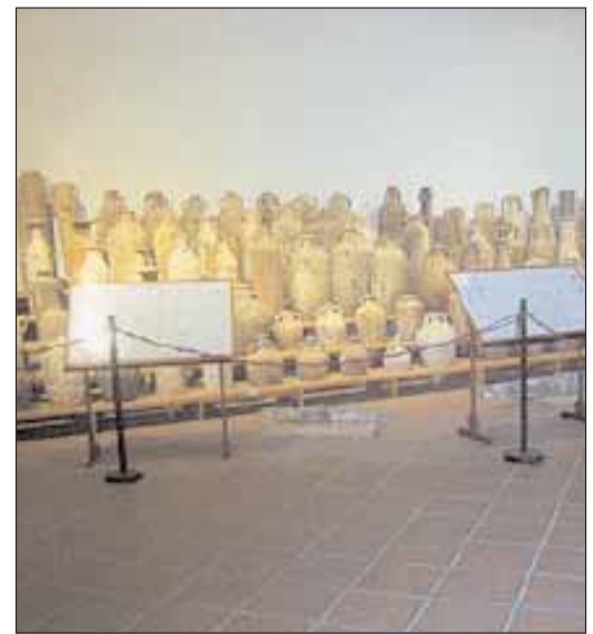
• Perhaps the biggest concern for auctioneers at the contemporary art sales in New York last week was the level of losses suffered on property for which they had guaranteed a minimum return regardless of whether the works sold. Sotheby's announced that it had lost more than \$27 million on works that it had guaranteed for its main sale.

Marsala Museum Has Greek Artifacts

The Archaeological Museum of "Baglio Anselmi" in Marsala, Sicily houses the wreck of a Punic ship discovered in 1971. Ancient Lilybaeum, today's modern Marsala, was the only major city of Sicily that was not completely Hellenized. On the other hand, copies of Greek art, Greek amphorae, lebetes (vases), and coinage with the head of Apollo, capitals of columns and the Greek language in funerary plaques from a necropolis (cemetery) are present. Lilybaeum was not a Greek colony, but had Greek influences.

Hundreds of amphorae were intact. In ancient times, terracotta amphorae were food containers used to transport wine, oil, fish sauce (garum, the ancient ketchup), fruit, salted fish, olives, perfumed oil and coloring agents over long distances. This manufacture of transport cargo containers coincides with the Hellenic colonization and growth of Western Mediterranean commerce of the middle 8th century in Magna Graecia (Greater Greece in Southern Italy) and Sicily. Corinth was one of the first centers producing amphorae and food-stuffs.

A Greek masterpiece is "The Statue of a Man", an original Greek marble from the 5th century B.C. found on the island of Mozia. The "Callipige Venus" is a marble statue of a headless reclining goddess, Aphrodite. The most amazing artifacts are the stone slabs with Greek inscriptions from the necropolis. They show the assimilation of Greeks in the mainstream community of Sicily. One inscription shows three generations of Greek names and their transformation into the Latin language. "The family is



Diognetas Megas, son of Damatrinus," said Dr. Gaetano Cipolla, president of the Arba Sicula Society. "The last generation of this family had a City Councilman with a Latinized name."

Greek coins with the head of Apollo, the sun god, are displayed. The columns have Corinthian and Ionic capitals. Greek inscriptions read: Nikasion Aristonos, Here (Long Live Aristonos, son of Nikasion). The Libeo National Museum is in a former wine factory. Marsala's museum has more than a Phoenician shipwreck: it holds unique artifacts of Hellenism.

Photo Catherine Tsounis Amphorae in the Archaeological Museum of "Baglio Anselmi" in Marsala, Sicily.