

Daughter of Obama's Former Pastor Charged With Fraud

The daughter of President Barack Obama's controversial former pastor was indicted on Wednesday on charges of money laundering and lying to federal authorities, a Justice Department spokeswoman said.

Jeri L. Wright, 47, the daughter of Jeremiah Wright, was accused of participating in a fraud scheme led by a former suburban police chief and the chief's husband that involved a \$ million state grant, according to the Attorney's office for the Central District of Illinois in Springfield.

Wright, of the Chicago suburb of Hazel Crest, was charged with two counts of money laundering, two counts of making false statements to federal officers and seven counts of giving false testimony to a grand jury.

The state grant was for a not-for-profit work and education program called We Are Our Brother's Keeper, owned by Regina Evans, former police chief of Country Club Hills, and her husband, Ronald W. Evans, Jr.

According to the indictment, Wright, a close friend of the couple, received three checks in 2009 worth about \$28,000 that were supposed to be for work related to the grant. About \$20,000 of that was allegedly deposited back into accounts controlled by the Evanses.

Jeremiah Wright was the Chicago pastor whose inflammatory church sermons, which often condemned U.S. attitudes on race, poverty, the Iraq War and other issues, became a focus during the 2008 presidential campaign.

Obama quieted the controversy with a speech putting the quotes in the context of race relations.

The money laundering count Jeri Wright faces carries a maximum

penalty of up to 20 years in prison, while the other charges carry penalties of up to five years in prison.

Jeri Wright could not be reached for comment. Prosecutor's office spokeswoman Sharon Paul did not know if she had yet retained a lawyer.

Reporting by Mary Wisniewski; editing by Cynthia Johnston and Bill Trott.

© 2013 Thomson Reuters. All rights reserved.