

## Parish out of hospital, ready for sentencing

By Molly Parker , Staff Writer

Al Parish is out of the hospital and anxious to get Thursday's sentencing hearing behind him, his attorney said Monday evening.

"He left the hospital around 7 p.m. on Saturday," Andy Savage said. "He is not healthy, but his cardiologists have said he is well enough to move forward."

The former economist was rushed to the Medical University of South Carolina's emergency room Thursday because of heart trouble, Savage said. It was the same day federal prosecutors recommended Parish spend 30-plus years in prison for stealing or squandering some \$80 million through his Ponzi investment scheme.

He underwent a procedure to clear a blocked artery, Savage said. He had recently been released from MUSC after a similar procedure.

The sentencing hearing is scheduled for 10 a.m. Thursday at the U.S. District Court on Meeting Street in downtown Charleston.

Parish was insistent that the hearing move forward, Savage said.

"He knew this day would come. He knows he will be incarcerated. He just wants to get it behind him," Savage said.

Savage said he will ask the judge to consider Parish's ailing health when handing down the sentence. Parish, 51, suffers from an array of mental and physical ailments, including coronary artery disease and Type II diabetes. Parish's father and two uncles died of heart conditions in their mid-50s, court documents show.

"If they sentence him to 30 years, that's a death sentence," Savage said. "Even 20 years is a death sentence based on his actuarial table."

Parish pleaded guilty on Oct. 5 to three federal charges of securities fraud. In the course of a decade, his investment offerings raised \$112.5 million from up to 650 investors. Federal sentencing guidelines call for him to serve between 292 and 365 months behind bars.

In seeking leniency from the judge, Parish's defense team also will argue that such a sentence is grossly out of line with the punishment prescribed in similar white-collar crimes.