

Doolittle goes from disgraced congressman to lobbyist

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy

WASHINGTON – Meet John Doolittle, working stiff.

Sacramento-region residents once called him Republican state senator, then congressman. He was Lake Tahoe's congressman, too.

Federal prosecutors once called him, ominously, Representative 5. Now, starting over at the age of 61, he unashamedly calls himself a lobbyist.



John Doolittle

“It’s funny,” Doolittle said. “That’s such a negative term, but if people ask, that’s what I say I am.”

He laughed. He laughs easily, which is saying something, given all that’s transpired.

“I know,” said his former colleague Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., “that he and his wife went through a great deal.”

Doolittle was one of several lawmakers caught up in the turbulent wake of Jack Abramoff, the Republican uber-lobbyist who was released recently after serving 3 1/2 years in prison on mail fraud and conspiracy charges. More than a dozen other individuals were convicted or pleaded guilty to assorted

charges, though no charges were ever brought against Doolittle or his wife, Julie, who did event planning for Abramoff's firm.

Doolittle's former legislative director Kevin Ring was among those convicted of corruption-related charges. Ring's indictment referenced an email in which he told Abramoff that Doolittle was a "good soldier, doing everything we asked of him."

The Doolittles watched Ring sob as he was sentenced to four years in federal prison.

John and Julie Doolittle estimate they paid more than \$400,000 for attorneys' fees during the long-running corruption investigation, which left them poorer but in the clear. They endured what was essentially the involuntary end of John Doolittle's 28-year career in elective office.

"It was painful to leave" Congress, Doolittle acknowledged, but "I'm going forward. Honestly, I don't look back."

Read the whole story