



Elliot Kolkovich

Summit County Prosecutor

For Immediate Release:
CONTACT: James Pollack
Phone: (330) 604-2739
pollack@prosecutor.summitoh.net
X: @ProsKolkovich
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Prosecutor Kolkovich Pays Tribute to Retired Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh

AKRON, Ohio (Tuesday, March 19, 2024) – Summit County Prosecutor Elliot Kolkovich is paying tribute to retired Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh following an event celebrating former Prosecutor Walsh’s historic tenure as Summit County Prosecutor.

Close to 300 people attended the March 15th event at Akron’s John S. Knight Center. The celebration included a look back at Walsh’s 23 years as County Prosecutor as well as tributes from colleagues, friends, and family.

At the event, Walsh recognized and thanked those who were part of her leadership team over the years, including, Mary Ann Kovach, Dave Crook, Jennifer Tultz, Brad Gessner, Lisa Holdt, Crystal Baker, Brian LoPrinzi, James Pollack, and John Galonski. She also recognized current Prosecutor Elliot Kolkovich, stating, “Despite my health issues, I would not have retired if I didn’t have a competent, talented, hard-working prosecutor to take my place. Elliot has years of experience and I know he will be an excellent leader. He is also an honest, good person who cares deeply about victims and the prosecutor’s office.”

Walsh also focused on her accomplishments, including creating the office’s Victim Services Division, being the first Prosecutor’s Office in Ohio to have a facility dog to comfort and assist victims of crime, as well as the numerous awards and honors.

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During her speech, Walsh highlighted some of the best parts of her 23-year career as prosecutor and some of the most difficult aspects. "I loved my job as Prosecutor," said Walsh. "One of the best parts of my job was all the people I was able to help... all the crime victims and all the senior citizens I met during the hundreds of safety speeches I gave for more than 20 years. I loved doing all those safety presentations and the people I met always showed so much appreciation."

Walsh also honored the memories and service of the three Summit County Police Officers who were killed during her tenure as Prosecutor:

Akron Officer Justin Winebrenner, who was shot and killed while protecting patrons of a pub from an armed subject.

Boston Heights Officer Jarod Dean, who was killed in the line of duty while trying to protect drivers from hazards on the roadway.

Twinsburg Police Officer Josh Miktarian, who was shot and killed by a violent offender during a traffic stop.

Walsh stated, "These deaths were a reminder of the daily risks our police officers face every day. Being a police officer is often a thankless job, especially in recent years where we hear more criticism than praise despite the fact that the great majority of police officers do an exceptional job". She added, "I want to personally thank all of the police officers in Summit County for your hard work and the risks you have taken to keep our community safe. You should be proud of your profession. I am proud of all of you."

When talking about the most difficult parts of her job, Walsh stated, "Reading police reports, seeing crime scene photos, meeting with victims who have been terrorized, traumatized and violated in some of the worst ways imaginable takes a toll on everyone who does this work".

She also shared two of the most emotional cases she personally worked on, Richard Cooley, who abducted, raped and murdered two Akron University Sorority sisters and James Tayse, who abducted a woman and her baby, sexually assaulting the woman and threatening the baby with a knife. In the Cooley case, Walsh handled the clemency hearing before the Ohio Parole Board; a heart-wrenching time as she presented while the surviving family members were openly sobbing. In the Tayse case, Walsh shared how emotional it was to watch the victim have to relive this terrifying day on the witness stand for over five hours. Walsh admitted that she cried when the victim was done testifying.

In closing, Walsh said that despite all the accomplishments of her office, she is most proud of her two sons, Matthew and Joey. She commended her son Matthew, who has Autism, for graduating from the TOPS Program at Ohio State and learning to live independently. She recognized her son Joey for having one of the biggest hearts of anyone she knows and for all the people he is helping as a Recovery Advocate at a Detox and Mental Health Assessment Center.

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Walsh's husband Pat added, "Sherri made the Summit County Prosecutor's office the best Prosecutor's office in the State of Ohio. She would receive countless awards for community service, Child Support Enforcement, Victim Services and many others. I am blessed to have Sherri in my life. I have never met a more caring person than Sherri."

Summit County Prosecutor Elliot Kolkovich said, "Sherri has left behind a legacy of fighting for crime victims and holding criminals accountable. We will continue to follow the path Sherri has paved and push to make our community a better and safer place to live."

The event also raised over 10-thousand dollars for the Victim Assistance Program of Summit County. Attendees were able to donate through an online link with Walsh and her family matching the donations dollar for dollar.

Health reasons forced Walsh to retire on February 16, 2024, leaving office as the longest serving County Prosecutor in Summit County history.