



FROM THE OFFICE OF
SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR
SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

A MESSAGE FROM PROSECUTOR WALSH BELIEVING SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS

The recent conviction of Bill Cosby on three counts of sexual assault has me thinking about how society looks at sexual assault cases and how survivors of sexual assault are treated. Throughout the trial, Cosby's attorneys labeled his victims as extortionists who were just in it for the money. Jurors weren't convinced and eventually found Cosby guilty. The 80-year-old iconic entertainer, revered by millions of people for his comedy and acting, is now awaiting sentencing and could spend the rest of his life behind bars.

The accusations against Cosby date back decades, with some of the incidents occurring at the height of his popularity when he portrayed Dr. Cliff Huxtable on the NBC hit "The Cosby Show". The charges were filed in December of 2015, just before the statute of limitations was to expire.

Some times, victims are initially dismissed, called liars, and even ridiculed for coming forward. About 70-percent of sexual assaults are not even reported to police. Many aren't reported until years after the assault. One question we are asked is why did it take so long for the victim to come forward?

There are many reasons why a sexual assault survivor may not immediately report the crime. Sexual assault takes an enormous physical and emotional toll on a survivor, who may still be processing what happened and may not be totally ready to handle retelling the facts of the assault.



A study by the National Institute of Justice found that over 40-percent of people who were survivors of sexual assault where force was used did not report their assault because they did not want anyone to know about it. Sexual assault survivors may feel a number of different emotions; including fear, shame, guilt, isolation, embarrassment, and fear they'll be blamed for what happened. That can be especially true if the violence was committed by someone the victim knows.

The recent #MeToo movement has also brought the issue of sexual

harassment to the forefront. Both issues have a common thread—believing the victim.

That is why I work so hard at making sure the survivors of sexual assault are believed. My office has held several trainings for law enforcement on the best ways to investigate allegations of sexual assault and the impact trauma has on the brain. Investigators try to get as much detail about the assault as possible and will ask deeply personal questions to get information. Survivors can find the line of questioning intimidating. Our goal is to make the criminal justice process less overwhelming.

So the next time a survivor of sexual assault comes forward, you can start by believing.

If you or a loved one is a survivor of sexual violence, there is help available. The Rape Crisis Center of Medina and Summit Counties has a 24-hour hotline – 330.434.7273.

Stay safe,

Sherri B. Walsh



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IN THE COMMUNITY

The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office is proud to fight for the victims of crime. We believe in them and give them a voice. We proudly took part in the annual luncheon sponsored by the Victim Assistance Program of Summit County. This year, the agency honored Pamela Hinton with the Rev. Dr. Robert Denton Outstanding Victim Service Award.



The event coincides with National Crime Victims’ Rights Week.

The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office can also be a voice for those who need assistance. That includes people with special needs.

The Autism Society of Greater Akron named Prosecutor Walsh as an Autism Ambassador at April’s Autism Summit Breakfast.

Prosecutor Walsh joined Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and Marilyn and Joseph Henn as Autism Ambassadors for their continued support and dedication to the Autism Society of Greater Akron.



Prosecutor Walsh has long been a strong supporter and advocate for children with special needs.

As the mother of a 20-year-old with Autism, Prosecutor Walsh has served on the board of the Greater Akron Chapter of the Autism Society. Prosecutor Walsh also

established the Take Me Home Program in Summit County. Take Me Home is a secure database used by law enforcement to identify people, including children with special needs, who have a



difficult time communicating.



We also have a very talented and dedicated staff of victim advocates. Our victim advocates provide information and support to crime victims through the judicial process.

We are very proud of each and every member of our Victim Services Division. Recently, the Ohio Crime Victim Justice Center honored Mark Beckwith, a victim advocate in our Juvenile Division, as a 2018 Model of Justice.

Mark has worked for the Summit County Prosecutor’s Office for over 14 years. Many times, victims deal with a wide range of emotions and anxiety. Mark’s ability to put people at ease as well as his compassion gives victims the knowledge that we believe them and are there to fight for them.

Thank you Mark and congratulations!

We also love to show off one of our favorite employees—Avery!

Prosecutor Walsh spoke to members of Leadership Akron Class 34 during the organization’s Justice Day at the Summit County Courthouse.



Avery sits with children or adults with special needs if they are victims or witnesses to a crime.

Prosecutor Walsh talked about how Avery’s calming presence helps victims overcome their fears and anxiety when they come to our office or testify at trial.

Thank you Leadership Akron for inviting us!



AVERY'S CORNER

KEEPING THE COMMUNITY SAFE

I'm so glad May is here! The weather is finally getting warmer and I can go outside and play without getting my paws muddy and wet.

I also love spending time with my friends at Bolich Middle School in Cuyahoga Falls. Thank you Wendy Thomas for inviting me and letting me meet your students. I hope they enjoyed the visit.



This is my new friend Ashley. Ashley is an intern with Summit County Victim Assistance and wanted to follow me! I showed her all the best places to go in the courthouse (and maybe a trip to Starbucks!). Thanks Ashley for spending time with me.



I also got to play with some little humans at the Hudson Preschool Parents-Children's Fair.



This little guy showed me his new friend.

It was great meeting everyone and I hope I can go again next year.

Follow Avery II on Facebook at:

[www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/SummitCountyProsecutorAveryII)

SummitCountyProsecutorAveryII



GUILTY VERDICTS

April 2018



Congratulations to the following assistant prosecutors for obtaining convictions at trial.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Jon Baumoel | Seema Misra |
| Joe Dangelo (2) | Zach Neumann |
| Felicia Easter | Cletus Pulliam |
| Elisabeth Jackson | Brian Stano |
| Elliot Kolkovich | Ryan Stickel |
| Brian LoPrinzi (2) | |

GREAT JOB PROSECUTORS!



TOUGH PROSECUTIONS

These defendants will be locked up for a lengthy period of time thanks to our dedicated Assistant Prosecutors:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| William Knight, 64 | John Kruger, 51 |
| • Murder | • Sexual Battery |
| • LIFE IN PRISON | • 25 YEARS IN PRISON |



Help Us Go Green!

Contact Melanie Hart at hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net to receive this newsletter by e-mail



TOP COP

AKRON POLICE CAPTAIN DAVID LAUGHLIN

NOMINATED BY ASST. PROSECUTORS JON BAUMOEL & BRIAN LOPRINZI

Recently, an Akron murder received a lot of attention. The 64-year-old William Knight is currently serving a life sentence for killing 24-year-old Keith Johnson over a stolen dirt bike. The efforts of the lead investigator in the case was vital in securing a conviction. That is why we nominate Akron Police Captain David Laughlin as this month's TOP COP.



The shooting occurred on the evening of March 20, 2017. William Knight shot Keith Johnson in the head. Mr. Knight claimed self-defense saying he fired his gun because Mr. Johnson posed a threat to Knight, his daughter, and son-in-law. Curtis Gill, Knight's son-in-law, was the original owner of the dirt bike and had posed as a potential buyer in order to lure Keith Johnson and the bike for an in-person meeting.

Captain Laughlin was faced with the daunting task of recreating a complex timeline and chain of events that resulted in Keith Johnson's tragic death. Captain Laughlin and other officers analyzed phone and Facebook posts and

interviewed multiple witnesses to learn the history of the dirt bike and how the meeting between Johnson and Knight's family members was arranged.

The most difficult task was trying to obtain a true and consistent version of events when the shooting occurred as there were nine people who witnessed all or part of the events. Capt. Laughlin utilized diagrams, maps and computer programs during the interviews to verify the credibility of each witness and confirm the truth.

Capt. Laughlin was able to determine that William Knight's version of self-defense was not credible or accurate, and the shooting of Keith Johnson was unnecessary and criminal.

As this month's TOP COP, Captain Laughlin receives a gift card to Ido Bar and Grill. Thank you Ido Bar and Grill for your continued support of local law enforcement.

Congratulations Captain Laughlin

POLICE WEEK

During the month of May, we take time to pay tribute to those who serve and protect our communities.

Police week begins on Friday May 11 with six days of events and commemorations.

The 37th annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Service is scheduled for Tuesday May 15 at 11am on the west front of the U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C.

In 1962, President Kennedy signed a proclamation which designated May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day. That grew into a week-long celebration and service.



For more information click www.policeweek.org.

FREE SELF-DEFENSE CLASS

Our next FREE Women's Self-Defense class is coming up!

We will be at Woodridge High School in Peninsula on Thursday, May 31st from 6pm-8pm. You can learn vital and potentially life-saving techniques including the trachea notch push-off (shown here).

The classes provide common sense tips to help people become more aware plus simple self-defense techniques in case a person is attacked.

Check out our Facebook page for future locations!



WHY I'M A PROSECUTOR

SEEMA MISRA

The Summit County Prosecutor's Office has a new campaign to help inform the public about what it's like to be a prosecutor. Each month, an assistant prosecutor in our criminal division will explain why they chose to be a prosecutor.

This month, Assistant Prosecutor Seema Misra discusses the reasons why she is a prosecutor.

• WHY DID YOU BECOME A PROSECUTOR?

Before becoming a lawyer I worked for a government agency that was involved in bettering the environment. I then went to law school where I wanted to find a career that would give me that same feeling of being a part of something which made a difference and bettered the community.

Being a prosecutor allows me to improve the lives of Summit County residents by fighting for victims and holding criminals accountable.



• WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF BEING A PROSECUTOR?

The best part of being a prosecutor is getting justice for victims who can't protect themselves. Many times you come across cases where you want to help the victim because they can't help themselves. The cases which are the most rewarding are those where you're able to help them out of a position that they're in and they just can't find their way out.

• WHAT'S THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF BEING A PROSECUTOR?

One of the most difficult parts of being a prosecutor is that even after a case is over, knowing the scars of what happened and the impact of the crime will still be with the victim and their family for the rest of their lives. I like to think that we can start the healing process for the family and the victims of serious and horrible crimes.

Seema's full "Why I'm a Prosecutor" video is on our website and Facebook page.

AKRON CANTON FOODBANK



The Summit County Prosecutor's Office works hard to make our community better. Recently, employees collected non-perishable foods to donate to the Akron-Canton Regional Food Bank as part of their Harvest for Hunger campaign.



The Criminal Division held a race to collect the most cans, with participants having to run through an obstacle course and complete certain tasks.

Our Child Support Enforcement Agency held a can/food building contest. The winners are pictured with Prosecutor Walsh - Cherie Zarembka, Jen Watson, Samantha Lisy, Susan Yeatts, and Colette Stewart. Thank you for all you do!

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