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News from the Criminal Division

February 2012

Message from Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh

You may have recently heard about my efforts to prevent two killers from receiving parole. Although both of their crimes occurred back in 1975, that doesn't mean my office -- or their victims' families -- have forgotten.

I believe it is my responsibility to provide victims and their families with a voice. My Victim Services Division contacts victims and their families when an offender is up for parole and informs them of what will happen and how to contact the parole board, if they want to be involved.

I don't always actively oppose parole. Some of the factors that go into whether I oppose parole are the severity of the crime, how much of the sentence the offender has served and the wishes of the victim.

Most of the time, there is little fanfare when I oppose someone's parole. I send a letter, a Victim Advocate attends a hearing. But sometimes I need some help from the community.

This month I needed to find the family of an elderly woman who was murdered in 1975. The killer, Dale

Collins, has a parole hearing at the end of March, and I felt my case would be much stronger with the support of his victim's family. Within an hour of the story airing on the radio, my office was fielding calls from relatives, as well as community members who wanted to keep the killer in prison.

Another offender, Donald Webb, Jr., also has a parole hearing in March. He is serving a life sentence for his role in the shooting death of an Akron detective.

The detective's children vehemently oppose Webb's release, especially since he has already been paroled multiple times on this murder and keeps ending back in prison

for committing new crimes. When I asked for community support to keep this admitted cop-killer in prison, my office was again inundated with calls.

On behalf of my office and the families of Helen Shay and Detective Gary Yost, thank you to everyone who contacted the Ohio Parole Board!

Stay safe,

Sherri B. Walsh



Educating Kids

Prevention is a large component to keeping kids safe. And educating them on what's right and wrong in the eyes of the law is key.

Some behavior that was previously brushed off as simply kids being kids now has legal consequences. The days of schoolyard taunts and scuffles over lunch money being a problem for the school to handle are over.

Now kids may face criminal charges for bullying -- in person or via the Internet -- and sharing sexually explicit digital images.

It is my goal to prevent kids from becoming either a victim or an offender, so my office works with local schools and community organizations to educate students, teachers and parents about the criminal aspects of "typical teenage behavior."

Our most frequently-requested presentations educate students and teachers on why sexting and cyberbullying are illegal, the potential consequences and what to do if you witness it.

We also speak with parents on this same topic and include warning signs and what to do if they suspect their child is being victimized.

We can tailor our presentations to cover any topic, from a specific legal issue to a more general discussion of what it's like to work in the Prosecutor's Office. To request a speaker for your organization, contact Lisa Holdt at holdt@prosecutor.summitoh.net or (330) 643-2000.



Domestic Violence Unit

Some kinds of crimes are best prosecuted by people experienced in dealing with that specific type of crime. For example, some of my assistant prosecutors are assigned to cases in which a child has been the victim of a sexual crime. Those prosecutors have handled enough of those cases to understand how to talk to such young victims in a way that elicits the information necessary for prosecution without victimizing the child all over again.

Another type of crime that benefits from specialized prosecution is domestic violence. My office's Domestic Violence Unit consists of three assistant prosecutors who work solely on cases involving domestic violence.

These prosecutors understand the cases particularly difficult to victims, stigma and evidence that against another's -- and they are able to build a strong case.

Even with the many hurdles the Domestic Violence Unit has a victims.

And last year we further strengthened our commitment to combatting domestic violence by securing a \$750,000 federal grant from the Office on Violence Against Women and by creating Ohio's first felony Domestic Violence Court. The Court, which is a collaboration between my office, the Summit County Court of Common Pleas and other local agencies, aims to reduce recidivism by holding offenders more accountable for their actions and rehabilitating them.

Although the Court is still in the early stages, I am proud of it and look forward to demonstrating its progress to the Ohio Supreme Court in April.

In 2011, we achieved a 96 percent conviction rate for domestic violence cases.

issues that make domestic violence prosecute -- frequently uncooperative often comes down to one party's word to work with and around those issues

unique to domestic violence cases, strong record of securing justice for

February Top Cop



Top Cop: Stow Police Detective **Ken Mifflin**

Nominated By: Assistant Prosecutor Ron Clum

Last Summer, two juveniles were caught in Cuyahoga Falls riding stolen motorcycles. The subsequent investigation linked the juveniles to three burglaries in Stow, in which six motorcycles and thousands of dollars in property were stolen, and additional burglaries in Cuyahoga Falls.

A third juvenile, now 18, purchased four of the six stolen motorcycles. When he learned that the police were investigating the motorcycle thefts, he hid his motorcycles in the basement of his cabin in Pennsylvania.

From the time the two juveniles were first arrested, Detective Ken Mifflin of the Stow Police Department methodically and patiently interviewed suspects and witnesses until he was able to unravel a burglary ring and recover most of the stolen property. Detective Mifflin worked with the Pennsylvania State Police, who served a search warrant on the third juvenile's Pennsylvania cabin and recovered two motorcycles. At the same time, Detective Mifflin served a search warrant on that same juvenile's property at a golf course in Peninsula and found two more motorcycles.

Through the course of his investigation, Detective Mifflin interviewed various witnesses, subpoenaed cell phone records, reviewed text messages between all three juveniles, served search warrants and worked with the Pennsylvania State Police. Detective Mifflin put together an airtight case, which resulted in guilty pleas for all three of the juveniles.

That's why Detective Ken Mifflin of the Stow Police Department is February's Top Cop.

Way to go, Detective Mifflin!

Teen Dating Violence

Violence between romantic partners is a crime my office takes very seriously, and our society and culture reflect that mindset as well. But one type of domestic violence that you don't often hear about is when it occurs between teenagers.

Sadly, teen dating violence is more common than you might think. According to one study, as many as one-third of all U.S. teens has been the victim of physical abuse from someone they've dated.

What makes that even worse is that the people involved most likely don't have the skills and resources necessary to deal with this sort of violence. Teens are just starting to learn about romantic relationships. Violence within a relationship is difficult enough to deal with for adults.

Imagine yourself as a teenager. What if your boyfriend or girlfriend physically harmed you? What would you do? Who would you talk to?

Dating violence and abuse take many forms:

controlling behaviors like needing to know where you are and who you're with at all times, demanding passwords for your cellphone and email, stalking and outright physical violence. It can even be something seemingly minor like name-calling and insults. But no matter what form

it takes, it has no place in a healthy relationship.

There are many resources available for teens (and even adults) in abusive relationships. If you need help, call the National Dating Abuse Helpline at 866-331-9474 or contact my office to speak with a victim advocate.

We must continue to advocate for the young people in our lives by providing safe spaces to have conversations about dating abuse and provide examples of healthy, violence-free relationships that include support, love and respect.

- Office on Violence Against Women

Help us go green!

If you currently receive this newsletter on paper and would like to receive an electronic version instead, email Melanie Hart at hart@prosecutor.summitoh.net.

Meet Assistant Prosecutor Pete Daly



Name: Pete Daly

Hire Dates:

Tax Division: November 2010

Juvenile Division (Dependency & Neglect): April 2011

Criminal Division: January 2012

Title: Assistant Prosecutor

Hometown: Westbury, NY

Education: I earned my undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Notre Dame.

Background: Prior to joining the Summit County Prosecutor's Office, I clerked for Federal Judge Peter C. Economus from 2007 until 2010. I joined the Tax Division of the Prosecutor's Office in 2010. Then I moved to the Juvenile Division to work on Dependency and Neglect cases. I joined the Criminal Division in January.

Something People Don't Know About Me: I play hockey as often as I can.

Job Duties: As a courtroom prosecutor, I handle a variety of felony offenses.

Most Memorable Case: It's hard to pick one. Many of my Dependency and Neglect cases stand out because of the nature and circumstances of the children involved.

Contact the Summit County Prosecutor's Office
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Guilty at Trial

Congratulations to the following assistant prosecutors for obtaining guilty verdicts at trial in January:

Beth Aronson

Jay Cole

Joe Dangelo

Aaron Howell

Tom Kroll

Brian LoPrinzi

Angela Poth-Wypasek (2)