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News from the Criminal Division

January 2013

Message from Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh

On Monday, January 7, I was sworn in by Judge Carol Deszo to serve my fourth term as Summit County Prosecuting Attorney. As I prepared to take my oath of office, I reflected over my 12-year tenure leading the Prosecutor's Office.

I am proud of all that my office has accomplished since I first took office in 2001.

I created a strong Victim Services Division that goes far beyond the victim notifications as required by law.

I strengthened our Child Support Enforcement Agency to become an award-winning organization and one of the best CSEAs in Ohio. Our Criminal Non-Support Unit has collected almost \$30 million in owed child support since its creation in 2001.

Our Domestic Violence Unit made history last year with the establishment of the first Felony Domestic Violence Court in Ohio.

In 12 years, I have had the opportunity to meet prosecutors throughout the state. I have worked with many of them on finding ways to better enforce our laws and

protect our communities. In this past term as Prosecutor, I had the honor of serving one year as the President of the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association. Through that involvement, I have met many elected prosecutors and many of their assistants.

Those experiences made me realize that I was very fortunate to select and hire a staff of talented prosecutors who share my passion for fighting for victims. These assistant prosecutors also work with a fine

staff of secretaries, victim advocates and investigators who help us work toward justice in all of our cases. I am proud to say that the citizens of Summit County are well served by my staff.

I look forward to even more progress over the next four years. I am committed to continuing my office's close relationship with law enforcement and the community. I envision greater collaboration with the many nonprofit organizations throughout Summit County.

I am thankful to have another four years to serve the citizens of Summit County.

Stay safe,



StalkingAwarenessMonth.org

January is National Stalking Awareness Month

Although stalking can sometimes be portrayed in pop culture as more of a joke than a serious crime, stalking is no laughing matter. See page 2 for some sobering statistics on stalking and to find out what you can do.

Summit County CSEA Director Leads State Association



On January 11, Jennifer Bheam, director of the Prosecutor's Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) was elected president of the Ohio CSEA Directors' Association (OCDA). OCDA is dedicated to strengthening Ohio's child support program by providing a forum to initiate, discuss and analyze legislation, budgetary concerns, regulations and other issues affecting the child support program. The association coordinates the efforts of CSEAs throughout the state and collaborates with other professional organizations on issues that impact the children and families served.

As president, Jennifer plans to work on maintaining funding for Ohio's CSEAs, collaborating with the state's workforce program to assist noncustodial parents in finding employment and prioritizing policy considerations for the upcoming legislative cycle.

Congratulations, Jennifer! Ohio's child support system can only improve under your leadership.

Tough Prosecution

Here are just a few of the defendants my assistant prosecutors recently convicted:

Anthony Hill, 21

- Murder
- Felonious Assault
- Sentenced to life in prison
- Eligible for parole in 2045

Tony Smith, Jr., 18

- Aggravated Robbery (two counts)
- Aggravated Burglary
- Kidnapping
- Sentenced to 16 years in prison

Ja'relle Smith, 17

- Aggravated Robbery (three counts)
- Aggravated Burglary
- Kidnapping
- Sentenced to 16 years in prison



Stalking Facts & Figures

Think stalking is a harmless crime? Consider these facts from the Stalking Resource Center:

- Each year in the United States, 6.6 million people are stalked.
- 1 in 6 women and 1 in 19 men have been stalked.
- 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 14 boys were stalked between the ages of 11 and 17.
- Most stalking victims are stalked by someone they know.
- In 20 percent of cases, the stalker uses a weapon.
- 1 in 8 stalking victims miss work because of their victimization.
- 1 in 7 stalking victims move because of their victimization.
- Almost one-third of all stalking victims fear the victimization will never stop. More than 10 percent of victims have been stalked for at least five years.
- More than three-quarters of females murdered by an intimate partner were also stalked by that intimate partner.
- Stalking is a crime in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Territories.

Are you or someone you know being stalked? These two local organizations can help:

Battered Women's Shelter

(888) 395-4357

www.scmcbws.org

Victim Assistance Program:

(330) 376-0040

www.VictimAssistanceProgram.org

Visit <http://stalkingawarenessmonth.org> and <http://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>.

January Top Cop

Top Cop: Summit County Sheriff Steve Barry
Nominated By: Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh

This month's Top Cop isn't in recognition of one particular case. Instead, I'd like to commend someone for a successful career and for what I'm certain he will accomplish in the coming years.

The son of a reserve Akron Police Officer, Sheriff Steve Barry was recently sworn in as Summit County's newest Sheriff. Sheriff Barry was a deputy for the Summit County Sheriff's Office for more than 30 years, working his way up through the ranks to the position of Captain.

Sheriff Barry gained his experience by working and rising to commanding positions in multiple divisions. These include Corrections, Investigations,

Internal Affairs, Community Policing and the Hostage/Critical Incident Negotiations Unit. In addition, he served as the Commander of the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission's Summit County Mortgage Fraud Task Force. He achieved success in each of these areas. These experiences will serve him well as he leads our Sheriff's Office.

My office works closely with the Sheriff's Office. We collaborate on many initiatives, most notably the Take Me Home program. I could not be more proud or more excited to work with Sheriff Barry.

Sheriff Barry is clearly a man of integrity. While I am pleased to call



Steve "Sheriff," I am even prouder to call him my friend. I got to know him well when he served as an Investigator in my office. He has been very helpful to me and my office.

I congratulate him on what I'm sure will be a successful tenure as Summit County Sheriff!

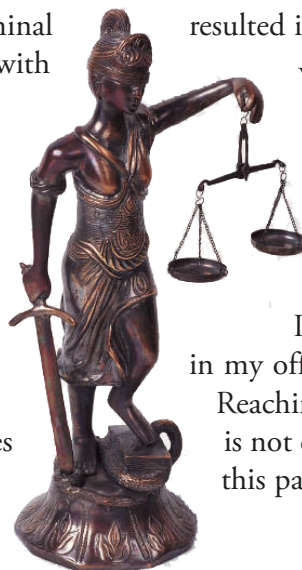
Way to go, Sheriff Barry!

Criminal Division Continues High Conviction Rate

Each January I review the previous year's criminal case log statistics. I am continually impressed with my office's success in obtaining justice.

In 2012, we closed cases involving 3,710 defendants. Many cases have multiple defendants. That is why we talk about the number of defendants instead of the number of cases we handle each year. However, that still leads to a high case load!

Our overall conviction rate increased from 95 percent to 96 percent. This number includes cases that went to trial and resulted in a verdict by the jury or judge as well as cases that



resulted in a plea agreement before or during trial.

What is even more impressive is our trial conviction rate. Of the 125 cases that went to trial in 2012, 86 percent resulted in a guilty verdict. That may be the highest trial conviction rate this office ever accomplished.

I am very proud of the great job everyone in my office does every day in the pursuit of justice. Reaching and maintaining such high benchmarks is not easy. I truly appreciate everyone's hard work this past year.

Meet an Assistant Prosecutor: Kassim Ahmed



Hire Date: August 2012

Title: Assistant Prosecutor

Hometown: Austintown, Ohio

Fun Fact About Me: I was recruited by the CIA, mostly for my language skills. My family talked me out of joining the CIA out of fear for my safety. I sometimes think about how I regret not going, but if I was there, I wouldn't have ended up here!

Education: I earned my bachelor's degree at the University of Akron in Political Science/Conflict Management and my law degree at the University of Akron School of Law.

Background: I was an intern with this office, as well as with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

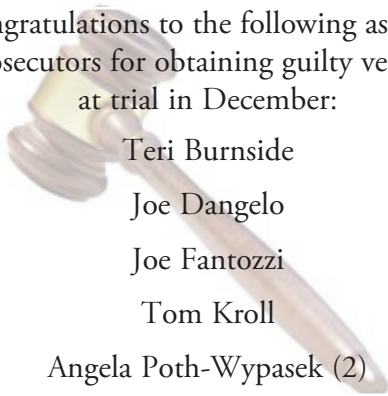
Job Duties: I prosecute juvenile cases involving misdemeanors, felonies, traffic violations and status offenses such as truancy and unruly conduct in the Juvenile Delinquency Division.

Most Memorable Case: My most memorable case is a burglary case with a juvenile defendant. The victims and police officers pulled me aside and explained that the defendant had been a menace for years, from torching cars to burglaries. They explained that in the three months that the defendant was locked up, the crime rate in that area dropped -- no burglaries, no robberies and no stolen or torched cars. After winning the trial, it was a great feeling to be able to tell the victims and police officers that the defendant was going to be off the streets for the next nine months.

Why I Wanted to Become a Prosecutor: I love being in the courtroom. I want to be the best trial attorney that I can be, and this is the perfect place for that. It's an important job that I can feel good about.

Guilty at Trial in December

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



Teri Burnside

Joe Dangelo

Joe Fantozzi

Tom Kroll

Angela Poth-Wypasek (2)

"He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it."

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Summit County Prosecutor's Office will be closed on Monday, January 21 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

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.

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