



Elliot Kolkovich

Summit County Prosecutor



A YEAR OF PROGRESS

As 2024 comes to a close and 2025 begins, I want to reflect on the past year we've had in the Summit County Prosecutor's Office. Trailblazing retired Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh passed the torch to me in February after more than 23 years of dedicated service to the people of our county. I am honored to carry on her legacy and am proud of what our Office has been able to accomplish since my first official day on February 21, 2024.



Our Office continues to recognize that our law-enforcement responsibilities do not end at the courthouse door. I remain committed to being a proactive Prosecutor who works within the community to prevent crime and to reduce its impact. To that end, our outreach division and victim advocates led the re-launch of the

Start by Believing public awareness campaign to support victims of crime, particularly survivors of sexual assault. And, we've continued our free women's self-defense classes, senior-safety events, and internet-safety presentations in schools and community centers throughout every area of Summit County.

The Adult Felony Unit in the Office's Criminal Division underwent its first reorganization in decades to streamline operations, provide additional stability to victims of crime, and better prioritize the prosecution of violent offenses. The unit now has five Major Trial prosecutors who are dedicated exclusively to prosecuting high-level offenses. To reflect our continued commitment to rehabilitating deserving offenders with drug-addiction and mental-health issues, the Office has also worked with the Court of Common Pleas to hire our first-ever Specialty Dockets prosecutor. That prosecutor is exclusively assigned to getting low-level offenders into appropriate diversion and intervention programs.

I am equally proud of the continued hard work of the Child Support Enforcement Agency. Through their multi-pronged techniques to collaborate with both custodial and noncustodial parents, CSEA collected tens of millions of dollars in child support this year. Each dollar collected is critical to helping Summit County's children achieve the financial and medical support that they deserve.



When I took office in February, I said that I couldn't wait to get back to work. The same holds

We've already seen positive results from our reorganization with more convictions for high-level felony offenses, quicker case dispositions, and more diversionary placements for deserving offenders. By getting more violent offenders off the streets and more deserving offenders into rehabilitative programs, we improve safety for everyone and save more money for taxpayers.

true today. I cannot thank every member of my staff enough for all that they have done this year to protect the residents of Summit County, hold offenders accountable, and stand up for the most vulnerable in our community. It is an exciting time of progress and opportunity in the Summit County Prosecutor's Office, and I cannot wait to see what we can accomplish in 2025!



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IN THE COMMUNITY



The Summit County Prosecutor's Office got into the holiday spirit throughout November and December.

We kicked the holiday season off with a

Thanksgiving bake sale to benefit the Office's community-service efforts. Many enjoyed tasty holiday treats!

Prosecutor Kolkovich joined over 200 seniors for WAKR's Holiday Senior Lunch. A good time was had by all, and many seniors left with safety pointers and anti-fraud pens.



Representatives from the Summit County Prosecutor's Office also volunteered for the Salvation Army's bell-ringing campaign. Many thanks to

Assistant Prosecutor Felicia Easter for coordinating our Office's efforts in Cuyahoga Falls.



Prosecutor Kolkovich also presented at a holiday-themed Outsmart the Scam event that provided tips for avoiding scams. Our Office is proud to sponsor the Outsmart the Scam series with County

Executive Ilene Shapiro and Sheriff Kandy Fatheree, and we were honored to have County Councilman Brandon Ford with us at this month's event. Be on the lookout for more informative events in 2025!



GUILTY VERDICTS November & December

Congratulations to the following Assistant Prosecutors for obtaining convictions at trial.

- Rimma Avanesyan** **Chris Delisio**
- Felicia Easter** **Amanda Koren**
- Joe McAleese (x2)** **Jamila Mitchell**
- Austin Nagy**

TOUGH PROSECUTIONS

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

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Deshawn Coleman
Murder
LIFE IN PRISON | Da'Quan Issac
Murder
LIFE IN PRISON |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|

Elias Gudino
Aggravated Murder
LIFE IN PRISON

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Quinton Nixon
Murder
LIFE IN PRISON | Jontay Johnson
Manslaughter
15-to-20.5 years |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|

Scott Jacobson
Rape
LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE

CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

In November, John Ventura, Case Management Administrator, along with other Ohio Child Support professionals from metro cities, visited Chicago, for the annual Midwest Urban Jurisdiction Meeting. In addition to Ohio, colleagues from large cities in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Region 5 Federal Office were in attendance.



OCSS Commissioner, Tangler Gray, opened the session welcoming everyone and discussed her vision and priorities, including her 3P's: People, Process and Performance. Commissioner Gray spoke of the importance of

reinvesting in programs that support fathers and employment opportunities along with improving our collaboration with tribal programs.

Other presentations included State Refugee Coordinator, Jennifer Johnson, from the Office of Refugee Resettlement, Ryann Moore, Child Support Program Specialist and the always entertaining Thomas McDonald, Senior Economist from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

This meeting offers a forum to discuss challenges, best practices and opportunities from an urban perspective.



Our very own John Ventura with other members of the Ohio delegation

The Summit County Prosecutor's Office "Ambassadors for Equity & Social Justice" was formed to bring co-workers of different backgrounds and cultures together. Each month the Ambassadors share thoughts to make our community a better place to live.

December is Universal Human Rights Month to commemorate the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. Drafted by representatives who came from every region of the world, it set out fundamental human rights to be universally protected.



One of the individuals involved in its drafting stated, "It is the first occasion on which the organized community of nations has made a declaration of human rights and fundamental freedoms. And it has the authority of the body of opinion of the United Nations as a whole and millions of people, men, women, and children all over the world, will turn for help and guidance and inspiration to this document."

Human rights play a critical role as a preventative, protective, and transformative force in addressing people's greatest concerns. By defending human rights, we can prevent harm before it happens. By protecting human rights, we protect our future. By advancing human rights, we create a fairer world.

An individual's economic, cultural, and social rights can be violated through various means. Violations occur when a state fails in its obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill these rights like failing to ensure a wage sufficient for a decent living or forcibly evicting people from their homes.

Human rights can empower individuals and communities to forge a better tomorrow. By embracing and trusting the full power of human rights as a path to the world we want, we can become more peaceful, equal, and sustainable. Hopefully, Universal Human Rights Month will inspire everyone to acknowledge the importance and relevance of human rights, change perceptions by countering negative stereotypes and misconceptions and mobilize action to reinvigorate a global movement for human rights.

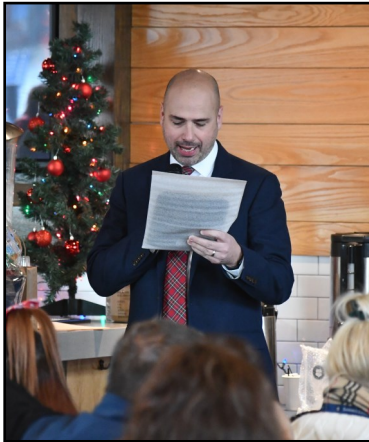


Help Us Go Green!

Contact Tara Fought at tfought@prosecutor.summitoh.net to receive this newsletter by e-mail



OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY



The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office held its annual Christmas Party in early December at the Rubber Duck Club in downtown Akron. Unlike previous years, we were able to have all divisions of the Office together to celebrate at the same time. All members of the staff enjoyed some fellowship as we relived the trials,

tribulations, and successes of the past year. All agreed that next year would be even better!

Prosecutor Kolkovich was honored to present multiple awards to the Office’s highest-performing staff members. CSEA Case Manager of the Year was awarded to Katlyn Feeman. CSEA Staff Member of the Year was awarded to Cherie Zarembka. The Office awarded General Division Staff Member of the Year to Kathy Duskey and Team of the Year to the Child Protection Unit to recognize their zealous representation of Summit County Children Services despite staff shortages. And, Prosecutor Kolkovich awarded General Division Employee of the Year to Rimma Avanesyan. Assistant Prosecutor Avanesyan’s guilty verdicts at trial and tough prosecutions are often featured in this newsletter.



Summit County Children Services despite staff shortages. And, Prosecutor Kolkovich awarded General Division Employee of the Year to Rimma Avanesyan. Assistant Prosecutor Avanesyan’s guilty verdicts at trial and tough prosecutions are often featured in this newsletter.



A PUPPY PARTY!



The Prosecutor’s Office rewarded its dedicated Juvenile Court staff by holding a Puppy Party in December. Members of the Delinquency and Child Protection units got to spend some quality time with 6-week-old puppies from One of a Kind Pet Rescue, which is based on Market Street in Akron. Everyone had fun with our new furry friends, including Adam! Don’t worry, Adam, you’re still our favorite dog! Thanks to Juvenile Court Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio for allowing us to use the Court’s conference room.



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FREE WOMEN’S SELF-DEFENSE CLASS

**Certified Instructor
Chad Cunningham**

Learn simple techniques that could save your life!



- Verbal techniques
- Free yourself from a choke-hold
- Learn the wrist breakaway
- Escape if pinned to the ground
- Practice kicks and slaps



**Tuesday, January 21, 2025
6pm - 8pm**

**The Natatorium
2345 4th St.
Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221**



Scan for our full class schedule
**For any questions contact
Tara Fought: 330.643.2787**

TOP COPS

COPLEY POLICE DETECTIVES

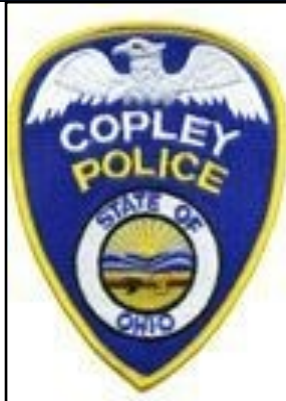
MIKE YOVANNO & JARED HASLAR

NOMINATED BY ASST. PROS. ZACH NEUMANN

Over the years, the Prosecutor’s Office has handled a number of violent offenses. Few have been as chilling as the prosecution of Elias Gudino for a triple homicide.

Gudino developed jealousy against a man who was in a relationship with his estranged wife. Due to that jealousy, Gudino kidnapped four other men at a house in Youngstown to try and lure his wife’s boyfriend to the house. When the boyfriend never showed, Gudino bound and gagged the four men and drove them to his house in Copley. He eventually executed three of the men at point-blank range and nearly killed the fourth.

The investigation into the killings involved agencies from the federal, state, and local levels. But, Detective



Lieutenant Mike Yovanno and Detective Jared Haslar of the Copley Police Department took the lead. They worked diligently and navigated language barriers to ensure that the surviving victim was able to stand up and tell the jury about Gudino’s evil actions. And, they tracked down important leads to disprove Gudino’s defense.

Thanks to the work of Det. Lt. Yovanno and Det. Haslar, Gudino was found guilty at trial and he will now spend the rest of his life behind bars.

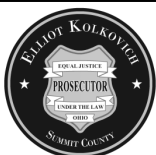
Great job and congratulations!

A REIMAGINED CITIZENS ACADEMY



The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office organized a reimagined Citizens Academy in November. Unlike previous years, the Office is now conducting a full-day academy where attendees learn about the Prosecutor’s Office and the criminal-justice system in Summit County. By adopting a single-day format for Citizens Academy, the Office can hold more academies during the year and expand the reach of our innovative program to more community leaders.

“My Office is dedicated to transparency and engaging with the community about all the work that we do to keep Summit County safe,” Prosecutor Kolkovich said. “It was great to meet with so many community leaders and to talk about our Office’s work. Thanks to our community-outreach specialist, Mickey Valdez, for organizing the academy!”



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