



# WCDA Newsletter 2018

## January - December

WASHOE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

### WCDA SPECIALTY COURTS TEAM



### **WORKING TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY SAFETY THROUGH DIVERSION PROGRAM SUCCESS**

In 2016, Washoe County District Attorney Chris Hicks established the first ever WCDA Specialty Courts Division with the designation of a team including two full-time attorneys and support staff employees. The division received funding in 2016 and is currently overseen by Assistant District Attorney (ADA) Bruce Hahn and staffed by Deputy District Attorneys (DDA) Roy Stralla and Rebecca Druckman. Additionally, many prosecutors from around the office routinely and graciously volunteer to cover Specialty Court dockets during staffing shortages.

### **A MESSAGE FROM DISTRICT ATTORNEY CHRIS HICKS:**

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about your Washoe County District Attorney's Office.

In this edition, you will read about the significant strides taken to further build our presence in our local specialty courts. We strive to strike the important balance between rehabilitating low-level offenders with substance abuse or mental health problems, ensuring justice is served for victims and holding serious offenders accountable.

You will also learn about some grants we have brought to the office. Our Sexual Assault Kit Initiative prosecutor is focusing on cold cases, seeking to bring closure to victims and the removal of sexual predators from our streets. Our Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor will improve public safety on our roadways by providing training and specialized prosecutor response to impaired driving cases.

This is just some of the important information in our 2018 recap newsletter. Again, thanks for reading. I hope you enjoy it.

Chris Hicks,  
District Attorney

The office has been appearing on limited Specialty Court dockets since their inception in July of 1995. Shortly before his retirement in 2015, former Assistant District Attorney John Helzer tasked DDA Druckman with taking over this duty and focusing solely on Second Judicial District Court Specialty Court cases. At that time, DDA Druckman was the sole prosecutor covering all the Second Judicial District's Specialty Court dockets. Due to the volume of cases and the addition of several court diversion programs, Chief DDA Cheryl Wilson also began assisting.

The catalyst for the establishment of the WCDA Specialty Court Division occurred in 2015. This was a critical time for Washoe County's Specialty Courts with the inception of many new court programs, both at the district and justice court levels. Sparks Justice Court (SJC) launched Sparks Recovery Court in 2015, while District Court launched its Medically Assisted Treatment Court and Young Offender Drug Courts. These courts provide participants with medication to break their dependence on illegal drugs and, given the opiate epidemic and three hundred people dying daily from drug overdose, new approaches have developed to combat the overwhelming cravings of opiate addiction. This has resulted in medical advances in treating addiction, while societal changes have resulted in specialty courts' numerous innovative approaches to offenders and crime.

Moving forward to 2016, DDA Druckman now covers Veterans Court, Felony DUI Court, Medically-Assisted Treatment Court, Diversion Court, and Adult Drug Court. She has also hosted several presentations approved for continuing legal education credits covering a wide array of specialty court related topics such as substance abuse, addiction, and mental health for lawyers.

DDA Stralla was also an important addition to the team. Along with serving as lead prosecutor on several active homicide cases within the office, DDA Stralla handles Young Offender Drug Court, Prison Re-entry Court, and Mental Health Court. He is also assigned to all justice court level programs in both Reno Justice Court (RJC) and SJC, including RJC's Community Court diversion program and SJC's Recovery Court. In March of 2017, he assisted RJC in relaunching its DUI Court Compliance Program. Legal secretaries Stephanie Larkin and Annalise Lockhart round out the WCDA Specialty Court Team, providing much needed administrative support.

The development of the WCDA's Office Specialty Court Division has truly been a team effort. DDA Druckman, with the help of Sharon Flanary, Alicia Agrella, Dale Kaduk and Stephanie Larkin brainstormed the current work flow for hundreds of specialty court cases that are active within the District Attorney's Office. Ms. Larkin, who was recently promoted to a supervisor position, utilized her

## Did You Know?

- WCDA Specialty Court prosecutors attend approximately 20,000 hearings every year across 13 different court programs.
- WCDA Specialty Court prosecutors each carry an approximate case load of 550 cases at any given time.
- WCDA accepted 136 cases from other jurisdictions in 2018: 74 cases from Western Regional Drug Court, 25 cases from Reno Municipal Court, 20 cases from Sparks Municipal Court, and 17 cases from miscellaneous referral sources outside Washoe County.
- The Specialty Court population increased by 611 participants 2018.

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extensive knowledge of our Justware case management system to track, analyze, and organize the complex procedures of the specialty court caseload. Thanks to the efforts of the entire team, she is able to compile reports that provided useful statistical information for the office, such as the pass/fail rates for individual court programs.

While the goal of the Washoe County District Attorney's Office continues to be that of seeking justice for victims and holding offenders accountable, the office recognizes that preventing future crimes and working with the courts and other stakeholders to provide youthful and non-violent low-level offenders with a path out of criminal life may ultimately be the best way to ensure the public's safety.

## TRIAL ATTORNEYS OF THE YEAR

Deputy District Attorneys (DDA) continue to carry rising caseloads and each January the Criminal Division recognizes the DDA who completes the most jury trials in the preceding year with the distinction of **Trial Attorney of the Year** or "*Trial Dog.*" Last year ended in a tie, this time between three DDAs who completed 4 trials each. Impressively, the trials they completed represented some of the most serious cases prosecuted by the entire office in 2018. Convictions were secured for murder, sexual assault, kidnapping, robbery, child pornography, lewdness with a minor, felony DUI and battery with a deadly weapon. These DDAs are to be commended for their efforts to bring offenders to justice and are truly deserving of recognition.



As the Executive Director of the Washoe County Child Advocacy Center and chief prosecutor of that division, all of **Chief DDA Nicole Hicks'** trials were against child sexual predators. Among Chief DDA Hicks' trials was the case against Jim Chen. Chen sexually abused a female relative for 9 years from the age of 4 to 13, and received 6 life sentences in prison. Also prosecuted was Jorge Borja-Ruiz who impregnated an 11 year old girl as a result of one of his multiple sexual assaults. Another prosecution was against Jeffrey Fluckiger. Fluckiger was convicted of 17 counts of child sexual abuse for having victimized a young girl from the age of 7

to 12. Fluckiger, who also filmed some of his assaults, was sentenced to 271 years in prison. All told, Chief DDA Hicks' trials resulted in over 28 life sentences delivered to child sexual predators removed from our community.



**DDA Carrie Morton** is a veteran prosecutor on one of our three felony teams. One of DDA Morton's early trials was against Robert Totman who had fled the scene of a traffic accident where he had crashed his work truck into a passing motorcyclist. As a result, the motorcyclist suffered a life altering injury. Totman was found guilty of felony hit and run and also pled guilty to DUI. A subsequent trial was the prosecution of co-defendants Kayshawn Smith-Harper and Raymond Banks, two men who were found by a homeowner while they were stealing a gun safe from his house. The two men pointed a gun at the homeowner and fled. They ultimately crashed their car while fleeing from the police and were caught. Upon their apprehension, evidence of an additional residential burglary was found. They were convicted of multiple felony charges and sentenced to lengthy prison terms.



**DDA Amos Stege** is assigned to the WCDA's Office's Major Violators Unit. His first trial was against Christopher Kindler who sexually abused 3 young boys. Kindler was convicted and sentenced to 5 consecutive life sentences for his crimes. Next, DDA Stege prosecuted Edward Pundyk for brutally murdering his elderly mother with an assault rifle after an argument. He too was sentenced to a term of life in prison. Yet another of DDA Stege's cases was that of John Degen, convicted of attacking and raping a woman in a Midtown motel room. Degen used a stun gun on his victim during the assault and was convicted of 8 felony charges. He will serve the rest of his life in a Nevada prison for his crimes.

# OUR SUPPORT STAFF

## Behind the Scenes Dedication

Regardless of the size of an agency or company, the contributions of support staff are instrumental in its success. The Washoe County District Attorney's Office relies heavily on the work performed by many unsung heroes. Each year, the office handles thousands of criminal and civil cases beyond just criminal prosecutions. In order to successfully carry out our mission, a dedicated staff of over 180 men and women are employed with expertise in many areas of law and legal support. We strive to ensure their work and dedication does not go unrecognized.

In what can be considered the largest law firm in Northern Nevada, Criminal Prosecutors and Civil

Deputy District Attorneys handle cases ranging from misdemeanors to serious felonies and provide specialized legal guidance to all of Washoe County Government's many divisions and departments. Providing critical assistance to them are **LEGAL SECRETARIES, OFFICE SUPPORT SPECIALISTS** and **OFFICE ASSISTANTS**. With their support, the office is able to meet the requirements of a complex legal system of court filings and document generation. Strict timelines exist within our judicial system and it takes a team effort and knowledgeable people for all to succeed.



**Susan Kriner** has been with the Washoe County District Attorney's Office for 14 years as a Family Support Specialist and works with passion and dedication every day!

**What brought you to work for the Washoe County District Attorney's Office?** I was new to the area and my neighbor told me that I should apply with the County. It was the best decision I have made.

**What has become your favorite part of working with the Washoe County District Attorney's Office?**

Working with some great co-workers. It is a second family away from home and working with the public. Helping out other families.

**What are your favorite things to do when you are not at work?** I love to spend time with my family and my dog, Brody! I have been married to my husband for 22 years. I have 2 daughters, 21 and 17 years old. I love to go camping, drag racing, doing arts and crafts or just relax and read on my kindle.



**Tilena Hicks** has worked with the Washoe County District Attorney's Office for 3 years as an Office Assistant II and we are glad to shine some light on all the hard work she does.

**What brought you to work for the Washoe County District Attorney's Office?** I was looking for a career. A place I could invest myself and see return, somewhere I could plant roots and grow. When I got the call, I just knew that this was it!

**What has become your favorite part of working with the Washoe County District Attorney's Office?**

Where to start... In a nutshell when I go home, I feel like I contributed to something important. And of course there is also the people that I work with. I've made friendships here that I feel will last a lifetime.

**What are your favorite things to do when you are not at work?** Spend time with my family. These moments are fleeting and soon one day, they will have their own families to care for and their own careers. Sometimes we go to the movies and go camping in our motorhome. It gives the kids no choice but to spend time with me – some of my very favorite memories!

**Favorite Quote?** "A dream doesn't become reality through magic, it takes sweat, determination and hard work" – Colin Powell



**Cathy Silvas** has worked for the Washoe County District Attorney's Office for 15 years. Her dedication and passion for her work is demonstrated each and every day.

**What brought you to work for the Washoe County District Attorney's Office?** The private defense attorney I worked for in Truckee retired. I decided to leave the private sector and work for the "other side"

**What has become your favorite part of working with the Washoe County District Attorney's Office?** I like the people contact and the fact I don't have to write my own paycheck. I went from a 1 person staff to over 200 staff. They are fun to be for.

**What are your favorite things to do when you are not at work?** My two grown daughters are my favorite way to spend time. Next to that, I like my animals, my garden, and long walks with my husband.

**Favorite Quote?** "Expecting the world to treat you fairly because you are a good person is a little like expecting the bear not to eat you because you are a vegetarian" – Anonymous

Charged with assisting thousands of victims and witnesses each year, the Victim Witness Assistance Center (VWAC) has an important mission. A team of **VICTIM ADVOCATES, OFFICE ASSISTANTS** and **LEGAL SECRETARIES** work closely with each other to provide support for those involved in criminal and sometimes civil cases. Advocates provide much needed support to victims of crime throughout the life of a case and specialized legal secretaries and office assistants handle the logistics of subpoenaing over 10,000 witnesses to court every year. VWAC staff are often the first to contact the public and they consistently represent the office well.

In addition, the Records Division and Family Support Division are charged with specific areas of responsibility that both support the office and the public. Records Support Staff are tasked with the management of hundreds of thousands of documents, cases and files received by the office each year that make up our criminal or civil cases. In addition, the Division's **OFFICE ASSISTANTS** and

**SUPERVISOR of RECORDS** archive all criminal warrants issued in Washoe County and coordinate the office's Fraudulent Check Diversion Program. Finally, the Family Support Division (highlighted in this newsletter) is a joint effort with the State of Nevada. **FAMILY SUPPORT SPECIALISTS, CASE WORKERS** and **OFFICE ASSISTANTS** routinely provide help to Washoe County families with the court mandated collection of millions of dollars in child support payments every year.

**Without the work of our support staff, we could not be successful in our mission to provide the best possible service to the community.**



Wendy Beltran has worked for the office since 2017 as an Office Support Specialist in the Records Division. Her hard work and commitment does not go unnoticed.

**What brought you to work for the Washoe County District Attorney's Office?** I had previous experience working in criminal justice but found that I needed a change to grow my career. Luckily, I had an opportunity to join Washoe County.

**What has become your favorite part of working with the Washoe County District Attorney's Office?** My favorite part has been meeting the people who make this office work. We have a wonderful team who work hard every day to serve the people of our community.

**What are your favorite things to do when you are not at work?** I feel grateful to live in a beautiful area like Northern Nevada and try to spend a lot of time outdoors hiking and camping. I also enjoy reading, going to the movies and trying the new restaurants that are popping up around town.

**Favorite Quote?** "The secret of getting ahead is getting started."- Mark Twain

# MARSY'S LAW

## WCDA LEADS RESPONSE TO STRENGTHEN THE VOICE OF CRIME VICTIMS

### Leading the Way - Protecting Victims' Rights



In November 2018, Nevada voters made clear that they want the justice system to do more to protect victims of crime. Question 1, commonly known as “Marsy's Law,” passed overwhelmingly and amended our state constitution to expand victims' rights. The law went into effect three weeks after passage and Washoe County District Attorney Chris Hicks directed the office take a leading role in its implementation in Northern Nevada

While victims previously had the ability to make a victim impact statement at sentencing, the new expansion of victims' rights now includes the right, upon request, to be notified of all public hearings in the case, and to be heard in court at any hearing involving release of the defendant from custody. This change allows victims to express their safety concerns directly to judges, who are now constitutionally required to consider the victim's safety when reducing a defendant's bail, or letting a defendant out of jail before trial. Marsy's law also protects victims from the release of information that may be used to harass them, and advises defense counsel that victims have the right to refuse interviews or depositions absent a court order.

### Working Quickly To Meet the Challenge

Though the change in the law officially became effective on November 27<sup>th</sup> 2018, DA Hicks put together an implementation team before its passage. At the beginning of a criminal prosecution in the office, victims are now being notified of their constitutional rights and given the opportunity to choose how and when they want to learn about court events in their case.



These new procedures are a worthwhile challenge to the men and women of the DAs office. The work is currently being handled by existing staff, as Marsy's Law does not include a provision for additional funding to support victim notification efforts for the hundreds of criminal hearings that occur in Washoe County courts each month. More importantly, the law does not place the responsibility of victim notification on prosecutors. Regardless, the WCDA's Office felt strongly that the needs of victims in our community called for us to take the initiative.

### **Educating the Community on Victims' Rights – First Steps**



In the initial stages of implementation, office staff worked quickly to make hundreds of educational calls to victims of existing cases in the weeks following the law's passage. A Marsy's Law implementation team held internal trainings on the new law for prosecutors, administrative staff, and victim advocates. The office also held partner agency meetings and presented its implementation plan to state and local law enforcement agencies, courts, and area defense attorneys. It also hosted a well-received presentation on Marsy's Law for members of the victim services community. In addition, implementation strategies were shared with other district attorneys' offices throughout the state.

### **Improving Strategies for the Future**

Though the WCDA's Office has stepped up in the months following Question 1's passage in order to ensure victims know and exercise their new constitutional rights, there are ongoing efforts to work with all members of the criminal justice system to ensure full compliance with the law. Just as all members of the criminal justice system must work together to safeguard a defendant's constitutional rights, Marsy's Law calls upon prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges to honor a victim's need to be safe and to be heard during the criminal justice process.

*"We look forward to working with our criminal justice partners, courts, and attorneys to develop even more effective ways to ensure our victims are treated with dignity and respect," said District Attorney Hicks.*

# Did You Know?

## The Constitutional Amendment Known As Marsy's Law Give Victims These Rights

The right to be treated with fairness and with respect for the victim's privacy and dignity, and to be free from intimidation, harassment and abuse;

The right to be reasonably protected from the defendant and persons acting on behalf of the defendant;

The right to have the safety of the victim and the victim's family considered as a factor in fixing the amount of bail and release conditions for the defendant;

The right to prevent the disclosure of confidential information or records to the defendant which could be used to locate or harass the victim or the victim's family;

The right to refuse an interview or deposition request, unless under court order, and to set reasonable conditions on the conduct of any such interview to which the victim consents;

The right to reasonably confer with the prosecuting agency, upon request, regarding the case;

The right to the timely disposition of the case following the arrest of the defendant;

The right to reasonable notice of all public proceedings, upon request, at which the defendant and the prosecutor are entitled to be present and of all parole or other post conviction release proceedings, and to be present at all such proceedings;

The right to be reasonably heard, upon request, at any public proceeding in any court involving release or sentencing, and at any parole proceeding;

The right to provide information to any public officer or employee conducting a presentence investigation concerning the impact of the offense on the victim and the victim's family and any sentencing recommendations before the sentencing of the defendant;

The right to full and timely restitution and to have all monetary payments, money and property collected from any person who has been ordered to make restitution be first applied to pay the amounts ordered as restitution to the victim;

The right to the prompt return of legal property when no longer needed as evidence;

The right to be informed, upon request, of the conviction, sentence, place and time of incarceration, or other disposition of the defendant, the scheduled release date of the defendant and the release of or the escape by the defendant from custody;

The right to be informed of all post conviction proceedings, to participate and provide information to the parole authority to be considered before the parole of the defendant and to be notified, upon request, of the parole or other release of the defendant;

The right to have the safety of the victim, the victim's family and the general public considered before any parole or other post judgment release decision is made; and

The right to be specifically informed of these constitutional rights and to have information concerning these constitutional rights be made available to the general public.

# SEXUAL ASSAULT KIT INITIATIVE

## PROSECUTOR FOCUSES ON COLD CASES



In response to nationwide attention on sexual assault investigations and backlogs in some jurisdictions of untested evidence collected in these cases\*, a National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) program was launched in 2015. The program is a federally funded grant program administered by the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). The goal of the initiative is to improve the overall response to sexual assaults by identifying and apprehending violent offenders and by addressing previously untested sexual assault kits in law enforcement custody.

In August 2018, the WCDA's Office was awarded a BJA SAKI grant sub-award through the Nevada Attorney General's Office for the hiring of a special prosecutor who would be responsible for the prosecution of all SAKI related cases submitted by local law enforcement agencies. In October 2018, Deputy District Attorney (DDA) Darcy Cameron, a 8 year veteran prosecutor, was selected to lead the office's effort and began her assignment as the designated SAKI prosecutor for Washoe County.

In addition to focusing on the prosecution of these cases, DDA Cameron is also providing vital training to area law enforcement and developing outreach and educational material aimed at sexual assault response and prevention. The SAKI grant has enabled the WCDA's Office to further its efforts in coordinating a regional multidisciplinary Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) that will be critical in promoting an ever-improving victim centered community response to sexual assault in Washoe County. With the assistance of the SAKI grant, the office continues to be committed to providing survivors of sexual assault with the compassion and respect they

### Did You Know?

According to State of Nevada reporting, Washoe County's law enforcement agencies reported 203 sexual assaults in 2017 (<http://rccd.nv.gov/About/UCR/Crime-In-Nevada/>). Nationally, the crime remains one that is estimated to be significantly under-reported for a variety of reasons.

deserve and bringing their assailants to justice.

\*The majority of Washoe County's 1020 sexual assault kits submitted for testing thru the SAKI funding consisted of kits that were un-submitted by law enforcement for a variety of reasons and were not part of a backlog. New legislation (AB No. 97, 2017 Legislative Session) now makes the submission of sexual assault kits taken as evidence during a criminal investigation mandatory.

# THE WASHOE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

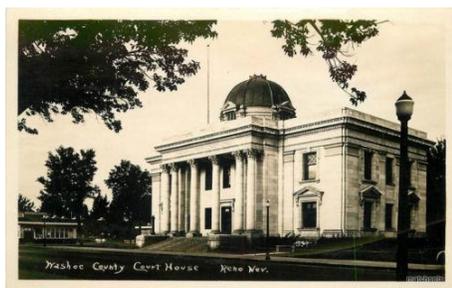
A PROUD TRADITION OF SERVICE SINCE 1864

The Washoe County District Attorney's Office has a proud 155 year history of dedicated service to the community. Our mission has expanded as our community has grown from the days of the old west to the modern pursuit of justice for the over 440,000 citizens of Washoe County. Since its origin in 1864, the office has played a major role in the safety of the public it serves. One constant is that of an elected District Attorney, who is selected by popular vote to a four year term.

The first elected District Attorney was James F. Lewis, appointed April 30, 1864. Lewis served until December 5, 1864, when he resigned to become the first elected Chief Supreme Court Justice, serving on that high court until his retirement in 1872. Since then, many prominent Nevada men and one woman have held the office, including familiar names from our states history such as Mills B. Lane, the late Nevada Senator William J. Raggio, William Woodburn Jr., Jack Streeter, Robert Rose, Cal Dunlap and Dorothy Nash Holmes to name a few.



JAMES F. LEWIS  
1ST DISTRICT ATTORNEY - 1864



Current District Attorney Christopher J. Hicks is the 37<sup>th</sup> District Attorney for Washoe County to be elected since the office was established. First elected in 2014 and beginning his second term, his tenure follows that of his father, Larry R. Hicks, who was elected to the office in 1974. The senior Hicks was appointed by George W. Bush to the federal bench and currently serves as Senior United States District Court Judge for the District of Nevada.

From its humble beginnings as a lone DA pursuing justice in the old west, the office has evolved into today's modern District Attorney's Office divided into four divisions, Criminal, Civil, Family Support and Administration. Currently, over 180, prosecutors, attorneys, legal support staff, criminal investigators and professional victim advocates work diligently to prosecute crimes, protect public safety and handle a variety of other legal functions in support of County government.



*"The oath every District Attorney takes has not changed, only the names and the challenges faced in achieving justice and protecting the welfare of the community."*



*District Attorney Chris Hicks*

# A HISTORY OF TRADITION AND SERVICE



**Mills B. Lane**  
1983 - 1990

**Jack Streeter**  
1951 - 1954



**Eugene L. Williams**  
1989 - 1990



**Larry R. Hicks**  
1975 -1978



**Richard A. Gammick**  
1995 - 2014



**William J. Raggio** 1959 - 1970

**Dorothy Nash Holmes**  
1991-1994



**Frank H. Norcross**  
1894 - 1896



**Calvin R. X. Dunlap**  
1979 - 1982



**William Woodburn Jr.**  
1908 - 1914



**Lester D. Summerfield**  
1919 - 1930

Not Pictured  
James F. Lewis 1864, Alanson Smith 1864 - 1865,  
William Webster 1866 - 1868, Joseph Kunz 1868 - 1870,  
William M. Boardman 1870 - 1874, H. B. Cossit 1874 -  
1876, William Cain 1876 - 1878, John Bowman 1878 -  
1880, George Rankin 1880 - 1882, J. F. Alexander 1882 -  
1886, Pierce Evans 1886 - 1888, David Allen 1888 -  
1890, Thomas V. Julien 1890 - 1892 & 1896 - 1898,  
Benjamin F. Curler 1892 - 1894, William H. A. Pike  
1900 - 1904, W. B. Craig 1904 - 1906, Thomas F. Moran  
1906 - 1908, Melvin E. Jepson 1931 - 1934 & 1943 - 1946,  
Ernest S. Brown 1935 - 1942, A. Dyer Jensen 1955-1958,  
Robert E. Rose 1971 - 1974



**Harold O. Taber**  
1942 - 1950



**Douglas Busey**  
1942



**Howard F. Lunsford**  
1915-1918

# DIVISION SPOTLIGHT

## The Washoe County District Attorney's Office Family Support Division

The principles that guide the work of the Washoe County District Attorney's Office's Family Support Program are to promote the well-being of children, strengthen families, and reduce the demand of public treasuries by securing financial and medical support from legally responsible parents. The program, which operates out of the Family Support Division (FSD), is made up of 40 dedicated employees who are responsible for case management. This team is led by Chief Deputy District Attorney Kathleen Baker and Program Manager Lori Garcia, both longtime employees of the office who know that every dollar collected can make a difference in the life of a child. They take great pride in delivering quality service to the families who rely on the Division for assistance in the collection of owed child support payments.

With a caseload of over 6500 cases, the Division is consistently one of the top performing child support programs in Nevada and continues to collect and distribute over \$2,000,000 each month. In



### Did You Know?

The WCDA's Office has a Child Protective Services unit, which is run by Chief Deputy District Attorney Jeff Martin. Martin leads a team of six Deputy District Attorneys and five Legal Secretaries in the handling of the sensitive and complex civil cases arising out of child abuse and neglect. The unit works primarily with the family courts and Washoe County's Human Services Agency (formerly Social Services) on issues related to child dependency when there are allegations of a child in need of protection.

Federal fiscal year 2018, total collections distributed to families where either parent lived in Nevada topped \$27,618,959.

While the mission of the FSD is focused on strengthening families, the work can be difficult and stressful. In November, 2018 the staff participated in an all-day retreat held at Rancho San Rafael. It was a fun-filled day of celebration of the Division's successes, learning about peers, identifying challenges and sharing ideas in order to improve performance and promote rejuvenation!

Throughout this past year, the Division also provided support and countless hours of staff resources towards the development of Nevada's new child support records management system. Called NVKIDS, the project is one of the largest technology modernization initiatives of its kind for the State of Nevada. When completed, it will provide user agencies with a new child support system that can handle the growing complexities of the program's tracking needs in order to ensure Nevada's children and families have the financial and medical support they need. The system has over 800 federally mandated requirements and the verification and validation sessions documenting all of these requirements ended in October 2018. The project will move into the design phase in 2019, with final implementation of the multi-year project slated for June 2022. FSD's Child Support Program is hopeful that NVKIDS will increase overall efficiency that will in turn improve performance measures, customer service and the overall satisfaction of the families who receive their support. The Division looks forward to all the opportunities that 2019 may bring and is committed to continuing to be a top performing child support program.

## WCDA's Office *IN THE NEWS*

### **WCDA Prosecutor Secures Life Sentence Against Violent Rapist**



The Washoe County District Attorney's Office secured a life sentence against a violent offender convicted in a September trial on multiple counts of sexual assault, battery with the intent to commit sexual assault and kidnapping charges. John Anthony Wayne Degen, 36, was ultimately sentenced to life in prison for brutally attacking a Reno woman at a downtown motel on Christmas Day, 2017. Based on the sentence, Degen must serve 73 years in prison before parole eligibility begins.

### **Defendant Convicted of Sexual Assault, Robbery and Attempted Murder for Hire Plot Sentenced to Life in Prison**



In July, James Poochigian, 19, was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole after 29 years for the crimes of Sexual Assault, Kidnapping, Robbery with Use of a Deadly Weapon, Battery with Intent to Commit Sexual Assault, and Coercion. While in jail, Poochigian was found to have attempted to have the victim in his case killed and was also sentenced to a consecutive 15 year term, the

maximum sentence allowed for the crime of Solicitation to Commit Murder.

Poochigian's sentencing followed those of two co-defendants who participated with him in the armed robbery. Demarcus Deandre Patrick, 23, and Mathew James Gray, 19, each pled guilty to one count of Robbery with Use of a Deadly Weapon and were sentenced to identical 13 year prison terms, with parole eligibility after 5 years.

# Employee SPOTLIGHT

## Deputy District Attorney

### SHANNON BRYANT

#### GRANT FUNDING SECURES TRAFFIC SAFETY RESOURCE PROSECUTOR (TSRP)



In September 2018, the Washoe County District Attorney's Office received a \$200,000 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) grant from the Nevada Office of Traffic Safety. The purpose of the funding was to increase the office's ability to improve public safety on Nevada's roadways statewide by providing training and specialized prosecutor response, primarily to impaired driving cases. To accomplish this, the NHTSA grant specifically provides funding for a state-wide Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor (TSRP) position within the office. On October 1, 2018, District Attorney Chris Hicks appointed Deputy District Attorney (DDA) Shannon M. Bryant as Nevada's first state-wide TSRP.

DDA Bryant is an eight-year veteran of the Washoe County District Attorney's Office, and also brings with him close to four years of experience as an Assistant United States Attorney where he prosecuted drug and violent crimes in federal court. Since his appointment as Nevada's TSRP, DDA Bryant has provided hundreds of training hours to law enforcement officers and prosecutors around Nevada to assist them in their detection, investigation, and prosecution of impaired driving cases. In addition, he has received specialized training in Nevada and around the country. He has completed the driving under the influence portion of Nevada's Peace Officer Standards and Training course, attained certification as a Standardized Field Sobriety Test instructor, and is obtaining NHTSA certification as a Drug Recognition Expert.

DDA Bryant also provides technical assistance to other Nevada prosecutors who face challenging issues in serious impaired driving trials and require specialized resources. He also carries a caseload of his own comprised of select Washoe County impaired driving cases, which have resulted in death or substantial bodily harm. The position of a full-time, state-wide TSRP is a Nevada first, and DDA Bryant's hard work and commitment to public safety places the Washoe County District Attorney's Office at the forefront of reducing impaired driving related fatalities and injuries within the Silver State.



# WCDA's Office *IN THE COMMUNITY*



In 2018 staff of the WCDA's Office once again supported our community by donating their time and helping to raise funds to assist the Ronald McDonald House, Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Research Foundation, Mt Rose Elementary School and many other worthy groups

Our employees continue to take pride in representing the office at special events and community forums such as Hot August Nights, the Annual City of Reno Safety Fair and by participating in awareness campaigns such as Domestic Violence Awareness and Child Abuse Prevention Month Activities



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