



# WCDA Newsletter

# 2017

January – June

WASHOE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

## WASHOE COUNTY CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER EARNS ACCREDITATION FROM NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE



The Washoe County Child Advocacy Center (CAC) has been awarded accreditation by the National Children's Alliance (NCA) following an extensive application and site review process. NCA is the national accrediting body for Child Advocacy Centers across the nation. It awards varying levels of accreditation and membership to centers that respond to allegations of child abuse in ways that are effective and efficient,

while putting the needs of child victims of abuse first. **In February, the CAC received the NCA's highest level of accreditation, denoting excellence in service.**

The CAC opened its doors in June of 2014 as a partnership between prosecutors, local law enforcement, advocates, child protection workers, as well as medical and mental health professionals. These professionals work together to form a Multi-Disciplinary Team whose mission

### A MESSAGE FROM DISTRICT ATTORNEY CHRIS HICKS:

Greetings! As part of a continuing effort to inform the citizens of Washoe County about the meaningful work of your District Attorney's Office, I am proud to release this first of its kind biannual newsletter.

The District Attorney's Office has a long tradition of service. Since its establishment in 1864, the year Nevada achieved statehood, we have grown into a highly professional organization employing a dedicated staff of men and women committed to the public's safety. As your elected District Attorney, it is an honor to maintain and improve upon that tradition. I hope you enjoy the newsletter and I thank you for your interest.

Chris Hicks,  
District Attorney

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<https://www.washoecounty.us/da/>

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WASHOE COUNTY  
*Child Advocacy Center*

is to ensure the health and safety of the child in a child-friendly setting. Child victims are no longer exposed to multiple interviews in unwelcoming environments.

To date, over 1,250 forensic interviews of children have been conducted, a number that illustrates the need for such a center in our community. Successful prosecutions of child predators have increased substantially since its inception. In 2016, prosecutors secured 60 life sentences against child predators.

At the same time, child victims and non-offending family members are receiving assistance in the emotional healing process. Since opening, the CAC has provided over 1,000 counseling sessions at no charge to the victim.

### Washoe County CAC Partnering Agencies:

- Washoe County District Attorney's Office ▪
- Reno Police Department ▪
- Washoe County School District Police ▪
- Sparks Police Department ▪
- University of Nevada-Reno Police ▪
- Washoe County Sheriff's Office ▪
- Child Advocacy Medical Unit ▪
- Washoe County Social Services ▪
- Child Advocacy Therapy Unit ▪

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# TRIAL ATTORNEYS OF THE YEAR - 2016

Deputy District Attorneys (DDAs) carry caseloads in the hundreds 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." 2016 ended in a tie between two DDAs who completed 6 trials each.

## DDA Mike Bolenbaker



Mike's first trial was a violent Sexual Assault case where the defendant kidnapped his victim. He was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison. His second was a DUI trial involving a defendant who

habitually drove intoxicated having accumulated two prior felony DUI's in his lifetime. This time he crashed his car and fought with the police. He was found guilty. His third was an Attempted Murder case where a jilted boyfriend shot the new beau in the chest with a pistol. The defendant was sentenced to 40 years in prison. His fourth guilty verdict involved an inmate who not once, not twice, but three times violently attacked deputies working at the jail. His fifth was a very tragic trial. Six days before Christmas 2014 the female defendant, who was high on marijuana, intoxicated, and recklessly driving away from an accident she had just caused, struck a vehicle with two local teens in it which resulted in catastrophic injuries to them both. One of the teens suffered a traumatic brain injury and must now use a wheelchair for mobility. After 4 days of trial, she was also found guilty. Lastly, the sixth trial

involved a defendant who possessed methamphetamine and a concealed handgun when encountered by police. In the midst of all these trials, Mike and his wife welcomed a new baby into the world.

## DDA Zelalem "Z" Bogale



Z's first trial was a tragic DUI crash where the victim, a popular local musician, was struck while riding a scooter resulting in significant injuries to his legs and arms. The defendant who fled the scene

was found guilty and sentenced to prison. His second was an Open and Gross Lewdness case where the defendant hid in a stall in a casino's female public bathroom waiting for the chance to caress the leg of a neighboring patron. The third involved a defendant who committed significant destruction to a local hotel room, then accosted the hotel staff while preventing them from calling 911. He was found guilty. His fourth was an Attempted Murder case where the defendant, a gang member, shot the victim in the head with an assault rifle. He was found guilty and sentenced to 20 years in prison. The defendant in his fifth trial was a habitual domestic batterer who grabbed the victim by the throat and threw her. He was found guilty and sentenced to the maximum prison sentence. Lastly, the sixth trial involved another tragic DUI crash where the intoxicated defendant drove onto a sidewalk and struck a pedestrian who sustained broken bones. He was also found guilty.

**DID YOU KNOW? ~ Since its inception, the Fraud Check Diversion Unit of the District Attorney's Office has collected over \$10,000,000 in restitution that has been returned to local businesses.**

## 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL CHILDREN'S CANCER CLASSIC RAISES FUNDS FOR LOCAL NON-PROFIT

In April, the 2nd Annual Children's Cancer Classic Basketball Game benefiting the Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation (NNCCF) took place. The matchup between the District Attorney's Office and the Washoe County Public Defenders helped raise over \$7,000 in support of local families with children undergoing cancer treatment. Since its inception, the Children's Cancer Classic has raised over \$15,000.

This year's event once again featured a competitive game, where prosecutors and defense attorneys met each other on a different court, exchanging legal arguments and objections for lay-ups and three-pointers. Event organizer Cortney Young said, "for the second year in a row, the real winner of the day was the Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation. I know all the participants were honored to help fundraise for such an important organization."

NNCCF is a local non-profit, providing assistance to local families who have children receiving treatment for cancer through financial and emotional assistance, increased awareness, and promoting research to find a cure. For more information please visit: <https://nvchildrenscancer.org/>



**Final Score: District Attorneys 38**

**Public Defenders 37**

# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Chief Deputy District Attorney  
Susan Hallahan

Washoe County District Attorney's  
Office 1992 To 2017



After 25 years of service, Chief Deputy District Attorney Susan Hallahan will retire. Susan attended Reed High school and is a third generation Nevadan, graduating from UNR in 1988, and Santa Clara University Law School in 1991. She was hired into the Family Support Division of the office in 1992 – her ultimate dream job. Susan and her sister were raised by a single mom without financial assistance from their father and wanted to help people by working to provide financial stability for children.

During her tenure in the office, Susan was instrumental in building a highly successful Family Support Division. This year, the Family Support Division was recognized as the number one family support collection agency in the entire state. Last year, the Division collected \$27,000,000 dollars that was distributed to families in our community.

Susan's dedicated service to the office and families of this community will be missed.

## WASHOE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE PAYS TRIBUTE TO LATE NEVADA ICON WILLIAM "BILL" RAGGIO, FORMER DISTRICT ATTORNEY 1959 - 1970, WITH OFFICE DISPLAY

In March, the District Attorney's Office paid tribute to former District Attorney and longtime Nevada icon, the late Senator William Raggio. Thanks to a generous donation from Raggio's widow, Dale Raggio, a memorial was established on the executive floor of the office located in the Mills Lane Justice Center. This memorial is the newest effort by the office to recognize and preserve its proud 152 year history of public safety service. The desk used by District Attorney Raggio serves as a centerpiece to the memorial that consists of donated books, badges, office memorabilia and personal effects once belonging to the well-known prosecutor and Nevada State Senator.

Raggio began his service to Nevada in 1952. He served 38 years in the Nevada Legislature and 18 years as a prosecutor for the District Attorney's



Office, including 12 as its elected District Attorney. His overwhelming influence in Nevada is undeniable and was detailed in a 2011 biography titled, "A Man of His Word."

## PROSECUTION CORNER

The Criminal Division is dedicated to achieving justice for victims of crime and aggressively prosecuting violent offenders to protect the welfare of our community. Each year, the office handles thousands of criminal cases, including those highlighted below. Cases vary, ranging from minor traffic offenses that occur within unincorporated areas to all felonies committed within the County.

### SERIAL CHILD SEX ABUSER SENTENCED TO 39 LIFE SENTENCES IN LARGEST CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE CASE EVER TRIED IN WASHOE COUNTY



Last December, Valentin Anthony Corrales, was found guilty of 39 counts involving Lewdness with a Minor Under the Age of 14, Sexual Assault of a Child, and Sexual Assault. In March, Corrales received 39 consecutive life sentences for his crimes by Judge Elliott Sattler. He is not eligible for parole. District Attorney Hicks praised Judge Sattler's decision stating, "These severe and just sentences not only validate the victims' courage to come forward and disclose the atrocities forced upon them by this horrendous defendant but also guarantee he will be behind bars for the rest of his existence."

A multi-disciplinary team coordinated through the Washoe County Child Advocacy Center (CAC) began investigating Corrales in February of 2015, when a 19 year old victim reported to police that she had been a victim of sexual abuse by Corrales for the last 13 years. The investigation uncovered additional victims whose years of abuse dated back to 1994. All victims reported the sexual abuse started when they were approximately 6-7 years of age and included various forms of

assault in multiple locations on a frequent, if not daily, basis. Corrales had previously been convicted of two counts of Lewdness with a Minor Under the Age of 14 in 1990 and was sentenced to three years in prison. In that case, he abused two young daughters of a single mother.

Emotional statements from two of the victims were presented at Corrales' sentencing that portrayed the traumatic impacts the abuse had on their lives and expressed their gratitude to the jury, the court, and the authorities involved in the prosecution of the case for ending their abuse. Deputy District Attorney Nicole Hicks characterized the victims as "victors" and argued that the maximum sentences will deliver a message that these acts will not be accepted in our community and that these victims' cries for justice were heard.

## ROBBERY CASE RESULTS IN LIFE SENTENCE FOR DEFENDANT WHO VICTIMIZED ELDERLY WASHOE COUNTY HOMEOWNERS



In April, a Reno man was sentenced to life in prison after having been found guilty on multiple residential robbery and burglary counts. The crimes involved elderly victims attacked in their own homes, including one 74 year old Reno man who was severely beaten, bound, gagged and repeatedly Tasered at gunpoint. The sentence ensures the defendant will serve the remainder of his life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Earlier in the year, this defendant's week-and-a-half long jury trial resulted in convictions for Burglary, Robbery Against a Person 60 Years of Age or Older, Fraudulent Use of a Credit Card, Burglary with Use of a Deadly Weapon, Battery with Intent to Commit Robbery Against a Person 60 years of Age or Older and Kidnapping in the First Degree Against a Person 60 Years of Age or Older Causing Substantial Bodily Harm.

The case against Roberto Anthony Ramirez began on February 14, 2016 when the Reno Police Department (RPD) responded to a report of a robbery. The 75 year old female victim reported she had been robbed by two male suspects who forced their way into her home when she answered her doorbell. Once inside, the suspects demanded money, while pushing the victim and knocking her to the ground. After ransacking the victim's home, the suspects left with approximately \$100 in cash, credit cards and other property. The victim immediately called police and RPD detectives began an investigation.

Ten days later, a second similar robbery occurred involving a 74 year old male victim. In that case, the victim reported a similar pair of armed suspects entered his home and demanded money. The victim was pistol whipped, bound, gagged and repeatedly Tasered during the robbery, which resulted in the man's wedding ring being stolen off his finger. Both victims were able to provide descriptions of the suspects and RPD detectives were ultimately able to identify Ramirez. In addition to witness statements, DNA evidence linked Ramirez to the crimes and he was arrested.

During sentencing before the Honorable Patrick Flanagan, Prosecutor Michael Bolenbaker argued Ramirez had no regard for human life as he played "Russian Roulette" with the victim; pulling the trigger twice while the firearm was inches from the victim's face.

**DID YOU KNOW? ~ The Child Protective Services Division of the District Attorney's Office has helped free 50 abused and neglected children for adoption in 2017.**

# JEFF HOPPE – SOLDIER AND PROSECUTOR

Deputy District Attorney Jeff Hoppe has been with the District Attorney's Office for over 3 years and recently returned from military service in the Middle East



## In 2016, you deployed overseas, what happened?

In addition to my fulltime job as a prosecutor at the Washoe County District Attorney's Office, I also serve in the Nevada Army National Guard as a Judge Advocate General (JAG), which is a military lawyer. Last year my unit, the 17<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade that is based out of Las Vegas, Nevada, deployed to the Middle East in support of Operations Inherent Resolve and Spartan Shield. My unit's primary mission was to provide weapons, supplies, and vehicles to allied forces, including the Iraqi Army, through the Iraq Train and Equip Fund in order to support the fight against ISIS and other terrorist groups. My unit had command authority over 2,000 soldiers spread throughout eight countries in the Middle East. Most of us were located in either Kuwait, Iraq, or Jordan.

## What were your duties?

My primary role was to act as legal advisor for approximately 35 commanders throughout the region with a focus on military justice issues and functioning as the Brigade's prosecutor. I often advised commanders on how to deal with soldier misconduct, which ranged from low-level actions such as soldiers being late to formations, disobedience to superiors, all the way up to sexual assaults. I regularly traveled throughout the region to assist with legal and administrative investigations used as the basis for adverse and punitive actions. While deployed, I successfully prosecuted three courts-martial, which are military criminal trials and proceedings.



## What is the biggest difference between being a civilian and military prosecutor?

The biggest difference between being a civilian prosecutor and military prosecutor is the amount of discretion we have as civilian prosecutors. As a JAG, I provided guidance to various levels of commanders from the company level up to a two-star general. I would analyze their available options, the strength and weaknesses of each decision, and my legal recommendation. However, the ultimate resolution of a case is left up to the commanders. While deployed, I missed the ability to make decisions on cases, but I learned a lot observing how non-attorney senior military leaders digested the information I presented and applied it to their military decision making process.



## Did your work and experience at the District Attorney's Office assist you overseas?

Being a prosecutor at the Washoe County District Attorney's Office definitely made me a more effective military prosecutor. Although the military has its own set of rules and procedures, the overall concept of the criminal process remains the same. Civilian prosecutors carry a much heavier caseload than I saw overseas, but having the ability to assess a case and its value allowed me to conduct thorough investigations and build stronger cases. In turn, I was able to provide commanders in a deployed environment the tools they needed to maintain good order and discipline and successfully accomplish the mission.

## DA HICKS BEGINS PUBLIC REPORTING ON OFFICER INVOLVED SHOOTING INCIDENTS

**Starting in 2016, District Attorney Chris Hicks began releasing comprehensive public reports detailing his findings in Officer Involved Shooting (OIS) incidents.** Earlier this year, he released a report detailing the July 3, 2016 OIS incident that took place at the Annual Downtown Reno "Wing Fest". The shooting involved a high risk situation between Reno Police Department (RPD) officers and Raul Saavedra-Vargas (Saavedra), who had recklessly fled an attempted traffic stop moments before driving into a crowded downtown Reno street event. Concluding that the shooting officer was justified in his actions, DA Hicks released a 26 page report outlining the incident and his analysis. A copy of this report and all other OIS reports prepared by this administration can be accessed on the office's website at: <https://www.washoecounty.us/da/newsroom/reports.php>

According to the Saavedra report, on Sunday, July 3, 2016 at approximately 1:30 p.m. an RPD Motor Officer encountered Saavedra driving a van the wrong way on a one-way street. The officer attempted a traffic stop, but Saavedra refused to stop. Instead, he fled and began driving towards downtown Reno at high speeds. The officer pursued Saavedra observing him once again travel the wrong way on another one-way street before crashing into a car traveling on Center Street. Despite the significant collision, Saavedra continued driving northbound and turned onto Plaza Street, traveling towards Virginia Street and the largely attended "Wing Fest" outdoor street festival. Two RPD officers working foot patrol at the event heard the travel path of Saavedra over the radio and began to move towards Plaza and Virginia Street.

Once there, they heard the van's screeching tires and saw Saavedra coming towards them and hundreds of Wing Fest patrons at a high rate of speed. Reacting, the officers yelled for bystanders to get down and for Saavedra to stop. The van did not slow down and swerved towards the officers and several bystanders on the sidewalk. Fearing for his own safety and the safety of the public, one of the officers fired his gun at the driver. This did not stop Saavedra.

Saavedra maneuvered the van past the Virginia Street barriers and began driving towards hundreds of Wing Fest patrons and vendor booths. Both RPD officers ran to the side of the van and yelled again for Saavedra to stop. Instead, he revved the engine and continued moving forward. Fearing for the safety of the people in Saavedra's path, the RPD officer again fired several more shots at Saavedra who then crashed the van into a vendor booth where it stopped. Saavedra was hit and later died from his injuries.

Consistent with the regionally-adopted OIS Protocol, the Washoe County Sheriff's Office led the investigation into the shooting of Saavedra. The completed report was then submitted to the District Attorney's Office in April of 2017 for a determination of whether the shooting of Saavedra was legally justified. No criminal charges against the shooting officer were recommended by the Sheriff's Office. After reviewing hundreds of pages of reports and documents including witness accounts, photographs, diagrams, video, and examination of the scene of the shooting, DA Hicks concluded that the shooting of Saavedra by the RPD Officer was legally justified.



The report highlights that on July 3, 2016 while patrolling a street festival full of people, the RPD officers encountered an unhinged, potentially homicidal and highly intoxicated Saavedra operating a van in a reckless manner with complete disregard for public safety. DA Hicks stated, **"The heroic and disciplined actions of the involved officers cannot be overstated, nor can the public threat presented by Saavedra be denied. A tragedy was prevented."**



The 2016-2017 Washoe County school year was the start of the office's partnership with the 360 Blueprint Program. 360 Blueprint is a locally grown collaboration effort of the Reno and Sparks Police Departments, the Washoe County School District, the District Attorney's Office, and the University of Nevada, Reno Criminal Justice and Human Development & Family Studies Departments. It also partners with non-profits and local businesses like ITS Logistics.

The program focuses on mentoring at-risk and/or reading deficient elementary school students 1 or 2 hours a week. It strives to develop the students' social skills, their education, and to help improve their futures, which can reduce dropout rates, substance abuse problems, and gang activity. Deputy District Attorneys (DDA) and Investigators were partnered with elementary aged children as part of this successful reading and relationship-building program. It was not just the children who benefitted.

As one participating DDA commented, "I loved working with my mentee. I felt I was doing something more meaningful for someone than I had done in a long time. Helping a young person develop math and reading skills could forever

change the young person's future. I often felt a quiet happiness and peace after our reading sessions. Playing basketball with him was just plain fun. My sister works in the Washoe County School District. She said if every professional (or other qualified person) would help one young student one hour a week, we could literally change Washoe County."

An annual end-of-year banquet to celebrate the accomplishments of the students and the mentors was held in April. This year's banquet theme was "This is Our Community" and took place at the Peppermill Resort & Casino. District Attorney Hicks spoke at the event and the Office was recognized for its partnership and continuing support of the program.



## Washoe County District Attorney's Office 360 Blueprint Mentors:



Michelle Bays  
Zelalem Bogale  
Kari Cordisco  
Mark Covington  
Christopher Day  
Mary Doyle  
Emmett Florez  
Pete Grimm

John Gurriere  
Marcus Hodges  
Stephan Hollandsworth  
Herb Kaplan  
Joe Plater  
Stephanie Shuman  
J.J. Stallings  
Alison Testa



For more information on 360 Blueprint please visit their website: <http://www.360blueprint.org/>

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The District Attorney's Office takes an active role in the community we serve. In addition to fulfilling the responsibilities of the office, staff has volunteered and partnered with the following organizations and events:



360 Blueprint  
 Alliance for Victim's Rights  
 Animal Rescue  
 Awaken  
 Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada  
 Boy Scouts of America  
 Boys and Girls Club of Truckee Meadows  
 Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Task Force  
 Christmas on the Corridor  
 Sparks City Parks & Recreation (coach)  
 Clayton Middle School  
 Committee to Aid Abused Women (CAAW)  
 Food Bank of Northern Nevada  
 Galena High School  
 Girl Scouts of the Sierra Nevada  
 Great Basin Youth Soccer League  
 Holly Quick Memorial  
 Hug High School  
 James D. Hoff Peace Officers Memorial  
 Join Together Northern Nevada (JTNN)  
 LDS Church  
 Living Stones Church (Reno)  
 Maison T Ortiz Youth Outdoor Skills Camp  
 McQueen High School  
 Mount Rose Elementary School  
 State Bar of Nevada's High School Mock Trial Program  
 Nevada POST (Peace Officers Standards and Training)  
 Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation (NNCCF)  
 Northern Nevada Police-Community Coalition

Northern Nevada Literacy Council (NNLC)  
 Northern Nevada Sports & Recreation (coach)  
 Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Church  
 Pinwheels for Protection  
 Reno American Little League  
 Reno Police Department Victim Services Unit  
 Reno Rodeo Association  
 Reno Rodeo Foundation  
 Ridge House  
 Race to End Domestic Violence  
 Safe & Healthy Homes  
 Seniors in Service  
 Senior Advisory Boards – Reno/Washoe  
 Solace Tree  
 Spanish Springs High School  
 Sparks Christian Fellowship  
 State Bar of Nevada, Clients' Security Fund  
 State Bar of Nevada, Publications Committee  
 St. Baldrick's Foundation  
 Tahoe Safe Alliance  
 High Sierra Lacrosse League  
 WCDA Tone Rangers Choir  
 Truckee Meadows Community College High School  
 United Blood Services  
 Washoe County Bar Association's Education Committee  
 Washoe County Domestic Violence Task Force (WCDVTF)  
 Washoe Little League  
 We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution