



YEAR IN REVIEW 2023

J. Hanley
Winnebago County State's Attorney





On behalf of the State's Attorney's Office, I would like to express our gratitude to all of our criminal justice partners. Last year didn't come without its challenges but having the support from our partners helped us achieve countless successes that I'm incredibly proud of. I am grateful that the County Board recognized our need to not only increase staff but ensure that they are fairly compensated for their critical role in keeping our community safe. Personally, I am honored to serve with such dedicated employees, who seek justice every day. I'm proud of how our office adjusted practices and procedures to align with newly enacted measures put forth by the Pretrial Fairness Act. Lastly, I am thankful for the community's support and TRUST. I remain steadfast in my efforts to aggressively prosecute violent crime, move defendants through the criminal justice system and effectively divert defendants where appropriate. As you can see in our review, we are making strides in each of these areas. I'm honored to serve the people of Winnebago County, and will never take your trust for granted.

-J. Hanley

About the Office

The Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office employs 88 people. Our employees include 43 Assistant State's Attorneys, 11 victim service providers, four investigators and an enhanced criminal liaison. The office handled 3,092 new felonies, 2,584 misdemeanors, 14,471 traffic and 791 DUI cases last year.

Mission: To Do Justice

Vision: To Be Trusted

Shared Values: Trust & Gratitude

Locations:

- Winnebago County Courthouse- 400 W. State Street Rockford, IL 61102
- Juvenile Justice Center- 211 S. Court Street Rockford, IL 61102
- Winnebago County Criminal Justice Center- 650 W. State Street Rockford, IL 61102

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Murder Cases

Our office achieved a 75% conviction rate in murder jury trials.* Our overall murder trial conviction rate (bench and jury) for 2021, 2022, and 2023 is 79%.

Murder Trials:

75%
**Conviction
Rate**

Sentence of Note:

155 years in
Department of
Corrections for
Raheem King.
Triple Murder in
2018.

Sentence of Note:

90 years in
Department of
Corrections for
Antonio Monroe.
2023 murder of 10
year old child.

Armed Habitual Criminal Cases

The office is committed to the prosecution of our community's most violent offenders. In Armed Habitual firearm cases, achieved an 89% success rate with an average sentence of 8.4 years in prison.

89% Success Rate

**Average
Sentence:
8.4 years in
prison**

Sentence of Note:

30 years in Department
of Corrections for Danny
Randall.
Arrested in 2021 with
guns & drugs after two
previous home invasion
convictions.

Sentence of Note:

13 years in Department
of Corrections for
William Jackson.
Arrested in 2022 after
search warrant found
guns & drugs in his
residence.

*Unless otherwise noted, the data included in this year in review is from 2023.

Child Sex Cases

The office has a designated prosecutor dedicated to the prosecution of cases involving the physical and sexual abuse of children. These cases originate with our community's children's advocacy center – the Carrie Lynn Center. In 2023, our team maintained an above average acceptance rate and a conviction rate of 95%.

Conviction Rate

95%

Case Reviews:

189

Sentence of Note:

Lamarr Wooden was convicted of sexually abusing three girls in 2020. He was sentenced to a total of 23 years in prison for Aggravated Criminal Sexual Abuse of a Child and Criminal Sexual Assault of a Child.

Juvenile Unit

Our Juvenile Unit consists of four Assistant State's Attorneys, two administrative assistants, and one victim service provider. The unit handled over 900 new case filings in 2023.

Juvenile Delinquency
Petitions:
448

Abuse & Neglect
Petitions:
471

Victim-Offender Reconciliation Initiative:

Young offenders discuss their crime with the victim. Allows offenders to gain an understanding of how their behavior impacts others.

Adult Transfer:

Juvenile teen suspect in October 2022 shooting at a residence on Gladstone Avenue in Rockford will be prosecuted in adult court after discretionary transfer.

Domestic Violence Unit

The Domestic Violence Unit consists of four attorneys, two victim service providers, three administrative assistants, an investigator, and an enhanced criminal liaison. The unit executes an intentional, evidence-based prosecution strategy which from July to December resulted in an 83% success rate in felony domestic violence cases.

Felony Domestic Violence

Success Rate: 83%

Stalking Convictions:

**2023-25
2022-19
2021-1
2020-0**

Between July & December:

Guilty verdict in every Domestic Violence trial.

Case of Note

On October 18th, 2023, Willie Thomas was found guilty of Attempted First Degree Murder, Vehicular Invasion, Aggravated Domestic Battery, Aggravated Stalking, and Domestic Battery following a jury trial.

The morning of February 11th, 2022, a school bus driver came upon the unfolding scene of a violent attack at the intersection of N Winnebago Street and Palm Street in Rockford. A woman with blood on her face and chest lurched out of the driver's seat of a stopped vehicle as a hand from inside tried to restrain her. The woman fell out to the pavement, screaming for help, as her vehicle then drove away without her. She sought refuge on the bus and was quickly taken for emergency medical treatment. She ultimately survived her injuries and identified her attacker as her ex-boyfriend, Willie Thomas. Thomas had entered her vehicle several blocks away, after a morning of calls and texts which she did not reciprocate. They had recently broken up, and he wanted her to know he was watching her as she left her house, went to work, then ran errands. When he got in the backseat of her car, blocks from where it ultimately came to a stop and she escaped, he told her she was going to die that day.

At trial, the victim in the case testified bravely to the trauma she endured on February 11th, 2022. Prosecutors presented evidence of a timeline from that day, placing the defendant's texts to his victim in context with her whereabouts. They introduced a video from the school bus, and admitted the results of forensic testing done on the defendant's clothing when he was arrested the day of the attack. Prosecutors also presented evidence of prior domestic violence he committed against her in their relationship.

Deferred Prosecution-DIVERT

DIVERT (Deferred Prosecution) is an effort to hold first time non-violent offenders accountable while avoiding conviction being entered on their record. Our office has enrolled 868 participants in the program since its inception in 2015 with 93% of those enrolled in the past year successfully completing the program.

**Total Cases Reviewed:
2,167**

**Enrollments:
147**

**Successful Completion
rate: 93%**

**Average time from
enrollment to
successful completion:
151 days**

**Most Common Cases:
Theft
Controlled Substance
Battery
Criminal Damage**

Mental Health Initiatives

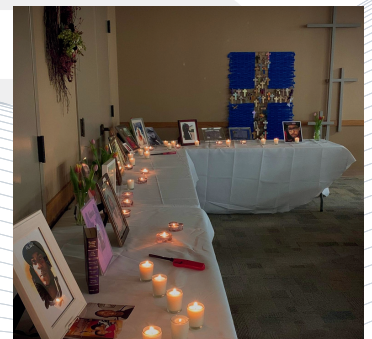
The 17th Judicial Circuit Problem-Solving Courts provide an alternative to the traditional prosecution model for those with mental health and substance use issues as well as veterans. These courts and the newly created "Wellness Track" utilize a collaborative approach to provide participants with necessary support and resources. The programs are aimed at reducing recidivism and improving public safety.

Obtained grant from the Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board to bring in a specialized mental health-focused prosecutor, dedicated to several Justice Programs operating within the 17th Judicial Circuit that serve individuals with mental health, and substance use issues. This attorney oversees the prosecution of matters in the Winnebago County Problem-Solving Courts and the Wellness Track.

The Wellness Track helps link individuals charged with misdemeanor offenses to community resources such as substance abuse & mental health treatment and housing assistance. Connecting these defendants and resources takes individuals out of the traditional prosecution model and allows them focus on a wellness/treatment-focused resolution for their pending criminal case.

Homicide Victim Memorial

For almost 20 years, our office has hosted a service and annual reunion of families whose loved ones have fallen victim to violent crime. The Carol McFeggan Homicide Victim Memorial Service gives families and friends of the victims the ability to share memories of their loved ones and pay respects to them. The memorial aims to ease the pain of grief by bringing families together to show the community's support and remembrance of the victims. In addition to the memorial service, our office partners with Kevin Polky, CADC, LCSW, to host monthly Homicide Victim Support Group meetings.



Community Connections

Our commitment to the Community remains strong. We educated hundreds of students about the role of the office in the Criminal Justice System, participated in dozens of meetings about the Pretrial Fairness Act and remained dedicated to our pursuit of justice for victims of crime. Members of our office joined the 17th Judicial Circuit Court and Public Defender's Office to participate in the annual Rockford Public School District's Academy Expo. Our booth took home the Expo's "Best in Show" award for the Service Academy.

