

BEHIND THE LETTERS

Character Witnesses in Support of Diane Lashmit



**Adriana Gonzalez
Gerdeman, MD**



**Andrea S. Franks,
Pharm. D.**



**Benjamin T. Barnett,
Attorney at Law**



**Ashley Craig
Watkins**



**Andrew O. Beamer,
Attorney at Law**



**Carla V. Winchester,
LCSW**



**Dr. Emily Anderson, New
Providence Pres. Church**



**Amy
Bassett**



**Deborah M.
Barnes**



**Gregory L.
Gerdeman**



**Dr. Margaret
Moore**



**James Daniel
Young**



**Rev. Jane M.
Herring**



**Barbara
Greek**



**Ethan
Greek**



**Gina Jenkins,
Attorney at Law**

Disclaimer: The contents of this document are derived exclusively from publicly available court records in Blount County, Tennessee, including materials obtained directly from the Clerk's Office. This document constitutes a good-faith compilation of filed records and does not represent allegations, conclusions, or independent claims by the compiler. All individuals named are referenced solely as they appear in official court filings. This publication is intended for public record documentation, transparency, and First Amendment-protected reporting on matters of public concern. All images included in this publication were sourced from publicly accessible platforms, including professional directories, publicly indexed web content, or other open-source materials. The inclusion of any image is strictly for informational and identification purposes in connection with names appearing in public court records.



**Margaret P.
Denney**



**Edith P.
Lashmit**



**Caroline
Eaten**



**Siara
Greek**



**Matt Gerdeman, Law Clerk
for D. Kelly Thomas, Jr.**



**Kimberly LaRocco,
Attorney at Law**



**Susan Young, New
Providence Pres. Church**



**William E.
Lashmit**

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EXHIBIT 1

Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

October 29, 2025

Dear Honorable Don R. Ash:

This letter is written in support of Dianne Lashmit.

My name is Adriana L. Gonzalez Gerdeman, MD, and I am a surgical pathologist in Nashville, TN. I have been in practice for over 25 years in Nashville, first as a faculty member at Vanderbilt Medical Center, where I was involved with patient care, collaborative research, and teaching of medical students for 10 years. I then transitioned into private practice at St. Thomas West Hospital in Nashville to pursue more full time patient care, but have continued some academic pursuits, including giving medical student lectures and sharing my love of medicine with middle school or high school students that visit or shadow staff members in our hospital. I am currently serving as Laboratory medical director for our hospital laboratory.

In my personal life, I have enjoyed being a part of women's groups, such as the Nashville Belles, an a capella group who for many years performed at nursing homes and raised money for charities. Other hobbies include hiking and traveling, although more recently, I find that I am much more involved in supporting my aging parents, taking on the roles of both health and financial power of attorney for both of my parents.

Dianne Lashmit is my dear friend and previous sister-in-law. I have known Dianne for over 20 years and our families have shared many great holidays, vacations and memories. Through family visits, I became acquainted with her and her family including her father, brother, and nieces, as well as folks from her church community. All of these interactions were as positive and loving as anyone could hope for. She is very close to her brother's family and very close to her college-aged daughter. Dianne has also been a core member of my and my husband's extended family, and she remains part of the family and family gatherings today.

Over the years, I have found that Dianne and I are similar in many ways, in our commitment to our professions, strong work ethic in everything we do, and in the desire to help others. At home and with family, she has served as a great role model for her children and more extended family alike, including myself. In fact, many years ago, when my husband and I were planning a family, it was Dianne who came to mind as THE person I would trust to take care of my children if anything were to ever happen to me and my husband. Unfortunately after two miscarriages, this would never become a concern, but it is a testament to Dianne's character that I would think of her before any other family member, including my own siblings.

In the time that I have known her, Dianne has faced many challenges, including loss of close family to cancer, divorce, and a cancer diagnosis of her own, resulting in the last 5 years of surgeries, complications and treatments, up until very recently. She has been amazing through this process and I am hopeful that she will remain a cancer survivor. Unfortunately, she now faces the greatest challenge of all...not only a disappointing situation with an adult child in trouble, but an unfathomable set of circumstances that have ambushed her life in the process, including resulting in the loss of her job as the Blount country juvenile court magistrate, a difficult but rewarding job that I know was central to her identity and gave her such purpose in life.

My understanding is that she has now pleaded guilty to "one count of failure to report child abuse." These words seem completely foreign to me, as it is incongruent with everything I know about Dianne, a person who dedicated many years to ensuring safety for minors, someone who loves children, and someone who prioritizes doing the right thing, regardless of the situation.

In summary, Dianne is a model citizen, a hard worker, dear friend, and loving family member. I foresee no future situation in which Dianne would commit a legal offense.

For my part, all I can do is show her love and support her through this most challenging time. My hope and plea for her is to be met with some leniency with this difficult legal situation, so that she can better meet the current challenge with the strength and grace she is known for, and create a path forward for herself and her college-aged daughter with whom she is so close.

Please let me know if you need any additional information or if I can be of any assistance.

Thank you for your consideration,



Adriana Gonzalez Gerdeman, MD



September 4, 2025

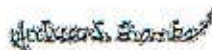
To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Andrea Franks. My husband and our two sons moved to Maryville in 2007, so it has been our home for 18 years. A professional opportunity and our desire to live in the area brought us to East Tennessee so I could be part of the inaugural faculty for the UT Health Science Center College of Pharmacy Knoxville Campus. I have been a practicing clinical pharmacist for over 30 years, practicing in a variety of settings and collaborating with health professionals to provide patient care while teaching the next generation of health care providers. I currently serve the state-wide College of Pharmacy as a tenured Professor and Assistant Dean for Curricular Affairs. I am pleased to have the opportunity to write this letter to support my friend, Dianne Lashmit, who recently pleaded guilty to one count of failure to report child abuse.

Dianne was one of the first people I met when we moved to Maryville in the summer of 2007. I met her through mutual friends at our church, New Providence Presbyterian (NPPC), where we are both ordained elders. Dianne invited me to join a small group prayer and Bible study group soon after we met. This is how I first appreciated Dianne's gentle heart, gifts of compassion, and genuine kindness. Our relationship strengthened when we participated on two mission teams together. Twice, (2014, 2018) we traveled to Panajachel, Guatemala with a multigenerational team from NPPC to work with a local program building homes, providing clean water, and supporting families and children. One of my most emotional memories of our second trip was Dianne serving communion to our team during our worship service on the last night. She had secured homemade tortillas made by the family (grandmother, mother, three daughters) or whom we were building a home, to use for our communion bread. It was so thoughtful and touching. Dianne's act carried out with so much care really impacted me.

In closing, I strongly support Dianne Lashmit and believe in the strength of her character and integrity as well as her strong commitment to our community, and most of all, to her daughter, Gwen. This conviction is not consistent with Dianne's character. I have seen firsthand her compassion, sense of justice, and willingness to serve those in need. I feel strongly Dianne deserves leniency and that she will not commit any future offenses but will contribute positively to our community. If I can provide any further information about Dianne Lashmit, please do not hesitate to contact me at (901) 834-7124.

Sincerely,



Andrea S. Franks, Pharm.D.

BENJAMIN T. BARNETT

ATTORNEY AT LAW

9006 HEMINGWAY GROVE CIRCLE
KNOXVILLE, TN 37922

10/28/2025

Honorable Judge Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Dear Judge Ash,

I am writing to you on behalf of Dianne Lashmit. I am a father, husband, small business owner, member of the bar in good standing for eighteen years, a rule 31 mediator, a colleague of Ms. Lashmit for 15 years, a friend for nearly that long, and her employer for over a year. I am a member of the Inns of Court, T.B.A., and Fellowship Church where we serve the children's ministry. I was voted by my peers as a Knoxville top family law and adoption attorney for the last 5 years. My wife serves on the Bluegrass Elementary School PTO board and we are the largest donor to the school.

I have worked with Dianne in every aspect of her career and feel I genuinely know her heart and character. I have been an opposing attorney, co-counsel, GAL, litigant while she was on the bench, and currently am her employer. I am aware that she has pleaded guilty in this matter and want to say with my strongest conviction that such behavior is not consistent with the character of the woman I have known over the years and that I observe now daily. There is no question that the seriousness of this situation has not been lost on her. This circumstance, and the surrounding ones that led to it, have nearly destroyed her career, her family, and to a significant degree how she sees the world and herself. I can without hesitation say that I cannot see the slightest chance of any new charges or legal issues in the future.

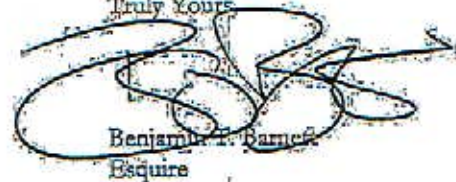
Since re-entering private practice, I have observed Ms. Lashmit personify only the best characteristics of what it is to be an attorney. She has been an effective, compassionate counselor and an assertive advocate. She is regularly at the office well after closing and coming in on the weekends to ensure her cases are ready and the clients well represented. She has been a true team contributor

that works above and beyond her case duties to help the other attorneys with their cases and preparation. It would be a true loss to us and the profession to not have her as an active part of the Bar.

Finally, Dianne has taken open accountability and shown genuine remorse. She is broken hearted over the circumstances leading to the moment we find ourselves facing. I do not have the slightest doubt that she will spend the remaining years of her professional life making good that the mistakes of the past will not be repeated. We plead with the Court for mercy in this sentencing to give her that opportunity. She will not let us down.

Thank you for taking the time to hear from us about Dianne and I remain at the Court's service for any further inquiry.

Truly Yours

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Benjamin H. Barnes". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive, with a large initial "B" and "H".

Benjamin H. Barnes
Esquire

Ashley Craig Watkins

November 5, 2025

The Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Dear Judge Ash:

I am writing to humbly request your leniency in the upcoming sentencing of my dear friend Dianne Lashmit.

My name is Ashley Craig Watkins. I am married, a mother of two internationally adopted children, and an active member of the Maryville-Alcoa community where we live. I have served on the boards of many non-profit organizations including Family Promise of Blount County where I previously held the offices of vice president and president and oversaw the organization's first property purchase to provide short-term affordable housing for homeless families.

I am employed by Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC, the managing and operating contractor of the National Nuclear Security Administration's Y-12 site in Oak Ridge where the primary mission is to ensure the nation's nuclear deterrent. I have been at Y-12 for more than 17 years and served in many different roles. Currently I am the senior director of supply chain management responsible for transportation, logistics, materials management, procurement, and property and fleet management. I lead an organization of 200 and am responsible for the approximate \$1.9 billion of government purchasing annually to support the nation's nuclear weapons, nonproliferation, and naval fuel needs. I have held a Department of Energy "Q" clearance (equivalent to a Department of War Top Secret) continuously since 2008 and am thoroughly investigated every five years. As part of my experience at Y-12, I have served on the boards of Contact Care Line, the American Museum of Science and Energy, and been a loaned executive to the United Way of Anderson County.

I am a graduate of Leadership Blount, Leadership Oak Ridge, and Leadership East Tennessee formerly known as East Tennessee Regional Leadership.

I am also very committed and dedicated to my church home at New Providence Presbyterian Church in Maryville which is where I met Dianne.

Dianne and her family were members of New Prov several years before my family joined. She has a long history with the absolutely phenomenal music program there and even led it for one of the two Sunday services in years before my family joined. She has shared her experiences from this role with me on several occasions and I know she considers it a wonderful, meaningful season of her life. Others who knew her in this capacity have related to me that she was an absolute light sharing her musical gift from God with others in worship. I wish I had seen her then! She is still active in the music programs and plays in our handbell choir.

I met Dianne at New Prov at some time in late 2015. I had been serving on both the Youth Committee and Church in the World Committee and we were beginning to plan for a youth mission trip in Guatemala that was planned for 2017. The church has been a large part of my family's life, and everyone knew that we had adopted our son from Guatemala. Because I had been there before and am a Spanish speaker, I was asked to serve on the planning team and consider traveling with the group. At the first meeting of that planning team I met Dianne.

As the team began to sketch out a plan for bringing this mission trip together that night, I was struck by Dianne's leadership, how articulate she was, and her commitment to teaching our youth to broaden their perspectives on serving others. She and I quickly agreed that while this was an opportunity for our youth to serve in a joyful and meaningful way, it was also an opportunity for our youth to see first-hand the magnitude of the need that exists in the world and how loving our neighbors extends beyond our borders. I recognized right away that Dianne and I were very like-minded, and I remember thinking to myself, "she and I could be good friends."

Over the course of a little more than two years of planning, fund raising, and educating together with the rest of the team, I got to know Dianne and her daughter, Gwen, well. Dianne and I actually ended up co-leading the trip and spent many hours exchanging emails and phone calls with parents and teens about how to prepare for the trip. We covered everything from Guatemalan history to helping teens apply for passports to writing packing lists. We worked together, both busy professionals with families to care for, to make sure this experience was God-centered for our youth and the parents who were going. Dianne's commitment to the youth was profound. She knew this mission trip could truly be life-changing.

Traveling with Dianne and her daughter, Gwen, to Guatemala to lead a mission to construct houses for the poorest of poor in this world was one of the most intense, beautiful, difficult, rewarding, and emotional experiences of my life.

Dianne and I shared a room in the hostel where the group stayed with two other women from our group who also had children on the trip. Unfortunately, my own children were too young to go with us that trip. Together the four of us: middle-aged, suburban-esque American moms, shepherded these teens and some other adults through the week of construction and living in the developing ("third") world. We had so many mini-adventures on that trip: bite school for indigenous children, our own kids losing money, hauling cinder blocks in jungle-like conditions in the rain, trying to get everyone in and out of a restaurant on time, lining up tuk-tuks down the street so we could all get somewhere at once... the list goes on. The responsibility at times was stressful! But I can't think of anyone else I would've rather co-lead that group with than Dianne. Smart, successful, professional, educated, yet here she was wearing clothes from Goodwill with a bandana in her hair knee-deep in mud passing cinder blocks down the line and laughing the whole time. And although she, like me, gained a lot from the trip herself, she didn't do it for herself. She did it for those teens. Those teens, mostly affluent, definitely naive and sheltered, suburban-esque... they needed that experience for so many reasons. And she committed and delivered for them and for her own daughter. Dianne was (and is!) a great role model for them. She showed them the amazing things that people can accomplish when they keep God first and use the gifts He gives them to help others.

I know that Dianne pleaded guilty to one count of failure to report child abuse, and I've prayed over it many times. And all I can say is that the Dianne Lasmiti I know and call my friend is responsible and accountable. She holds herself to the highest standards. If she made a mistake, and has accepted responsibility for it as she has, I am confident that she will not let it happen again. She will always strive to put God first. She will do whatever she can to set a positive example for her children. She is, and will always be, the best possible friend.

I am a better person for knowing her, and I'm proud to call her my friend.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



Ashley Craig Watkins

ANDREW O. BEAMER

Attorney at Law

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Knoxville, Tennessee 37902

313 High Street
Maryville, Tennessee 37804

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andrew@beamerlaw.net

10/31/2025

Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Dear Honorable Don R. Ash:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Dianne Lashmit. I am a practicing attorney who has been practicing in Blount and Knox County for over fifteen years. My primary area of practice is domestic law. At various times in the last fifteen years, I have been active in the Knox County Bar and politics on behalf of both the Democrat and Republican Parties.

I have known Dianne Lashmit for over fifteen years. Dianne and I both started taking indigent defense cases in Blount Juvenile Court in 2010. In this capacity she was a great help to me. As she had a lot more experience in the practice of law. She never hesitated to help me or to give me advice. Any time I had a question she always helped me navigate the situation.

Over the years we became friends, and she was always a source of inspiration and guidance to me in all my endeavors. I was always amazed at her sincerity in wanting to help people. In the line of work that we had chosen it was easy to become jaded. Never did Dianne stop believing in both people and the future. This was always a trait that I felt I wanted to imitate.

Dianne, I know, was always an active member of her church and community. She sang in the choir and was a regular volunteer to read to disadvantaged

youths, something I remember she really enjoyed doing. I can say that she never hesitated to volunteer for any event for a local school or other child centered organization like CASA. She was always active in promoting organizations that helped disadvantaged children. As I have known her, she always wanted to help and promote a promising future for those she saw as less fortunate than herself.

I know that she has pled guilty and that she has suffered a great loss of reputation. This loss of her reputation I believe has been of the greatest pain to her and I know she accepts responsibility for it. I would never expect to see her name grace a criminal docket ever again. I know that we cannot change what has happened or what was done. But I believe wholeheartedly that this mistake will not be repeated and that she deserves the chance to be rehabilitated as legally possible.

Thank You



Andrew Beamer

October 31, 2025

Carla Winchester

[REDACTED]
Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Dear Honorable Ash,

I am writing on behalf of Dianne Lashmit to ask for leniency on her even as she has pled guilty to one count of failure to report child abuse. The reasons I believe she deserves leniency will be explained in this letter.

I met Dianne 20 years ago when she joined New Providence Presbyterian Church. I was a member there. We became quick friends because her then husband was the contemporary service leader and Dianne and I were in the worship band together. Dianne and I had similarly aged children. We participated in Sunday school, dinner groups, were vacation bible school leaders, volunteered for the nursery and other activities in our church. Several years ago, I left our church where she continued to be in leadership roles such as Session elder (the governing board) and on the committee to find another pastor.

Because we formed such a strong friendship, she and I were together often outside of church. We spent holidays and vacations together with our families. I saw first hand what a devoted parent she was. She approached parenting with fairness, discipline and support. When my family was with hers, Dianne was like another parent to my children holding the same standards for them. Dianne and I both went through divorces at the same time and leaned on each other for support. Dianne and I participated in small groups with other women which delved into deep topics that required trust and confidentiality.

In addition, Dianne was an active member of an event called, The Walk to Emmaus. It is a yearly event which gives one an immersive experience of learning about the hands and feet of Christ. Dianne sponsored me as a "pilgrim" for a weekend. As a sponsor, she prepped me for the weekend, gave me support through the weekend, made sure my family at home had what they needed and collected letters from loved ones to be given to me at the end. Dianne served in the Emmaus community many years by being a table leader, on the agape committee and more. On the agape committee, Dianne made sure the "pilgrims" for the weekend had all that they needed - food, drink, medications, etc while also making beds and cleaning bathrooms.

I became ill in 2013 and required hospitalization when it was thought that I had throat cancer. During this hospitalization, I had to be given a tracheotomy. Dianne volunteered and insisted that

she spend the night at the hospital with me. Dianne organized a team of people to provide meals, clean and organize my house and stay with me once I was home. Luckily, I did not have cancer. But, if I did, I had no doubt that she would have been a primary support for me.

Professionally, I am a LGSW in private practice in Alcoa, TN. I provide therapy for individuals, couples and families. In being a therapist, I have heard many praises for Dianne when she held the job as Magistrate. She had an excellent reputation among mental health professionals and social services professionals.

Because of all I've written above, I believe that she has no risk to commit another offense in the future. I also ask for leniency for her as I believe this has had a big impact on her. Dianne has a college aged young adult daughter who still needs her support and presence. Dianne has always demonstrated to me the utmost of morals and strong character. This has been demonstrated in happy times but also in hard times. These characteristics have been shown to me up close and personal through many years of knowing Dianne. I have no reservations whatsoever in writing this letter of support.

Thank you very much for your time and concern.



Carla Winchester

November 3, 2025

Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130



Judge Ash,

My name is Emily Anderson, and I am the pastor and head of staff at New Providence Presbyterian Church in Maryville, TN. New Providence was chartered in 1786 inside the walls of John Craig's Fort, which eventually became the city of Maryville. Today, we are a congregation of something over 1100 members that is heavily involved in community ministries and support.

I have been privileged to hold this position for more than 26 years now, and along the way, I have also had the opportunity of 20 years of service on the board of directors of Maryville College, and 10 years on the board of Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA, where I earned a Doctor of Ministry in 2002.

Dianne Lashmit and I first met in 2005 when we were interviewing (and eventually hired) her former husband to serve as a worship leader for a newly-formed informal service. After an initial conversation, Dianne and I sensed that we had a great deal in common and became good friends. That relationship continues today, and Dianne has twice served as an elder on our session, the governing board of the church. In the Presbyterian church, elders are not appointed by the pastor, but nominated and elected by their peers. Clearly, Dianne's wisdom and thoughtfulness have made an impact on the rest of the congregation, who (by her election) have said, "this is someone we trust and want to follow."

In 2019, after the retirement of a long-time associate pastor, we found ourselves needing to restructure our staff. The congregation nominated and elected a 7-member search committee to fill 2 different positions, one for children & family ministry and one for youth & college ministry. Through the pandemic, Dianne and that committee searched for and found two gifted individuals who are still with us today. I hope that gives you a sense of the high degree of trust that this congregation places in her, and her insight into human beings and their potential.

At one of those meetings, Dianne showed up in the kitchen of the place that they were meeting, looking exhausted, and with tears brimming in her eyes. She did not divulge anything, but she simply said, "it was just a really long, hard day." Dianne feels the pain of her clients truly and deeply.

As her pastor, I have walked through the painful details of this case with Dianne, and it grieves me. I know that she pleaded guilty, and I understand why she would do that, as hard as it is to comprehend. Would she ever find herself in this position again? I cannot fathom that. In fact, when I shared Dianne's news with my pastoral colleagues (as well as her decision to resign from the session, so as not to drag the church through anything), one of them said, "if you had told me that any of our elders was being charged with this, Dianne Lashmit is the last name I would ever have imagined." She is a person of remarkable character, and demonstrates that in all of her relationships and interactions.

Dianne truly is one of the finest human beings I know, and I cannot say enough good about her. As this case has unfolded, she has let her decisions be guided by what will be best for everyone around her. She is a devoted mother to Gwen, a senior in college, and while she grieves the choices her son has made (which created this situation), she hopes— as only a mother can — to see him return to himself someday. She and her ex-husband have figured out how to co-parent their children well, and while her personal time is limited due to the demands of her work, her friendships are deep and lasting.

On a personal level, I can tell you that 18 months ago, I went through an incident that triggered a personal and professional crisis of my own. Dianne was one of the first people to hear the news, and as soon as she did, she was knocking at my front door with a bag of chocolates in hand. She did not hesitate to show up, because she knows that's what friends do for one another — they show up. There was nothing she could say or do that would have changed any of the circumstances, but the fact that she was there meant (and still means) the world to me. And I know of many, many other people who could say the exact same thing.

In the midst of all of this, Dianne has continued to be an exemplary attorney, sister, mom and friend. I would hate to see any of the ramifications of this trial affect her life, or the lives of her loved ones, any more than they already have. As an attorney, and as a magistrate, Dianne has always worked for the very best outcomes for her clients, and my prayer is that the outcome of this case might be a similar best-case scenario for her.

Judge Ash, I would not presume to reach out to you unless I believed with all my heart that Dianne is a kind, compassionate, thoughtful human being, whose life has been focused on improving the lives of those with whom she comes in contact. I would hope that you could grant her leniency in this case, so she can get back to what she has always done so well — making this world a better place for all people.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further service.

Sincerely,



Rev. Dr. Emily J. Anderson
Pastor/Head of Staff

Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

To The Honorable Judge Ash,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Dianne Lashmit, who has chosen to plead guilty to failing to report child abuse. I want to begin by saying that I understand the seriousness of this situation, and I am not writing to excuse her actions. Instead, I hope to share some insight into the kind of person Dianne has been throughout her life and the impact she has had on me and others who know her.

My name is Amy Bassett, and I am Dianne's eldest niece; therefore, I have known her my whole life. Dianne has always been one of the most honest, caring, and dependable people in my life. Her decision to accept responsibility for her mistake reflects the same integrity that I've always known her for. She has never tried to shift blame or responsibility. That level of honesty and ownership—while painful in this moment—is exactly what defines her character.

Beyond her honesty, Dianne has always been a source of wisdom and strength for me. As a mother myself, I have often turned to her for guidance. In a world where parents often prioritize being friends with their kids, and allow discipline to lack, she has always encouraged me to do the tough work now in order to raise humans I would want to be friends with someday. I will never forget a conversation we had when I was struggling with how to set boundaries for my children. Dianne reminded me that it's not only okay but important to teach our kids what "no" means—that saying no is an act of love, protection, and guidance. She taught me to be unwavering in this as well, even when it would be easier to give in. That advice has stayed with me ever since and shaped the kind of parent I strive to be.

Throughout her life, Dianne has dedicated herself to caring for others—family, friends, and members of her community. She has always been the person people call when they need help, whether that means showing up with a meal, offering a listening ear, helping accomplish a project, or simply being present in difficult times. Her compassion and quiet strength have touched countless lives. I grew up in Pennsylvania with my parents and siblings, and Dianne always lived in Tennessee. I remember being young and both my parents went on a Missions Trip with our church, she came and stayed with us kids while they were gone. She did not have to uproot her life for that, but she willingly came and even helped us work on house projects while they were gone. I also became very ill while she stayed with us, and she made me feel very comfortable and cared for in the absence of my mother.

I know that this situation has weighed heavily on her. She has expressed deep remorse and taken this as a serious and painful lesson. I truly believe that this experience has only deepened

her empathy and her commitment to doing what is right. I think leniency in this case is well deserved as she and her family, especially her daughter, have already dealt with enough criticism and public scrutiny.

Your Honor, I hope you can see the Dianne that I and so many others know—a woman of strong moral character who made a mistake, has owned it fully, and is committed to learning from it. She is a person whose life has been defined far more by her care and honesty than by this one lapse in judgment.

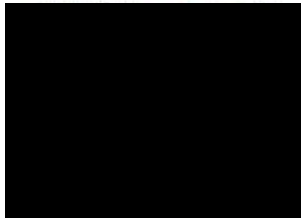
Thank you for taking the time to consider my perspective.

With respect and sincerity,

Amy Bassett

Amy Bassett

From:
Deborah M. Barnes



10/28/25

To:
Honorable Don B. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Dear Judge Ash,

My name is Deborah Barnes and I am the owner of Salon Barnes & Barnes located in Bearden in Knoxville. I've been in business for 30 years with 15 of those years being on Market Square and 10 years in the Old City. I've been an active member and leader at Redemption Church for 45 years.

I'm writing to you on behalf of my friend and client, Dianne Lashmit. I've known Dianne for 30 years. I began to service her in the very early days of my career. As you know, doing someone's hair can be lengthy if haircut and color are involved. I'm explaining this so that you will understand that Dianne and I have spent many hours together, where I began to see and experience what a beautiful, intelligent, and godly woman that she is. Dianne looked up on her career as a juvenile-court judge as a ministry, as a calling from God to help all the children and families that came into her courtroom. She never shared details, but she did share the heartbreak, pain, and compassion that she had for all concerned. Dianne also gave her whole self into her roles as a wife and mother. She's had a lot of responsibility, but walked with such

love, grace, and wisdom. I've always admired the way Dianne has walked through difficult times with family, her personal illness with cancer, and now this.

Judge Ash, I'm asking you for leniency in Dianne's case. I'm 100% confident that Dianne is no threat to our community but rather our community is better with her being actively involved. She is an amazing attorney, friend, and is very involved in her church. Churches are made up of people like Dianne who give their money and their time to volunteer to help others around them. Dianne is all that. I've watched her for 30 years live out this life.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this letter as you consider Dianne's future.

Sincerely,

Deborah Barnes

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah M. Barnes". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Gregory L. Gerdeman, Ph.D.

Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

October 23, 2025

Dear Judge Ash,

I am writing to appeal to the court for lenient sentencing in the case against Dianne Lashmit.

My name is Dr. Greg Gerdeman, Ph.D. I am a biologist and neuroscientist by training, having obtained a doctorate in Pharmacology from Vanderbilt University in 2001. For over 9 years I was Assistant Professor of Biology at Eckerd College in Saint Petersburg, Florida, a position I resigned after earning tenure in order to pursue a second career in pharmaceuticals. I am currently a freelance consultant and chief/lead scientific officer for two different startup companies in the field of pharmacology and natural product therapeutics: Manalo Life Sciences and Amapure, LLC. I also serve on multiple scientific advisory boards, as well as volunteer committees of ASTM International and the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO). I am the father of two young daughters and live in Fairview, Tennessee.

I have known Dianne Lashmit for over 30 years. When I met Dianne she was the girlfriend of my older brother Matt Gerdeman, while I was an undergraduate student at Centre College and they were at law school together at UT Knoxville. I clearly remember first meeting her on a camping trip with my brothers in the woods of Dickson County, on a piece of property my parents owned at the time, and how impressed I was by her thoughtful, genuine, inquisitive and caregiving nature. I was thrilled when they got married, that my brother found such a delightful and trustworthy person. Over the course of many years since, I have seen over and over again that these are qualities that simply emanate from Dianne. She is, in all sincerity, one of the most selfless, sincere and gentle people that I have ever known in my life.

Dianne is a hard working professional who has always pursued a career that matters, working in the defense of the most vulnerable in society, eventually becoming a Blount County juvenile court magistrate. Not only has she diligently practiced law but gave of her talents in the classroom as well, teaching trial practice at her alma mater of UT law school for over a decade.

She is a giving, charitable person of impeccable character. As a hard working professional and mother of two children, divorced and single throughout most of their lives, when she finds time outside of family and work, she does not give it to frivolous things, but to church and charity. In a tradition learned from her parents, she has joined multiple mission trips to central America and Mexico, notably for disaster relief efforts in Oaxaca where her brother Will met his wife and started his own family.

Dianne has suffered in very many ways. She lost her mother at an early age and then fought and survived breast cancer herself. Throughout all of that, and despite the fact that Dianne has remained without question a beloved member of our family after divorce from my brother, she has never pressed her needs on us, ever reluctant to ask for favors or even draw attention to her struggles.

Nonetheless many of her struggles have been shared, and far too many have been born of my nephew Julian and his litany of poor choices and unacceptable behaviors. Parenting is never easy, but it has been exceptionally hard with him. It has caused such profound suffering for Dianne to witness her child grow into such a reckless, unconscientious young man despite her ceaseless efforts as a mother. Now that I have some sense of the heinous crimes and habits he was committing in secrecy, it is devastating to know that he had utilized Dianne's Wifi network, even though she had barred him from her main house.

I am aware that Dianne pleaded guilty to the crime of failure to report child abuse. Because I know her — her integrity, honesty and heart — I know she feels vast remorse over any involvement whatsoever with the crimes of her son. On top of incredible emotional pain, especially pain felt for victims, she has also suffered profound, irreparable impact on her life calling, her career, her reputation. I beseech Your Honor to understand that the crime she has committed was inextricably dependent on a set of awful circumstances that will never be repeated. There is no doubt whatsoever in any fiber of my being that Dianne will never pose a future threat to the harm of any innocent person, especially a child. On the contrary, and with heartbreaking irony, it is her spirit's calling to defend children.

In closing, I truly feel without any reservation that Dianne Lashmit has received more than enough punishment for her crime. I pray you show this outstanding member of the community your most gracious considerations.

Sincerely,



Greg Gerdeman

Dr. Margaret Moore



November 3, 2025

Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Honorable Judge Ash

I am writing with regard to Dianne Lashmit. Dianne has plead guilty to her charges, and I request that you consider leniency in her sentencing. I am a professor in the Philosophy Department at the University of Tennessee, and am also a professional violinist with the Oak Ridge Symphony, the Symphony of the Mountains, and the Johnson City Symphony.

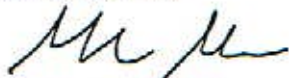
I have known Dianne for twelve years, having been initially introduced to her by my partner Andrew Beamer. We have become close friends over this time. I have always known Dianne to be caring, ethical, and responsible. She prioritizes her family and friends, as well as her church. She has attended my performances out of love for music as well as her support for me as a friend.

A number of years ago I asked whether Dianne might volunteer as a judge for the Ethics Bowl that the UT Philosophy Department runs for area high school students. We needed respected professionals in the community, and I thought that Dianne's position as Juvenile Magistrate and her position at the UT Law School made her especially well qualified as an Ethics Bowl judge. I was especially aware of the need for students to have female role models that they could aspire to emulate. She enthusiastically volunteered, and became one of our most valued judges. She was insightful in offering accurate and constructive feedback to the students while also being kind and supportive. She was one of very few judges that was invited to judge the final rounds of the competition. I know that Dianne enjoyed this work as a chance to work with young people and to think about interesting ethical dilemmas, and looked forward to our event each year.

As I see it, Dianne faced her own ethical dilemma when it came to her son's actions. She has always been conscientious and law-abiding, as indicated by the seriousness with which she always treated her role in the court system. But she found herself in extraordinary circumstances as a mother, and there is no reason to believe she is likely to commit another offense in her lifetime. Indeed, one of her primary focuses at this time is her daughter Gwen, who she needs to be able to support through her college years and beyond.

Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts regarding Dianne's sentencing.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Moore', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Margaret Moore

James Daniel Young



October 23, 2025

The Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Dear Judge Ash,

My name is James Daniel Young, and I am a resident of Walland, Tennessee. I am writing to you as a reference for Dianne Lashmit related to her upcoming trial. Over the 20 years that I have known Dianne I have never witnessed any actions or heard her express any views that called into question her character or her desire to achieve anything other than what was best for all concerned. She is honest, trustworthy and an important part of this community.

My wife and I moved from Houston, Texas to East Tennessee in 2003. At the time I was a Senior Vice President with Tailored Brands, Inc., the parent company of Men's Wearhouse, Jos. A. Bank, Moore's, and several other brands. I had spent my entire 44-year career as a part of this company, beginning as a retail salesman in 1974. At that time the company consisted of three stores but grew to over 2,000 stores, with more than 20,000 employees and sales of nearly \$2 billion before my retirement. In 2002 my wife and I decided to leave the fast, hectic pace of Houston for the peaceful mountains of East Tennessee. Our children were in college, and we were beginning to focus on our retirement years. When I advised the CEO and Executive Chairman of my intention, they graciously allowed me to relocate yet remain employed in a consulting role, a position I retained for the next 15 years.

Our move to East Tennessee proved to be exactly what we sought: a small, friendly community exhibiting values we believe are important. In fact, our children and grandson moved here after completing college as well as two of our sisters and my in-laws. Blount County is a special place for us and our loved ones. Family values are prevalent here and we all appreciate the role our community plays in our lives.

Another value we recognized here is the importance of a church community in which we can volunteer our time and develop supportive relationships. I volunteered as a "coach" with Good Neighbors of Blount County, a 501(c)(3) organization devoted to helping residents achieve self-

sufficiency, later serving as Chairman of the Board. We also became deeply involved in New Providence Presbyterian Church in Maryville, Tennessee, teaching Sunday School, singing in the choir, assisting in activities to support the underserved local community, and serving as deacons or on the Board of the Session. It was through our church that we came to know and become friends with Dianne Lashmit.

In 2019 the associate pastor at New Providence retired. I was asked to chair the search committee to find his replacement. Dianne was also asked to serve on this committee. The search committee consisted of 8 church members who worked together closely and regularly over the ensuing 2 years to recruit and vet candidates. In the end we called not one, but two, associate pastors to fulfill the vacancy. Dianne was a key participant in this process. She exhibited superb intellectual abilities, careful to look for skills and traits that would best suit the needs of the church. She voiced her opinions in a respectful and astute manner. I was, and still am, impressed with Dianne's character and high-level of emotional intelligence.


I am aware that Dianne is pleading guilty to the charge brought against her. However, she is someone I trust and do not hesitate to consider her a friend of mine and one of my family. I respectfully ask you to consider extreme leniency in any sentence imposed.

Respectfully,

James Daniel Young

James Daniel Young

Rcv. Jane M. Herring


October 26, 2025

The Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Re: Character Letter on Behalf of Ms. Dianne Lashmit

Dear Judge Ash:

My name is Jane Herring; I am a wife, mother, teacher, and the installed solo pastor at Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in Nashville, TN. I have served the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee since 2015 in many ways, as a trustee on the finance and administrative committees, and for the past year and a half, as the moderator of the presbytery. I also write for religious and spiritual publications.

Dianne Lashmit and I have been close friends since 2007. We met in East Tennessee through a women's study group and shared ministries at New Providence Presbyterian Church. We have remained in close contact since my family and I moved to Middle Tennessee. Over these years, I have known her to be a person of integrity, reliability, and faithfulness. I count Dianne as a blessing.

I understand that Dianne has pleaded guilty to the charges before the Court. I write not to question that decision but to speak about her character and to share my belief that Dianne's core values and devotion to personal improvement make her worthy of all possible leniency.

Throughout this extremely difficult time, I have known Dianne to be humble, strong, and open to seeing where she can improve. I have witnessed her being remorseful of any way she could have acted more rigorously for the good. She truly seeks to uphold the law. I believe she is determined to take personal responsibility for anything within her power.

Dianne authentically desires to be a beneficial member of society in all ways - family, work, and community. Many people, my family among them, can provide

accounts of how she gives of her intelligence, resources, and talents for the sake of the common good and to help people in need. She is committed to honesty, accountability, and compassion. I believe she will emerge from this heartbreaking trial with even more determination to be useful and productive.

Your Honor, I respectfully ask that you consider these qualities and Dianne's long history of integrity and responsibility as you determine the outcome of this matter.

Thank you for your important work. Thank you for taking the time to consider my letter, and for your careful attention to this matter. Please know that I speak with utmost respect for this Court.

Respectfully,



Jane Herring

Honorable Don R. Ash

October 25, 2025

Dear Sir,

My name is Barbara Greek. I am writing on behalf of my sister, Dianne Lashmit. I am 63 years old, the mother of four and grand-mother of five. I live in Latrobe, Pa, where I work at Commercial Bank & Trust of PA as a Customer Service Representative. I am a member and regular attendee of Harvest Church in Derry, Pa. Some of my involvement there includes - child's activities and programs, community outreach and running the Power Point presentations for the worship service. I work with Operation Christmas Child - a project by the Christian relief organization Samaritan's Purse. In the past, I was a Girl Scout leader and helped with my children's many school activities.

I understand that Dianne has plead guilty but I am asking that you grant her leniency in this case. She has always been a woman of good character, well respected in the community. Her love, guidance and wisdom have been appreciated by many. Dianne is a person who learns from her mistakes, so the likelihood of her doing anything even remotely similar is zero.

Our parents raised us to be honest, upstanding citizens. They would correct and discipline us when we did wrong. As Christians, we were taught to live as examples of Christ. Due to my father changing jobs, we moved many times as children. This meant changing schools, new churches and having to make new friends. But we always had our family. Our mother was the loving center of our home. Her first battle with cancer was at age twenty eight. She was told she would not live to be twenty nine but God had mercy on us and she lived to be sixty five. Our mother fought cancer eight times. As you can imagine, this taught us to appreciate life

and family. Dianne and my mother shared a special love of reading. Many hours were spent enjoying a good book or just talking about anything and everything. Mom's passing had a major impact on all of us.

Dianne is a loving mother, daughter, aunt and sister. She has always been a source of support to our family. When my eldest son, Adam, was born with Spina Bifida, she was a loving aunt who helped me deal with this unexpected life change. My other children have also benefitted from Aunt Dianne's involvement. She was there for Amy when she was facing an unexpected pregnancy and being a single mother. When Ethan and his wife, Siara, faced miscarriage, Dianne was a comfort. But she also helped them celebrate when they announced the birth of their daughters. She has also been a support to Kallie and her husband, Jake, as they are making decisions about life.

Dianne has faced difficult times as well. When she was faced with divorce, she thought of her children and did what was best for them. She worked with their father to try to maintain a stable home life.

I know that Dianne is thinking about how this whole situation is effecting our father. His eighty five year old wife is facing dimentia and he, at age eighty four, has some health problems as well.

The person that concerns Dianne the most is her daughter, Gwen. Gwen is a lovely young lady in college. As she is entering adult life, she needs her mother's love and guidance, the kind only a mother can give. Having her mother as an active and available part of her life would make a huge difference for Gwen and her future.

Sincerely,

Barbara L. Lusk

October 27, 2025

Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Dear Judge Ash,

My name is Ethan Greek, and Dianne Kashmit is my Aunt. I am a father of two, and I live with my family in Latrobe, PA. My wife and I are raising two lovely girls: Lacey (4 years old) & Mabel (2 years old). I am a long-standing member of Harvest Church in Derry, where I have attended since I was born. I have held many different volunteering roles over the years at Harvest Church including (but not limited to) VBS leader, youth leader, worship team drummer, caroler, clean-up crew, and any other task that is asked of me.

For the past ten years, I have worked in the field of finance. Currently, I am a Wealth Advisor at 21:5 Wealth Management. Our team founded 21:5 Wealth Management to apply the biblical principle of diligent planning (Proverbs 21:5) in and through the lives of our clients and community. Through my career as an advisor, I have been able to guide many people toward and through retirement. Also, I currently work with and support three local non-profit organizations: Life-Way Family & Pregnancy Support, Murrysville Historical Preservation Society, and Robert C. Dornon Post 652 of the American Legion.

Although my family lives nine hours away, I know "Aunt Dianne" is only a phone call away. Though I have known her my entire life, she really became a new source of comfort and wisdom as I entered my husband and now fatherly phase of life. Any chance we get, my family and I get packed into the car and make the journey to Maryville, TN. Dianne is so welcoming that she's given us an open invitation to stay at her house whenever we decide to come down. Our vacations at Dianne's are always filled with joy, laughter, stories of my grandmother, and especially tears of joy.

I specifically remember having a tough conversation with Dianne during our last visit. There was talk of my oldest daughter potentially having a learning disability, which came as quite a surprise to me. Alone with Dianne, I asked what I should do. As I cried in her kitchen, Dianne assured me that nothing had changed. She reminded me that Lacey was still my intelligent, talented, and wonderful little girl. Though Lacey may end up learning differently, it did not have to change my love for her or how special she is. Dianne has experienced enough life to see the hurting in someone's life and help them process through it with love.

I understand that she plead guilty to one count of failure to report child abuse, but I ask for leniency for my aunt. Please know that Dianne has my full trust in caring and watching over my young daughters. Her character is to lead with love and learn from past mistakes. Whatever circumstances led her to this point, I am confident that she made corrections in her life to ensure nothing like this ever happens again. Dianne's house is a place for families to gather and enjoy enriching each other's lives. We cannot continue to do that until Dianne can move beyond this case and get back to caring for others.

Sincerely,



Ethan L. Greek

GINA JENKINS
Attorney at Law

222 Ellis Ave.
Maryville, TN 37804

(865) 983-5642
Fax (865) 681-3523

ginajenkinsattorney@gmail.com

October 31, 2025

Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro TN 37130

RE: Dianne Lashmit

Dear Honorable Judge Ash:

My name is Gina Jenkins. I am a lifelong resident of Blount County, Tennessee and I have been a family law attorney for 20 years. I have known Dianne both personally and professionally for approximately 15 years. Dianne has always been a person of outstanding character and compassion. I have seen her show kindness and compassion to children in her Court when they were dealing with trauma. I have also seen her show grace to parents who were trying to improve their situations. If a parent came before her and was making steps forward in their life, she would always be encouraging, positive and supportive to them as she knew that a healthy, appropriate parent is best for children.

Personally, Dianne has been friend for years. She is the type of person to call and check on your sick child or be a friendly ear to hear your complaints. When my daughter began competitive swim (something Dianne's own daughter had done) she was quick to make suggestions on teams and guide me on how to volunteer and get involved as a stroke and turn judge. She is the type of person that genuinely cares about your family and wellbeing.

I would request that the Court show Dianne leniency in this case. Her daughter is in her senior year of college and Dianne is her biggest supporter and advocate. When her daughter began having anxiety issues at college, Dianne was quick to take time off from work, make doctor's appointments and help her daughter through the situation until she was stable again. I believe Dianne's constant support and presence in her daughter's life is necessary for her daughter to maintain her mental health stability.

I do not believe that Dianne poses any risk of reoffending or poses any risk to the community. I actually believe the contrary, which is that Dianne's presence and involvement in the community is an asset to Blount County. This offense is out of character for Dianne and I would ask the Court to show her the leniency in this difficult situation.

Yours Truly,


Gina Jenkins

October 27, 2025

Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Judge Ash,

My name is Margaret Denney and I am writing on behalf of Diane Lashmit, a long-time friend. I am a retired interior designer and worked for various local architectural firms for 30 years.

Since retirement most of my time has been spent working in my community, raising funds and collecting for needs of our most vulnerable citizens. In addition, I worked for several years as a volunteer for a county program that drove seniors to needed appointments. At my church, I serve as chairman of the Administrative Board and president of our women's group. I also serve as secretary for our district women's group.

I have known Diane for more than 20 years both as a friend and as a fellow alto in our church choir. I know her to be a kind, caring hard worker who is community minded. She held positions in the church and once planned and led a mission trip to Mexico, where her brother was a missionary.

I understand that Diane pleaded guilty to failure to report child abuse. Diane's success in the practice of law indicates to me that this is not consistent with her character. I'm convinced that it was a reaction of a mother protecting her child. I'm sure that a repeat of this offense will not occur. The action contradicts Diane's character.

I am hoping that all the things mentioned here will help result in leniency for Diane. Her background and her commitment to her family are important considerations. Her career accomplishments and her community contributions speak well of her character. The importance of her availability to her family is critical.

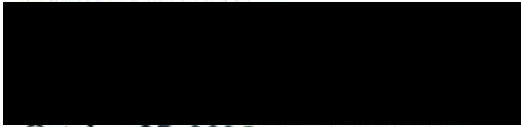
Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,



Margaret P. Denney

Edith P. Lashmit


October 27, 2025

The Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Letter of Support for Dianne Lashmit

Dear Judge Ash,

My name is Edith P. Lashmit. I am originally from Mexico and a proud American citizen since September 15th, 2016. I Work as a district wide ESL Teaching Assistant for the District ESL Team, and a district wide Spanish Translator for Maryville City Schools since 2012 to present. I have been a member of East Maryville Baptist Church since 2013, where I serve in the children's ministry and the greeting ministry. My husband and I are devoted Christians, and together with our two daughters we attend church faithfully and support our community through our church's outreach programs and our faithful giving. We are also responsible and active citizens who stay up to date with our tax filings, property taxes, and civic duties.

I am married to Dianne's brother, and I am honored to call her my sister. I met Dianne for the first time at my wedding. Even though we had never met before that day, she treated me with so much love and kindness that I felt like I had been part of her family for years. That moment showed me the kind of person she is, kind, caring, and full of love for others.

We married in Mexico where my husband and I met and lived there for the first twelve years of our marriage. During that time, we visited my husband's family in the USA including Dianne and her family whenever we could, and she also came to visit us in Mexico several times. Two of those visits were

for mission trips that she planned and led with her church. She saw the needs of the people in our area and wanted to help. She brought a group from her church to serve and bring hope to our community. I will never forget her compassion and how much effort she put into helping people she didn't even know.

One special memory I have is when Dianne met my grandfather, who was a blind 85-year-old sweet soul. She learned that he had always dreamed of having a saxophone but could never afford one. Dianne had played the saxophone in high school, so after she returned to the United States, she decided to send him her own saxophone as a gift. My grandfather could not believe someone would do something so generous for him. That gift made him so happy, and it showed me how selfless Dianne is. She didn't just say kind words, she lived them.

Years later, when my family and I moved to the United States for our daughters' education, Dianne helped us again in a big way. We didn't have a house yet, and we were planning to rent while we looked for one we could afford. But Dianne opened her home to us and insisted we stay with her family for free until we found our own place. That was such a big act of kindness. She made us feel welcome and supported during a stressful time.

These are only a few examples of the person Dianne is. She has a big heart and is always ready to help others. She loves her family deeply and gives her time and energy to her church and community. I know she has made a mistake, and I understand that she has pleaded guilty to one count of failure to report child abuse. I am not writing to excuse what happened, but I want to share that this situation does not reflect the person I know. Dianne has taken responsibility and feels very sorry for what happened. I believe she has learned from this and will never make the same mistake again.

Your Honor, I kindly ask you to consider Dianne's good character, her long history of helping others, and the many ways she has cared for her family and community. She has always been someone people can count on. I know she will continue to do good things and be a positive influence on others.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read my letter. I hope my words help you see the Dianne that I know, a woman with a caring heart, who has always tried to do what is right and who has brought light to many lives, including mine.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edith P. Lashmit". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E".

Edith P. Lashmit
ESL Educational Assistant/Translator
Maryville City Schools

October 28, 2025

Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Judge Ash, I am writing on behalf of Dianne Lashmitt, asking for leniency as you consider the next steps in her case. I understand that she has plead guilty to one count of failure to report child abuse. I do not believe there is any chance that she would commit another offense in the future because this conviction is not consistent with the woman I have known for 20+ years.

I am a retired instructional designer, having created on-line training courses for John Deere as a contractor for over 45 years. I first met Dianne at New Providence Presbyterian Church where I have been a member for 30+ years. I have served as an elder several times and am starting a new term on Session in January. Also I have served at our Welcome Table since it began 17 years ago, and currently I chair the Generosity Team which encourages our congregation in their support of our missions of service at New Prov.

Though Dianne and I have always been friends, my warmest memories are of our work together on a mission trip our youth, including Dianne and her daughter Gwen, took to Guatemala in 2018. There was planning, fund-raising, and the hard work in Guatemala as our team built a modest cinderblock home for a single mom and her three daughters. My favorite picture is of Dianne at an Adult Center for those with special needs where she was painting the fingernails of the women there. And there are others of her participating in a vacation Bible school and hauling cinderblocks in the mud. But I must admit that seeing these pictures, I'm struck by just how incongruous those images are with the charges that Dianne is dealing with now.

In closing, I have always admired the way Dianne has held her children accountable for their own behavior. Sometimes that has brought her a sense of pride but sometimes not, as sadly was often the case with Julian. Good or bad, difficult or easy, she provided the best role model and guidance that she could, but she always insisted they own their own behaviors and values.

I hope that this provides a bit of an insight into what kind of a woman and mother Dianne is. Thank you for letting me give input.

Regards,

Caroline Eaton

October 28, 2025

Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Dear Judge Ash,

My name is Siara Greek. I am a wife, a mother, and work a full time job from home for a local bank called First Commonwealth Bank. I currently reside in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. I have been a wife for almost 8 years and have two beautiful daughters named Lacey (age 4) and Mabel (age 2). I am involved at my local church (Harvest church) volunteering with any needs or opportunities provided to me, most notably, leader of the women's ministry. Dianne Lashmit is my Aunt by marriage and I got to know her briefly while I was dating my husband and established a deeper connection with her on my wedding day. She was so welcoming and ready to accept me as a niece and as a wife to her nephew. Although our distance may be far, her love and deep care for me fills the void.

What I admire most about Dianne is that she has always been a very hard worker. No matter what hardships she is currently undergoing or has faced in the past, she remains in her strength. Her faith has never wavered and she has such a heart for serving in any way she can. She has shown my daughters so much love and care. When we visit, she always opens her home to us. She always prioritizes my girls' needs, from naptimes to just giving me a break. My favorite thing is, when we visit, she has a separate room for my oldest, Lacey. This room was her daughter Gwen's when she was little, and now Dianne calls it "Lacey's Room". Dianne has even talked about setting up a bunkbed for when my youngest is old enough to share a room with Lacey. It really touches my heart to know that my girls have a room to call their own in Maryville, Tennessee.

It has been communicated to me that Dianne plead guilty to one count of failure to report child abuse. Seeing that the situation transpired by the action of others and not her own, Dianne has never shown any reason to cause intentional harm to another. My husband and I have been very particular about who our girls have an invested relationship with, Dianne is one of those people who has our trust. I can say that because Dianne has seen her fair share of hardships,

she has learned and outwardly shown growth. She will only go upwards from here on out. So please, offer Aunt Dianne leniency and know that she is a citizen we can count on moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Siara Greek', written in a cursive style.

Siara Greek

Matt Gerderman

Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

October 30, 2025

Judge Ash,

I write to urge and implore you to consider leniency in imposing a sentence upon Dianne Lashmit. I have known Dianne since we began attending law school at the University of Tennessee in 1992. We dated in law school, were married in 1996, and had our two children together in 1998 and 2003. Dianne and I divorced amicably in 2010 and have remained on good and friendly terms in trying our best to co-parent our kids.

As you can tell from that brief history, Dianne and I have been through a lot together in the 33 years we have known each other. Throughout that time, she has demonstrated the utmost good character. Dianne has been a caring and considerate spouse, mother, attorney, and public servant. She is genuinely compassionate and caring about others and has been dedicated in pursuing and applying the law to effectuate justice. She has given back to the legal system in many ways, including teaching classes for many years at the UT College of Law.

Over the course of our marriage, I served as music director for the churches we attended – Mountain View UMC in South Knoxville and New Providence Presbyterian in Maryville. Dianne was always very active and supportive of the ministries of those churches, singing in the choir and praise teams and serving in various leadership roles. She has gone on numerous mission trips, including several abroad to locations in Central America. She is a person of deep and abiding faith, which I know has supported and sustained her during difficult and challenging times, including her battle as a breast cancer survivor and the resultant double mastectomy.

The consequences for Dianne of this criminal charge and her plea have already been very significant and painful for her. She has lost at least two jobs, and as you know, her law license will be adversely impacted by this, depending on, among other things, the severity of her sentence. Most significantly, she has continued to feel the unrivaled pain of knowing that her child has made some very poor decisions that have caused harm to himself and others. This consequence is a severe and heavy burden that weighs heavily on the both of us. I know she has already suffered immensely from the consequences of this unfortunate chapter of her life.

I think it is safe to say that Dianne is the most important person in the life of our daughter Gwen. They are very close and Dianne has been extremely supportive of Gwen in many ways. The consequences of her punishment will reverberate and affect Gwen, and I implore you to take that into consideration in imposing a sentence in this case.

In my legal career, I have worked for five judges on the Tennessee Court of Appeals, a Supreme Court Justice, and currently as law clerk for Senior Judge D. Kelly Thomas, Jr. Although the vast majority of my experience has been on the civil side, I have seen enough criminal cases to know that Dianne's case is one that the concept of judicial diversion was conceived and created for. Under the circumstances, a reasonably short sentence of probation and judicial diversion would be appropriate and effectuate the ends of justice. Based on my experience with Dianne, I can assure you with the utmost confidence that the likelihood of her ever picking up another criminal charge in the future is as close to zero as reasonably can be.

Your Honor, thank you for your consideration in this case, and thank you for your extensive public service to the justice system of Tennessee. I look forward to seeing you at the sentencing hearing, and I know your decision will reflect the grace and mercy that truly is just and warranted in this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Gerdeman". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Matt Gerdeman

October 25, 2025

Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Dear Judge Ash,

My name is Kimberly LaRocco, and I am an attorney and a mother of two (2) young boys. I have practiced law in the Blount County Juvenile Court for fifteen (15) years. I am writing you about the defendant, my friend, Dianne Lashmit. I have known Dianne for over ten (10) years of which I have practiced along side her on many cases and before her when she was appointed magistrate. Over those years we had the opportunity to become close friends. I'm hoping this letter will give you some insight into Dianne's character and why she is valued by her family, friends and her community.

If I was asked to describe Dianne in a few words, I would say that she is compassionate, open minded, and hard working. These are traits that are becoming more and more rare in people these days, and I believe these traits are why she was excellent at her job when she was a juvenile court magistrate. It really takes a special person to preside over the issues you hear and see every day in juvenile court, and then to be the one having to make the ruling over the lives of the families before you. During her time on the bench, she was always professional to both the attorneys and the parties before her and maintained a fair and respectable courtroom. Moreover, the children, whether victims or defendants, had good rapport with her. If you practiced before her, you could see that she truly loved her job and cared about the children and parents in the cases she presided over.

She also has a kind soul and enjoys making others feel included. Below are just a couple examples of her kindness. For the last several years, she held an Easter celebration at her home where she invited friends, colleagues and their families to celebrate Easter with her and her family. Many of the people that attended did not have family in the area to celebrate with or were alone for the holiday, so she continued to host it each year. There was also a time when my family was going through a hard time and she was the only person at court that could tell I was very stressed. I remember she pulled me aside and just gave me a hug. It doesn't sound like much, but I still remember it till this day. Her kind gesture allowed me to take a moment to breath and realize that someone was there for me.

Dianne has been through a lot in these last couple of years, battling and defeating cancer and then pleading guilty to the charge that is before Your Honor. Throughout these trials, she has

stayed strong and maintained hope and accountability. I believe that she deserves leniency in her sentencing in the case before Your Honor because she has taken responsibility for her actions, she has no previous criminal history, she has a daughter that still needs her mother in her life, she is the sole financial provider in her household and I do not believe that she is likely to commit another criminal offense in the future.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kimberly LaRecco".

Kimberly LaRecco

Susan Young



October 29, 2025

The Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Dear Judge Ash,

I am writing on behalf of Dianne Lashmit. I moved to Blount County twenty-two years ago. During that time, I have attended New Providence Presbyterian Church in Maryville. It was there that I met Dianne as she was leading worship through singing in a praise band.

Prior to moving from Texas, I attended Houston Baptist University earning a Bachelor's degree in both piano performance and music education. Later I also earned and Lifetime Certification for Teaching in elementary schools and subsequently taught third grade for nine years. I was awarded Teacher of the Year during this time. After moving to Tennessee, I was hired by Knox County Schools to teach at Sequoyia Elementary.

When I retired from teaching, I was able to become much more active in our church. I served on a visitation committee serving people who were homebound or in a nursing home. I also served on the Children's Committee and later chaired this committee. I served as a Deacon and after three years I became Moderator of the Board of Deacons. For sixteen years I have taught Sunday School. I also served at Welcome Table, a weekly program that serves the community by providing a free weekly meal and opportunities to connect with other residents and non-profit organizations serving Blount County residents.

My relationship with Dianne has spanned at least twenty-two years and I have grown to admire and respect her for always seeking to do the right thing and the most caring thing. She has agonized over how to best parent her children, and we have had several conversations about this over the years.

I met Dianne when her children were small. We bonded over our children who were young at the time. I did not find out that she was a judge until several years later when she suddenly became a single parent. I remember that she was extremely concerned about how to best

nurture and care for her children, as well as spend adequate time with them while supporting her family financially. She wrestled with decisions over what was best for them. I never once heard her speak badly about her husband; she only concentrated on how to create a loving home for Julian and Gwen. During our conversations, she told me of her decision to change from being a judge, a job she felt called to do that would afford her opportunities to protect children and people in situations not of their choosing, to a new profession where she could spend more time at home. Her decisions were always made based on what was best for her children.

In the more than twenty years that I have known Dianne, I have never had any doubt about her integrity, her truthfulness or her determination to be the best possible parent. She has extended those qualities to her church and the community at large.

I understand that Dianne has pleaded guilty, although knowing her outstanding character, I am surprised. However, I am confident that she will continue to make decisions that seek to care for others and speak truthfully. Her character is admirable.

Sincerely,

Susan Young

Susan Young

William E. Lashmit

October 30, 2025

The Honorable Don R. Ash
500 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Letter of Support for Dianne Lashmit

Dear Judge Ash,

My name is William E. Lashmit, and I am the Inventory/Warehouse Manager at Wampler's Farm Sausage Company, Lenoir City, TN. I have been with the company since 2012, shortly after moving my family to the United States from Mexico. I am Dianne's favorite (only) brother.

During my years in Mexico, my wife and I led a children's ministry, bringing the Word of God to children through Bible stories, songs, and puppets. We also helped local churches with construction projects. Several times a year, we hosted and coordinated groups of volunteers from churches across the United States. Dianne led a few of those teams and visited us often, helping to bring school supplies and Christmas gifts to children in need.

I clearly remember bringing newborn Dianne home from the hospital. She is the youngest of three children. When she was only 18 months old, our mother was diagnosed with advanced breast cancer. Mom survived that and six other cancers before the eighth finally took her life 37 years later. Dianne was there for her in those final weeks, putting her own life, family, and career on hold to care for Mom. I will never be able to repay Dianne for that act of love.

Growing up, my older sister, Barbara, and I fought often, as siblings do, but Dianne was always the level-headed peacemaker. We have always been very close. Until I met my wife, Dianne was undoubtedly the most stable and influential person in my life. She has always been someone I could go to for sound, well-thought-out advice. She listens with empathy and has a rare ability to see through the clutter, identify the heart of a problem, and respond

with truth wrapped in kindness. That is just one of the many gifts that she has used to help many people throughout the years.

After the death of our mother and following her own divorce, Dianne once called me and said, "Will, I need you to come home." I knew then it was my turn to help my little sister. So, my family and I moved three thousand miles to Maryville, Tennessee, to be close to Dianne and her family. Our daughters, my daughter Amada and her daughter Gwen, were both in second grade at the time. They are now both seniors in college, and I am very proud of both.

Dianne and I have remained close throughout the years. From carpooling the girls to school and sports events, to me helping around her house, to sharing Sunday dinners together, I have always been there for her, and she has always been there for me. (I love her so much that I even split leftovers with her so we both have lunch to take to work.)

She has always been my rock. It seems strange to be writing this letter for her. Years ago, "safe money" would have bet she'd be the one writing this letter for me. But as the saying goes, "There but for the grace of God go I."

We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We have all made mistakes. Dianne has made this one, and she has owned it. My only request is that you consider the sum of her life's testimony as you determine her sentencing. I have seen my sister go through many difficult times, including her recent battle with breast cancer, but I have never seen anything affect her as deeply as this situation.

Dianne is known for her strength and integrity. She has devoted her life to helping children and families, and she is a good person. To think of her facing sentencing is almost more than I can comprehend. Regardless of the outcome, I know she has already faced the harshest judgment from her greatest critic, herself.

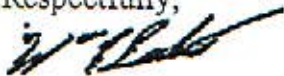
This case has also created enormous financial strain. A single mom with a college student trying to keep her head above water. While facing life altering legal expenses.

Our mother used to say, "Jails should be for people we are afraid of, not people we are mad at." There is nothing to fear from Dianne. She has admitted her wrongdoing is accepting responsibility, and there is no reason to believe she would ever knowingly repeat it. She is a good person doing her best to help good people.

Please, Your Honor, do not let this be the end of everything for her. I respectfully ask that you show leniency toward my little sister.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



William E. Lashmit
Inventory/Warehouse Manager,
Wampler's Farm Sausage Company