



SAO YEARBOOK 2020

Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office

November , 2020

State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross



OUR MISSION

The mission of the State's Attorney's Office is to serve the interests of the people of Winnebago County by vigorously and fairly prosecuting violations of the Illinois Criminal statutes and Winnebago County ordinances, by being attentive to the concerns of victims and witnesses that arise from those violations, and by providing legal services to all offices of Winnebago

Welcome to the Winnebago County State's Attorney 2020 Yearbook. This second annual report focuses on the hard work of the dedicated public servants who work in the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office. This year we have had a substantial increase in gun crimes within Winnebago County. While combatting gun violence, we have also been faced with the invisible pandemic, Covid-19 that has equally threatened the health and safety of our community. Despite these challenges, we have persevered in our focus to enhance public safety within our community. As State's Attorney, I understand that everyone and every life has value and this is the concept that builds a strong community. My commitment has been to work with our stakeholders to better serve the residents of Winnebago County. As my tenure ends on December 1, 2020, thank you for the privilege to serve. It has been a blessing and an honor to be of service.



“Pursuing Justice with Integrity, Trust, and Respect”

This remains my mission as Winnebago County State’s Attorney as I complete the last year of my term. AS 21st Century prosecutors, our duty has always been to seek justice for all who enter the criminal justice system. As we began the year, we were hopeful to continue to address the violent crime within our community and to enhance our community outreach programs. The Winnebago County State’s Attorney’s Office Community Justice Academy provides a second chance for those charged with non violent misdemeanor offenses and low level felony offenses. However, as we continued to implement our community outreach programs, we were confronted with the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic posed a substantial risk to the health and safety of everyone worldwide. As the corona virus spread throughout the world, it posed a significant threat to the effectiveness and efficiency of the criminal justice system. As State’s Attorney, I worked with our criminal justice partners to ensure the safety of inmates at the Winnebago County Jail. Our collaborative efforts resulted in drastically reducing the overall jail population without sacrificing the safety of the community. During this time period, the State’s Attorney’s Office remained open as an essential service provider. Safety protocols were implemented within the State’s Attorney’s Office in order to protect the health of staff while performing essential services. The courts also remained open but operated on a reduced scale. On June 1, 2020 trials resumed and the State’s Attorney’s office was prepared to proceed with prosecuting several major trials. All mitigation measures were implemented during the proceedings in compliance with the Center for Disease Control Guidelines.

We also experienced an international reaction as a result of the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Police Officers. Locally, there were several marches and protests within the Winnebago County Community. As State’s Attorney, I worked with local law enforcement to provide a safe venue and route for the individuals to convey their message while balancing the rights of business owners to conduct their businesses during the demonstrations.



Winnebago County State’s Attorney
Marilyn Hite Ross

The First Amendment is the most widely quoted amendment that is used during civil unrest. However, the courts have consistently ruled that while we are guaranteed these constitutional rights, they are not without restraint. When the exercise of a Constitutional right infringes on the Constitutional rights of others, there must be a balance.

We live in a civil society which permits us to express ourselves freely within the parameters of the law. As State’s Attorney, I have worked with community partners and law enforcement by providing separate venues for individuals to safely express their message when there are competing and diverse interests. As State’s Attorney, it has been my goal through collaboration with community leaders and residents to work together to identify and address the issues within the Winnebago County community.

Written by Marilyn Hite Ross

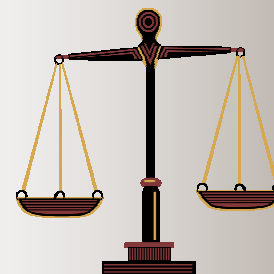




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Criminal Bureau



Criminal Case Closure Rate 2020

The Criminal Bureau attorneys prosecute felony, misdemeanor, DUI and Traffic cases. The 2020 case closure rates are listed below.



2020 Case Closure Rate

Case Type	Filings 1/1/20- 9/30/20	Closed 1/1/20- 9/30/20	Variance	% Cases Closed
Criminal Felony	2101	2017	84	96.0%
Criminal Misdemeanor	2519	2082	437	82.6%
DUI	577	671	-94	116.3%
Traffic	16,066	17,297	-1861	111.6%

Statistics provided by 17th Judicial Trial Court Administration

Internet Crimes Against Children

ICAC COLLABORATES WITH WINNEBAGO COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC) is a national network of sixty-one coordinated task forces representing over 4,500 federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. These agencies are continually engaged in proactive and reactive investigations and prosecutions of persons involved in child abuse and exploitation involving the internet. The Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office collaborates with ICAC to search out and prosecute these perpetrators. We recognize that we live in a wonderful world of the world wide web of technology. We have come to rely on this technology more than ever to conduct our day to day business. However, as technology has increased, so has criminal conduct through the use of technology. Many of these cyber-crimes include crimes committed against children and involving children. In order to keep our children safe from cyber predators, we must be vigilant in overseeing internet access with our children. There should be ground rules and internet safety protocols put in place. The best defense against exposing children to harmful material on the internet is appropriate parental supervision. State's Attorney Hite Ross is committed to holding individuals who sexually exploit our children accountable.

Written by Marilyn Hite Ross





Executive Clemency

Pursuant to the Illinois Constitution, the governor has the authority to pardon an individual who has been convicted of a crime by granting clemency. Executive clemency remedies can include a pardon or commutation of sentence. To be considered for clemency, a person must first submit a petition for clemency with the Illinois Prisoner Review Board (PRB). The PRB accepts petitions for clemency throughout the year and provides notice to the State's Attorney's Office. The State's Attorney's has an opportunity to file a response to the petition by submitting a letter and other supporting documents. It is the policy of the office to contact family members once we receive notice that a petition for clemency has been filed so that they can submit letters regarding their position on the granting of clemency. Clemency petitions are reviewed in the State's Attorney's Office by the supervisor of the Post- Conviction Integrity Unit.

The supervising attorney reviews clemency packets, makes recommendations to the State's Attorney on those petitions and prepares a response letter to the Prisoner Review Board. The State's Attorney considers the gravity of the offense and the impact on victims as well as the impact on public safety in determining whether to file a protest letter objecting to clemency. In 2018, six clemency protest letters were filed by the State's Attorney's and five clemency petitions were denied and one remained pending. In 2019, seven clemency protest letters were filed by the State's Attorney's, the PRB granted two clemency petitions, denied one petition and four remained pending. In 2020, twenty-two clemency petition protest letters were filed by the State's Attorney's Office, the PRB granted one clemency petition, denied eight clemency petitions (two from 2018 and two from 2019) and seventeen remained pending. The increase in clemency petitions filed and the acceleration of response time is directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Several inmates have used the COVID -19 pandemic as a basis to request clemency.

Written by Marilyn Hite Ross

BUILDING TRUST WITH VICTIMS OF CRIMES: U-VISA CERTIFICATION

The State’s Attorney’s Office has recognized the need to serve victims of certain crimes through a U Visa Certification form. The U Visa is an immigration benefit that can be sought by these victims who have cooperated or who are currently assisting law enforcement in the investigation of a crime, prosecution of a crime, or who are likely to be helpful in the investigation or prosecution of a crime.

The U Visa was created with overwhelming bipartisan Congressional approval in Section 1513 of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1513 (2000). The Act states that the U visa “will strengthen the ability of law enforcement agencies to detect, investigate and prosecute cases of (crimes) while offering protection to victims of such offenses in keeping with the humanitarian interests of the United States.” 8 U.S.C. § 1513 (a) (2)(A). Specifically, law enforcement can use the U visa to:

- Create trust between law enforcement and immigrants generally.
- Undermine the pervasive sense among perpetrators that they may victimize undocumented immigrants with impunity. Broadly utilized, the U Visa can substantially impact the safety of immigrant communities by removing this sense of impunity.
- Encourage reporting and cooperation by a particular victim in a particular investigation or prosecution. Like Victim/Witness services, the U visa helps victims cope with issues that create barriers to cooperation (insecurity, fear, logistical issues.)

Help a victim to recover from victimization.

Beginning December, 2009 thru October, 2020 - 594 total U-Visa Certification requests have been processed.

In 2019 there were 59 total U-Visa Certification requests processed.

17 were denied

42 were certified by State’s Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross

In 2020 there were 43 total U-Visa Certification requests processed.

14 were denied

29 were certified by State’s Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross

A total of 150 U-Visa Certifications were processed between January 2018 – October 2020.

37 were denied

113 were certified by State’s Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross.

The Winnebago County State’s Attorney’s Office, as the certifying law enforcement agency will validate the role the victim had, has, or will have in being helpful to the investigation or prosecution of the case; therefore, State’s Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross will review and determine the victim’s *reasonable helpfulness* based upon *helpfulness to law enforcement during an investigation and the helpfulness of the victim (relatives of victim) during the prosecution of a crime on a case by case basis*.

Any request for assistance in applying for a U Visa Certification should be forwarded to:

The Winnebago County State’s Attorney’s Office. For more information please visit the Winnebago County State’s Attorney’s Office website.

Written by Marilyn Hite Ross



Felony Trial Division



Criminal Justice System—TRIALS:

A criminal trial is a search for the truth. It proceeds through the examination of evidence (which includes the statements of witnesses) in a courtroom before a judge or a jury to determine whether a defendant is guilty of the charges in the Information beyond a reasonable doubt. Defendants are presumed innocent until or unless proven guilty in a court of law.

Recent Jury & Bench Trials

Defendant	Result	Trial type	Charge(s)
Michael Lambert	Found Guilty	Bench Trial	Criminal Sexual Abuse
Anzio King	Found Guilty	Bench Trial	Criminal Sexual Assault, Res. Burglary, Unlawful Restraint
Charles Gary	Pled Guilty	Pled Guilty	Home Invasion
Douglas Williams	Found Guilty	Jury Trial	First Degree Murder
Antoine Hill	Found Guilty	Jury Trial	Criminal Sexual Assault
Adam Mandujano	Found Guilty	Jury Trial	Aggravated Domestic Battery
Raheem King	Found Guilty	Bench Trial	First Degree Murder, Aggravated Vehicular Hijacking, Aggravated Unlawful Restraint



Criminal Justice System—SENTENCING:

At the conclusion of a Jury/Bench Trial where a defendant has been found guilty or after a defendant has pled guilty a sentencing hearing will be held. During a sentencing hearing a judge will take into consideration the penalty range based on state statutes as well as the defendants past criminal history, the circumstance of the crime, and other mitigating factors to determine the sentence. The judge may order probation, a sentence to the local jail or a sentence in the Illinois Department of Corrections. Although the People provide a sentencing recommendation the ultimate decision is up to the judge.

Recent Sentencing

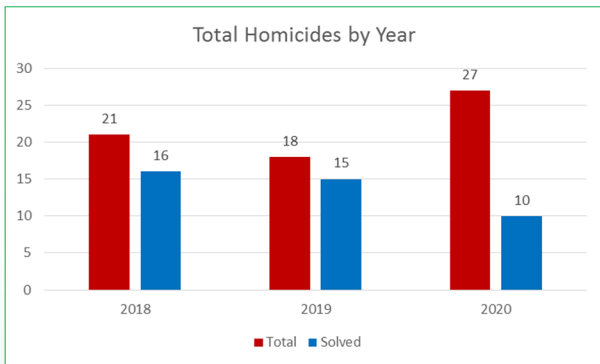
Defendant	Sentence	Charge(s)
Glen Farris	32 Years IDOC	Predatory Criminal Sexual Assault Aggravated Criminal Sexual Abuse
Stephen Grimes	60 Years IDOC	Predatory Criminal Sexual Assault of a Child, Criminal Sexual Assault, Criminal Transmission of HIV
Terrell Wilson	25 Years IDOC	First Degree Murder
Antwon Smith	32 Years IDOC	Home Invasion, Possession of Stolen Firearm
Victor Britton	5 Years IDOC	Failure to Register as a Sex Offender
Sergio Puentes	22 Years IDOC	Home Invasion, Aggravated Battery
Has Htoo	2 Years IDOC	Concealment of a Homicidal Death
Kellen Odomes	7 Years IDOC	Aggravated Leaving the Scene of an Accident involving Death
Douglas Williams	70 Years IDOC	First Degree Murder
Anthony Jenkins	27 Years IDOC	First Degree Murder
Jose Aranda	40 Years IDOC	First Degree Murder



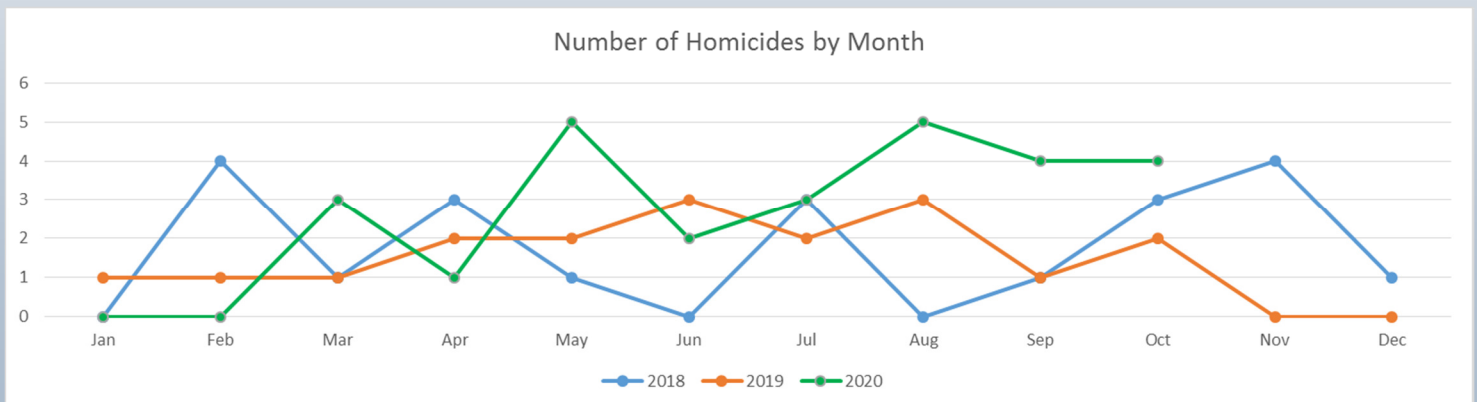
HOMICIDE CASES



Homicide investigations are the most serious investigations that law enforcement is tasked with investigating. The loss of life impacts the victim's family, friends, and the entire community. Sometimes it is difficult to gather information and evidence because of the reluctance of witnesses to come forward and assist the police. Despite these challenges, the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office continues to work with all of our local agencies to enhance public safety and hold offenders accountable. In comparison to the number of homicide investigations over the last three years, the city of Rockford has seen an increase in homicide cases. In 2018 there were 21 homicide cases which decreased in 2019 to a total of 18 homicide cases. However, so far this year the city of Rockford has seen 28 homicides. There are various factors that have contributed to the increase in these cases. However, in the middle of a worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, they continue to actively investigate these cases and continue to seek the cooperation and assistance from our community partners. Public safety is everyone's responsibility.



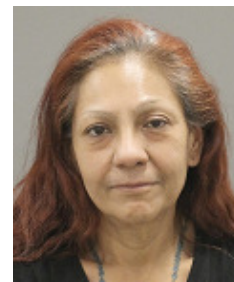
Number of Homicides by Year													
Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2018	0	4	1	3	1	0	3	0	1	3	4	1	21
2019	1	1	1	2	2	3	2	3	1	2	0	0	18
2020	0	0	3	1	5	2	3	5	4	4			27



Narcotics Division

A Deadly Delivery

Each year, the Narcotics Division prosecutes hundreds of cases. These cases range from Class 4 felonies to Class X felonies with extended term sentences. For the minor drug offenses, those charged (if eligible) have an opportunity to participate in the Winnebago County State's Attorney Community Justice Programs or have their cases adjudicated through one of the Specialty Courts. The goal of these Alternative justice programs is to provide assistance to those who suffer from addiction and to provide a second chance to offenders with a minor criminal history. Unfortunately, there are many individuals who do not take advantage of these programs and continue on the path of recidivism. Although many may view the unlawful delivery of a controlled substance as a non-violent crime, these offenses can easily escalate to a deadly situation. Illinois like many states has laws which hold drug dealers responsible for a death that occurs as a result of the unlawful delivery of a controlled substance. If an individual purchases illegal drugs and subsequently dies as a result of using the drugs, the person who delivered the drugs can be held legally responsible for the death and can be prosecuted for the offense of Drug Induced Homicide. It is a risky business to sell illegal drugs in our community and those who do so could be charged with more than a Class 4 felony drug offense. The Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office has charged and prosecuted several Drug Induced Homicide Cases.



Willie Walton (DOB: 09/03/1973)

On July 28, 2017, Rockford Police officers responded to the 1300 block of 15th Avenue, where they located the body of a female in the beginning stages of decomposition. An autopsy was conducted. Toxicology reports indicated that the victim had cocaine and fentanyl in her blood. The cause of death was determined that the victim died from adverse effects of poly substance toxicity. During the investigation, the defendant was developed as a suspect who delivered the drugs to the female victim. The case was reviewed by the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office and charges were authorized. Walton pled guilty to Second Degree Murder and was sentenced to twelve and a half years



Michael A. Leflore (DOB: 12/11/1987) On April 3, 2020 at 2:52 a.m. Rockford Police officers and the Rockford Fire Department were dispatched to 302 Forest Avenue in reference to a drug overdose. Upon arrival an unresponsive adult female was located and transported to the hospital where the adult female was pronounced deceased. An autopsy was conducted and the cause of death was determined to be the adverse effects of cocaine and fentanyl. An investigation into her death was conducted by the Rockford Police Department. During the investigation Michael A Leflore was developed as a suspect. The case was reviewed by the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office and charges were authorized. This case is pending. The charges are merely allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until or unless proven guilty in a court of law.

Karen E. Hernandez (DOB: 7/6/1965)

On March 16th, 2018, around 4:15am, Rockford Police were called to 1300 Block of Blake Street for a possible overdose. Officers found three victims who were transported to local hospitals. One woman, later identified as Justine Wentz, was pronounced deceased. An autopsy conducted by the Winnebago County Coroner's Office determined that Wentz died as a result of a controlled substance overdose.

Also on March 16th, 2018, at approximately 6:30am, Rockford Police were called to the 3200 Block of Westgate Parkway for an unresponsive male. The victim, who was later identified as Brock Palchik was taken to a local hospital, where he was pronounced deceased three days later. The Winnebago County Coroner's Office found that the victim died as a result of a drug overdose.

Rockford Police Narcotics and Violent Crime Detectives conducted a follow up investigation which was reviewed by the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office. As a result, Karen Hernandez was charged and subsequently indicted by a Winnebago County Grand Jury. Hernandez was sentenced to a total of 30 years.

A Deadly Delivery



On May 5th, 2017, Rockford Police Officers were called to a home in the 1400 Block of 12th Avenue for a possible overdose. Officers found an unresponsive male, later identified as 25-year-old Phillip John Charles Anderson-Hamilton, Jr. of Rockford. Rockford Fire Personnel arrived on scene and pronounced Anderson-Hamilton deceased. A subsequent autopsy conducted by the Winnebago County Coroner's Office determined that Hamilton died as a result of a controlled substance overdose.

Rockford Police Detectives conducted a follow up investigation which was reviewed by the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office. As a result a \$1 million arrest warrant has been issued for **Mitchell D. Wimbush (DOB: 7/26/1996)**. The charges are merely allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until or unless proven guilty in a court of law.



Damareo Mitchell



Miranda Powell

On July 3rd, 2018, Rockford Police responded to an apartment in the 2600 Block of Rudeen Close for a possible deceased female. The woman was later identified as Elizabeth Fosnow and she wasn't responsive. Fosnow was taken to a local hospital and pronounced deceased. An autopsy conducted by the Winnebago County Coroner's Office determined that Fosnow died as a result of a heroin overdose. Rockford Police Narcotics Detectives conducted a follow up investigation which was reviewed by the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office. As a result, the defendants, **Damareo M. Mitchell (D.O.B. 1/28/1988)** and **Miranda C. Powell (D.O.B. 2/23/1989)** were charged and recently indicted by a Winnebago County Grand Jury. Mitchell and Powell each face a four count bill of indictment that includes one count of Drug Induced Homicide, one count of Conspiracy to Commit Drug Induced Homicide, one count of Delivery of a Controlled Substance and one count of Conspiracy to Deliver a Controlled Substance charges. This case is pending prosecution. The charges are merely allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until or unless proven guilty in a court of law.

Cold Case Unit

Cold Case Unit

Working to bring closure to families who have lost loved ones to violence.

The Cold Case Unit is headed by State's Attorney Hite Ross. The goal of the Cold Case Unit is to work closely with law enforcement to re-investigate and review murder cases that have remained unsolved for several years. These cases are given high priority in the office and require dedication and fortitude to accomplish our mission to provide justice and a sense of closure for the families who have been impacted by these unsolved murder cases. The Cold Case Unit seeks to review the evidence and case materials in murder cases where law enforcement leads have deteriorated over time and have left the case stagnant. This unit within the state's attorney's office takes a vertical approach to review and prosecution of these cases. The prosecutors involved in reviewing these cases are ultimately tasked with prosecuting the cases in court. Their duties are to re-examine the evidence, review the investigative materials and provide direction to law enforcement on additional follow up on leads that have dissipated. By working closely with law enforcement to review historical materials, we can determine how to revive the investigation and move toward developing evidence that will ultimately result in filing criminal charges against the suspect. Since the inception of the Cold Case Unit the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office has charged and successfully prosecuted several cold murder cases.



Katie Stockton

On December 17, 2004 at 3:45 p.m., members with the Winnebago County Sheriff's department were dispatched to the area of 15431 Will Road, Rockton, Illinois. When deputies arrived they spoke to a witness who indicated that after letting her dog outside, he returned with blood soaked underwear in his mouth. When deputies searched the area, they found additional pieces of blood stained clothing. Deputies also found a white plastic kitchen garbage bag with an orange Menard's shopping bag inside of it. When deputies opened the Menard's shopping bag, they found a deceased infant wrapped in flannel jacket. The infant was unclothed, the placenta and umbilical cord were still attached, and the body was frozen to the touch. An autopsy was conducted and it was determined that the infant was born alive and died from asphyxia. Winnebago County Coroner Sue Fiduccia named the infant Baby Crystal. For several years, investigators worked to identify the mother of the infant and to get justice for Baby Crystal. In 2009, further evidence was developed and Katie Stockton was identified as a suspect and charges were authorized by the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office. In April 2013, Katie Stockton pled guilty to the charge of First Degree Murder and was sentenced to 50 years in the Illinois department of corrections. In August of 2009 during investigation, the decomposed skeletal remains of two additional infants were located in the trunk of Stockton's vehicle that had been impounded for traffic offenses in August of 2008. Autopsies were conducted on these infants, but were inconclusive. However, Stockton was identified as the mother of these two infants. These cases remain as an open investigation.

Cold Case Unit

Richard Wanke 14CF922 On February 6th, 2008, Rockford police were called to a residence in the 1700 Block of Oak Forest Drive for a shooting. They found the victim, Gregory Clark, with multiple gunshot wounds to his back, lying in the snow near his home. Mr. Clark was outside snow blowing his sidewalk when someone fired several shots at him. Clark died as a result of being shot. The defendant, Richard Wanke was later identified as the person who shot Clark. The victim was a Rockford area attorney. At the time of his



Richard Wanke



Gregory Clark

death, he was the defendant's attorney and was scheduled to represent the defendant at a sentencing hearing on February 8, 2008. On the day Mr. Clark was murdered, the Winnebago County courthouse was closed due to a snowstorm. Wanke was sentenced on May 23, 2017 to Natural Life in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

James E. Williams 15 CF1186 On November 8, 2008 Chaundra Davis was reported missing to the Rockford Police Department. Her body was found in the Rock River a few weeks later on November 22nd. A subsequent autopsy found that Davis died as a result of being strangled. Police Detectives



James Williams

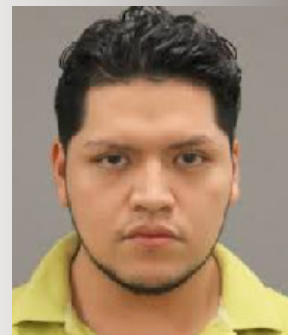


Chaundra Davis

and the evidence determined the defendant, James Edward Williams killed Davis, then put her body in the Rock River to cover it up. for the murder of Chaundra Davis.

Williams was sentenced on March 26, 2018 to 70 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Luis Anaya 11CF3186 On November 12, 2011 Winnebago County Sheriff's Deputies were called to the area of Linden Road and Perryville Road after a vehicle left the road and hit a tree. Officers found the victim, Brandon Wright in the driver's seat with a gunshot wound to the head. Detectives spoke to witnesses who said the victim helped break up a fight involving Luis Anaya earlier in the evening at a Rockford business. Wright left, a vehicle in which Anaya was a passenger in followed him. Witnesses reported seeing the passenger pull out a gun and firing it multiple times in to Wright's vehicle. One of the bullets struck and killed the victim. Anaya was sentenced on April 17, 2017 to 50 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

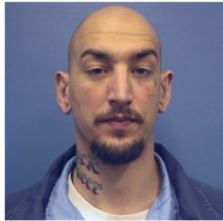


Luis Anaya

Cold Case Unit

Homicide Investigation August 2018

Suspect:



Carl N. Defay
(9/4/1988)

Charges:

First Degree Murder
Concealment of a Homicidal Death
Concealing a Death
Obstruction of Justice

The charges are merely allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until or unless proven guilty in a court of law.



Samantha Swan

Carl Defay 19CF429 In August of 2018, Winnebago County Sheriff Deputies received a report of a possible deceased individual on the property in the 17000 block of Wheeler Road. Detectives conducted a search warrant and located decomposing human remains. The remains were later identified as Samantha Swan of Rockford. A forensic pathologist determined that the cause of death was strangulation. Sheriff's Detectives conducted a follow up investigation that was reviewed by the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office. As a result, **Carl N. Defay (D.O.B. 9/4/1988)** was charged and recently indicted by a Grand Jury. Defay faces a 16 count Bill of Indictment that includes charges of First Degree Murder, Concealment of a Homicidal Death, Concealing a Death and Obstruction of Justice. The case is pending prosecution. The defendant is presumed innocent until or unless proven guilty in a court of law.



Carl Defay

Cold Case Unit



A 33 year old murder investigation results in charges filed against Jesse Smith, Jr.

Jesse Smith's faces First Degree Murder charges for the May 27, 1987 murder of nineteen year old Tammy Tracey. Smith was apprehended by the Worth County Sheriff's Department in Albany, Georgia and taken into custody by the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department. The preliminary investigation was reviewed by the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office and as a result, a no bond, First Degree Murder warrant was issued for the defendant. The defendant is presumed innocent until or unless proven guilty in a court of law.



Tammy Tracey



Jesse Smith



PRESS RELEASE

November 19, 2020
State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross

On May 27, 1987 nineteen year old Tammy Tracey DOB 10/6/1967 went to Searles Park to wax her car, a black two door Oldsmobile. Later that evening Tammy Tracey failed to show up at Ingersoll Golf Course to meet a family member. On May 28, 1987, Linda Tracey, Tammy's mother, learned that Tammy Tracey did not return home and reported her missing. A missing person's investigation was launched and multiple agencies were involved including the Rockford Police Department, the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department and the Illinois State Police. Later that day, Tammy Tracey's vehicle was located in Searles Park but there was no sign of Tammy Tracey.

For almost a year law enforcement searched for Tammy Tracey to no avail. On April 15, 1988 a photographer and bird watcher found human remains in the Sugar River Forest Preserve. The remains were later identified through dental records as Tammy Tracey. An autopsy was conducted and the pathologist determined she died as a result of a gunshot wound and a contributing factor to her death was a stab wound. The criminal investigation spanned more than thirty years. During the investigation, Jessie Smith was developed as a suspect. The case was reviewed by the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office and charges were authorized.

"The filing of these charges is the culmination of the tenacious efforts of all of the law enforcement agencies who worked on this murder investigation. The patience of the Tracey family during this time period is to be commended." - State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross

First Degree Murder is a Class M Felony that is punishable by a sentence range of 20-60 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections followed by 3 years of Mandatory Supervised Release.

First Degree Murder is a Class M Felony that is punishable by a sentence range of 20 years to Natural Life in the Illinois Department of Corrections followed by 3 years of Mandatory Supervised Release.

A warrant was issued for the defendant's arrest with a bond set in the amount of 5 million dollars. The defendant was taken into custody on the warrant late this afternoon in Albany, Georgia and will be extradited back to Illinois to face these charges.

The charges are merely allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until or unless proven guilty in a court of law.

Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office
815-319-4700

Domestic Violence Division

Behind Closed Doors

The home should be a sanctuary of safety for everyone who lives there. However, many homes have become crime scenes because this is where domestic violence occurs, behind closed doors. These victims suffer in silence because they are reminded that “what happens in the home, stays in the home.” However, we recognize that domestic violence is not a private matter but a crime and a community problem. In order to remove the stigma of being a domestic violence victim, we must engage them with support so that they can escape the abuse and begin the healing process. The cycle of domestic violence occurs in several stages. During these cycles the victim and the abuser re-engage to renew their relationship after the abuse and after the victim no longer feels an immediate threat. However, this honeymoon phase and the cycle of abuse repeats itself over and over again. The abuse can be physical or psychological. Often the level of physical abuse rises to a point where the victim is strangled and experiences a temporary loss of consciousness. In many cases, there may not be an outward appearance of injury; however, often there are internal injuries that go undetected.

These lethal situations place the victim at a high risk of being murdered.

The State’s Attorney’s Office is committed to working with survivors of domestic violence so that they become empowered to leave the abusive relationship. We have a dedicated team of prosecutors and advocates that work in the Domestic Violence Unit. We have partnered with the Family Peace Center to increase the efficiency of victim services. In an effort to improve prosecution of domestic violence cases, we use an evidenced based prosecution approach. We seek to develop evidence to prosecute the defendant that can support a conviction whether the victim testifies or whether the victim recants their initial statement. This evidence based prosecution approach allows us to protect victims without forcing them to testify in court. We understand that it is difficult for most survivors of domestic violence to testify against their abuser. Unfortunately, when the victim is unable to escape the abuse, it can be lethal. The Winnebago County State’s Attorney’s Office has charged and prosecuted several domestic violence murder cases where the victim was unable to escape the abuse.

Terrell Ellis 16 CF1129 On April 28th, 2016, Rockford Police Officers were called to 3540 Louisiana Road for a medical assist. Upon arrival, Officers were directed to an upstairs bedroom. Police found a female victim who was identified as Monica Box, and had been badly beaten.



Monica Box

Box was transported to the hospital, where she was pronounced deceased. A subsequent autopsy found that the victim died as a result of blunt force trauma to the head. Detectives conducted a follow up investigation and the defendant, Terrell Ellis was developed as a suspect. The investigation was reviewed by the Winnebago County State’s Attorney’s Office and Ellis was charged and subsequently indicted by a Grand Jury on First Degree Murder, Possession of a Stolen Motor Vehicle and Aggravated Domestic Battery charges. Ellis and Box were in a dating relationship at the time of the offense.



Terrell Davis

Behind Closed Doors

Noe Marquez 18 CF1724 On July 10, 2018, Rockford City Police Officers were dispatched to the 2700 block of Norway reference a man saying he stabbed his wife. Officers located the defendant, Noe Marquez, outside of the residence and the victim, Elizabeth Marquez, inside the residence with numerous stab wounds to her neck and facial area. She was pronounced deceased at the scene. Noe was sentenced on September 2, 2020 to 37 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections.



Noe Marquez



Calvin Carter 14CF3136 On December 20th, 2014, Rockford Police responded to 3234 Montrose Avenue after receiving a 911 call reporting that shots had been fired. Officers entered the duplex and found the bodies of Martia Flint, her two young children and her boyfriend, Demontae Rhodes. All the victims had been shot in the head. Detectives learned that Flint had previously been in a short relationship with Calvin Carter in the summer of 2014. The investigation, including cell phone records, physical and ballistic evidence linked Carter to the murders. Detectives found the gun, and other evidence connecting Carter to the murders. The firearm was sent to the Illinois State Crime Lab and it was confirmed to be the murder weapon. Carter was sentenced on September 8, 2017 and received four natural life sentences.

Calvin Carter

Abdon Ochoa Villaneda 19CF414 On February 16, 2019, around 11:00 a.m., Rockford Police Officers responded to a residence in the 3200 block of 9th Street. Upon arrival, officers located one deceased adult female, and a second adult female who was suffering from life threatening injuries. The injured female was transported to a local hospital in critical condition. Detectives with the Rockford Police Department conducted a follow up investigation that was reviewed by the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office. As a result, charges were authorized against the defendant **Abdon Ochoa-Villaneda, DOB: 05/19/1981.**

Detectives were able to track the suspect to Clinton County, Missouri and enlisted the help of the Missouri Highway Patrol. Shortly before 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 16, 2019, the suspect was taken into custody following a high-speed chase. This case is pending prosecution.

Ochoa-Villaneda was recently indicted by a Winnebago County Grand Jury on a 30 count Bill of Indictment that includes First Degree Murder, Attempt First Murder, Home Invasion, Residential Burglary, Aggravated Battery, Aggravated Domestic Battery, Domestic Battery and Violation of Order of Protection charges. The defendant is presumed innocent until or unless proven guilty in a court of law.



Abdon Ochoa Villaneda

Behind Closed Doors

Joseph Peppers 20CF2337 On or about October 23, 2020, Rachel Dishman left her home that evening with the defendant Joseph G. Peppers. She failed to return home and on October 25, 2020 Deputies from the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department were dispatched to her home at 610 Euclid Avenue in reference to a missing person. After speaking with family members, the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department conducted a missing person investigation. On October 27, 2020 Rachel Dishman's body was found in a quarry located at 5881 Cunningham Road in Winnebago



Rachel Dishman

County. An autopsy was conducted and determined that she had sustained blunt force trauma to the head which resulted in her death. During the investigation, Joseph G. Peppers was developed as a suspect. The case was reviewed by the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office and charges were authorized. This case is pending prosecution. The defendant is presumed innocent until or unless proven guilty in a court of law.



Joseph G Peppers

Frederick Thomas 18CF2508 On Tuesday, September 11th, 2018 shortly after 8:00 a.m., Rockford Police Officers were called to an apartment in the 900 block of 10th Avenue for a medical assist involving an unresponsive female. Upon arrival, Officers located the body of a female who was deceased. The victim was identified as 36-year-old Jennifer Lewis of Rockford. The Winnebago County Coroner's Office conducted an autopsy and found Lewis' cause of death to be blunt force trauma to the body. Detectives conducted a follow-up investigation and developed **Fredrick D. Thomas (D.O.B. 12/31/1984)** as the suspect. The investigation was later reviewed by the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office and First Degree Murder charges were authorized against the defendant. The defendant is presumed innocent until or unless proven guilty in a court of law.



Frederic D. Thomas



OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTINGS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

The Police Community Relations Improvement Act states (PCRIA):

(b) Each officer-involved death investigation shall be conducted by at least 2 investigators, or an entity or agency comprised of at least 2 investigators, one of whom is the lead investigator. The lead investigator shall be a person certified by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board as a Lead Homicide Investigator, or similar training approved by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board or the Department of State Police, or similar training provided at an Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board certified school. No investigator involved in the investigation may be employed by the law enforcement agency that employs the officer-involved in the officer-involved death, unless the investigator is employed by the Department of State Police and is assigned to a different division or unit of the Illinois State Police. [50 ILCS 727/1-10\(b\)](#).

Although PCRIA did not take effect until January 1, 2016, for many years it has been the practice of the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office to utilize independent agencies to investigate the officer's conduct in officer-involved deaths since 2009. In June of 2010, the Winnebago County Integrity Task Force was established to investigate an officer involved shooting which includes members of the Illinois State Police and all law enforcement agencies within Winnebago County. Following its formation, the Task Force was expanded to include all law enforcement agencies in Boone County and was renamed the Winnebago-Boone County Integrity Task Force (WBITF). The Winnebago-Boone County Integrity Task Force also investigates all in custody deaths and deaths related to fleeing and eluding police officers. Currently, the Winnebago-Boone County Integrity Task Force has investigated a total of twenty -seven cases.

In addition to mandating independence for the investigative team, PCRIA recognizes and codifies the distinct and separate roles of the team of investigators and the prosecutors. Specifically, the Act provides:

(d) The investigators conducting the investigation shall, in an expeditious manner, provide a complete report to the State's Attorney of the county in which the officer-involved death occurred.

As with other criminal investigations, the prosecutor assists the investigative team by procuring search warrants, subpoenas and other court orders, and providing legal advice and guidance. However, pursuant to the Act, the primary responsibility for conducting the investigation lies with the independent investigative team. The length of these investigations can vary depending on the circumstances surrounding the event. However, it is imperative that there be a thorough and comprehensive investigation prior to review by the State's Attorney's Office.



OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTINGS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

The Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office's review of officer-involved shooting cases where a death has occurred or where an individual has been injured is an involved process. Consistent with all criminal investigations, law enforcement is tasked with conducting the investigation. The Winnebago-Boone County Integrity Task Force is the investigative agency that conducts these investigations. The review of officer-involved shooting cases and the legal analysis undertaken in determining whether the filing of criminal charges is appropriate depend on the facts and circumstances of a particular case. This is an overview of the evidentiary and legal issues that impact these cases and an overview of the investigatory process and the applicable laws used to determine whether criminal conduct has occurred and whether criminal charges are appropriate.

The Winnebago-Boone County Integrity Task Force (WBITF) investigates all police shootings that occur in Winnebago and Boone County. The WBITF is comprised of all law enforcement agencies in Winnebago and Boone County. The WBITF is headed by a commander from the Illinois State Police. The sheriffs and police chiefs maintain authority to activate the WBITF when an officer shooting occurs. If the law enforcement agency has an officer that is the subject of the investigation, that agency's officers are excluded from participating in the investigation. As with all criminal cases, it is the primary responsibility of the investigating agency to collect all available evidence of a potential crime so that a determination of the facts can be made. Once the evidence is collected, it is submitted to the State's Attorney who reviews the evidence to determine which facts may be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. Sometimes physical evidence may be submitted to the Illinois State Police Forensic Science center for testing and analysis. After reviewing all of the evidence, the State's Attorney then reviews the applicable laws, including laws which may make some evidence inadmissible at trial, to determine if the admissible evidence will establish all of the elements of a criminal offense beyond a reasonable doubt. This analysis also includes a determination of whether the evidence also refutes beyond a reasonable doubt any available affirmative defense which is likely to be raised by the involved officer.

Effective January 1, 2016, whenever an officer-involved death occurs in Illinois, the distinct roles of investigators and prosecutors are governed by statute. Pursuant to the [Police and Community Relations Improvement Act "PCRIA" \(50 ILCS 727\)](#), the investigation of any officer-involved death must be conducted by a team of investigators, at least one of whom is certified by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board as a Lead Homicide Investigator, who are independent of the law enforcement agency that employs the officer(s) involved in the officer-involved death.



OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTINGS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

The public has a strong interest in learning the facts surrounding an officer-involved shooting or death. As with any investigation that may lead to a criminal prosecution, the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct and the Illinois Code of Criminal Procedure place restrictions on the information that the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office may release to the public. [Illinois Rule of Professional Conduct 3.6 \(a\)](#) prohibits an attorney from making "an extrajudicial statement that the lawyer knows or reasonably should know will be disseminated by means of public communication and would pose a serious and imminent threat to the fairness of an adjudicative proceeding in the matter." Further, [Illinois Rule of Professional Conduct 3.8](#) (f) applies specifically to prosecutors and provides: The prosecutor in a criminal case shall:

(f) except for statements that are necessary to inform the public of the nature and extent of the prosecutor's action and that serve a legitimate law enforcement purpose, refrain from making extrajudicial comments that pose a serious and imminent threat of heightening public condemnation of the accused and exercise reasonable care to prevent investigators, law enforcement personnel, employees or other persons assisting or associated with the prosecutor in a criminal case from making an extrajudicial statement that the prosecutor would be prohibited from making under Rule 3.6 or this Rule.

These rules are designed to protect an accused person's constitutional right to a fair trial. [Rule 3.6 \(b\)](#) explicitly sets forth certain types of subjects which create a "serious and imminent threat to the fairness" of an adjudicative proceeding in the matter.

There may also be other factors which restrict or prohibit the release of information to the public. The Illinois Code of Criminal Procedure mandates the secrecy of grand jury proceedings ([725 ILCS 5/112-6](#)). As a result, evidence and witnesses' testimony presented before the grand jury cannot be publicly disclosed. However, during the criminal process, this evidence may be presented in open court during public proceedings being litigated before the court such as bond hearings, pre-trial hearings and trials.

Once the State's Attorney has made a determination as to whether criminal charges are warranted, the results of the findings may be presented to the grand jury to determine whether the grand jury concurs with the State's Attorney's decision. However, the decision to file criminal charges rests solely with the State's Attorney. Also, if charges are warranted based upon the evidence, the State's Attorney will file charges against the individual or individuals and the case would also be presented to a grand jury for indictment. The State's Attorney's decision will be released to the public in a press conference or by issuance of a press release.

Written by Marilyn Hite Ross



General Counsel



REVERSAL OF APPOINTMENT OF A SPECIAL PROSECUTOR



Winnebago County State's Attorney
Marilyn Hite Ross

Winnebago County State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross announces that the Illinois Appellate Court for the Second District has reversed the appointment of a special prosecutor to represent Chairman Frank Haney in his lawsuit against 13 members of the Winnebago County Board.

Beginning in May of 2019, Chairman Haney petitioned the trial court for appointment of a special prosecutor to represent him in a lawsuit against members of the County Board who enacted ordinances that stripped him of some of his powers in violation of state law and County ordinances. In June of 2019, over State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross' objection, the trial court appointed a private attorney as special prosecutor to represent Chairman Haney in his lawsuit. The fees charged by the private attorney are paid by the residents of Winnebago County.

The State's Attorney's office appealed the appointment of the special prosecutor arguing that there was no basis for the appointment in that the actions taken by the County Board in passing the challenged ordinances were legal. The appellate court found that the trial court had erred in not granting the State's Attorney's Motion to Dismiss the appointment petition and that there was no basis for appointing the private attorney to represent Chairman Haney. (see opinion filed September 30, 2020 (2020 IL App. 2d 190845)).

Written by Marilyn Hite Ross



Continuing Legal Education

Welcoming remarks by State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross Ethics 101 CLE training held on June 26, 2020



Welcome to the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office Eleventh Annual Ethics 101 for prosecutors. I want to welcome all of the elected officials in attendance and all of the other attendees who have joined us electronically. It is a privilege and honor to serve as State's Attorney for Winnebago County.

During the historical civil unrest throughout the country and the call for social justice reform, this training is part of my ongoing commitment to ensure that prosecutors are cognizant of their ethical obligations to the victims, to the defendants, and to the community in which they serve. Although we have adjusted the method of delivery for our training this year, the significance and quality of the MCLE training remains an integral part of the State's Attorney's Office

Even though we are currently faced with the challenges of prosecuting cases in the midst of a pandemic and ensuring the integrity of criminal investigations, this is our sworn duty and obligation. Indeed Prosecutors are held to a higher standard because we have the duty and obligation to seek justice, not merely convict. This is what we signed up for. Therefore, we must continue to act with courage to seek the truth and justice for all. "Fear is a reaction and courage is a decision." (Winston Churchill) Thank you for having the courage to serve. We are the gatekeepers of justice and we do the right thing, for the right reasons, all of the time, even when no one is watching.

We, the prosecutor represent the victim, the defendant, and the community and our duties extend to all. The words of Justice Sutherland continue to resonate, resound, and remind all of us of our mission. As he wrote in *Berger v. United States* (1935) about the role of the prosecutor and I quote:

"... (the prosecutor) is the representative not of an ordinary party to a controversy, but of a sovereignty whose obligation to govern impartially is as compelling as its obligation to govern at all; and whose interest, therefore, in a criminal prosecution is not that it shall win a case, but that justice shall be done. As such, he is in a peculiar and very definite sense the servant of the law, the twofold aim of which is that guilt shall not escape or innocence suffer. He may prosecute with earnestness and vigor-indeed he should do so. But while he may strike hard blows, he is not at liberty to strike foul ones. It is as much his duty to refrain from improper methods calculated to produce a wrongful conviction as it is to use every legitimate means to bring about a just one."

In 1872 Chief Justice Christiancy of the Michigan Supreme wrote the following regarding the prosecutor's duty :

"The prosecuting officer represents the public interest, which can never be promoted by the conviction of the innocent. His object like that of the court, would be simply justice; and he has no right to sacrifice this to any pride of professional success. And however strong may be his belief of the prisoner's guilt, he must remember that, though unfair means may happen to result in doing justice to the prisoner in the particular case, yet, justice so attained, is unjust and dangerous to the whole community." *Hurd v. People*, 25 Mich. 405, 416 (1872)

IN HOUSE CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

Since joining the State's Attorneys Office in 2008, now State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross has been an advocate for continuing legal education required for the attorney's in the office. The State's Attorney's Office continued this year to offer in house training to prosecutors, free of charge. The topics selected directly correlate to the job of a prosecutor. While these presentations are conducted largely on site, the COVID pandemic caused the office to respond by offering presentations through Video platforms.

Some of the courses offered this year include:

- ◇ Jury Instructions, Non IPI's and Deliberation Issues
- ◇ Ethics in Jury Selection
- ◇ Guilty Pleas and How to Survive a Motion to Withdraw
- ◇ Fitness Issues (3 part presentation)
- ◇ The Perils of Social Media
- ◇ Pro Se Defendant and Krankel Hearing
- ◇ Prosecuting DUI and SSS hearings
- ◇ Prosecuting and charging Gun crimes
- ◇ Issues in Prosecuting Sex cases
- ◇ The Expert Witness
- ◇ Miranda and Motion to Suppress Statements
- ◇ Speedy Trial
- ◇ Pre-flight check list – preparing your file
- ◇ Rules of Evidence
- ◇ Grand Jury Presentations

In addition, the Annual Prosecutors Ethics Seminar was held. Due to the pandemic, the seminar had one speaker in person and the remaining presenters appeared through video platforms. Attendees were social distance in person and others attended via video only.

2020 Speakers included:

- ◇ Honorable Judge Diane Shelley
- ◇ Sharon Coleman, Deputy Director of Forensic and Justice Services/DHS
- ◇ Dr. Carl Wahlstrom Jr. MD
- ◇ Joe Scally, Illinois Lawyers Assistance Program



Diane Shelley



Sharon Coleman



Carl Wahlstrom



Joe Scally

The Prosecutor's Brady Obligation

The prosecutor is an administrator of justice and has a "duty and obligation to seek justice, not merely convict." (ABA rule 3- 1.2) The prosecutor represents the people which includes the victim, the defendant, and the community in which the prosecutor serves. The prosecutor has a duty to ensure that victims are apprised of their rights and advised regarding the progression of the case. The prosecutor owes a duty to the community to collaborate on addressing community issues that have an impact on public safety and the administration of justice. The prosecutor also has a duty to protect the constitutional rights of defendants by ensuring due process at every stage of the proceedings and by seeking to use only evidence that is legally obtained. Concurrent with this obligation is the duty to disclose information to the defendant's counsel that may be exculpatory or that may impact the credibility of a witness. The duty to disclose material information is often referred to as the prosecutor's Brady discovery obligation. However, the Illinois Supreme Court Discovery Rules and the Illinois Rules of Professional Responsibility provide that the prosecutor has an ethical duty to provide to defense counsel all material information through discovery.

Over five decades ago, the United State' Supreme Court decided the case of Brady v. Maryland (1963) 737 U.S. 83 establishing the rule that a prosecutor has a "due process" affirmative duty to disclose to a charged criminal defendant all "material evidence" that is favorable to the defense and that is possessed by the "prosecution team."

The prosecution team includes all members of the State's Attorney's Office, all law enforcement agencies, all Illinois State Police forensic science personnel, and personnel from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) when the charges filed are related to or result from a DCFS investigation. Due process is the constitutional provision under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments guaranteeing that a person's "life, liberty, or property" will not be taken from him or her without first being accorded "due process" or being treated with "fundamental fairness." Pursuant to Brady and its progeny the prosecutor has the duty to disclose any material information that might be favorable to the defense. Failure to comply with the rules of discovery under Brady results in what is commonly referred to as a "Brady Violation."

There are three components to a Brady violation. The evidence at issue must be favorable to the accused because it is either exculpatory or because it is impeaching. The evidence must have been suppressed by the state either willfully or inadvertently. Finally, the withholding of material evidence must result in prejudice to the defendant and thereby impacted his ability to receive a fair trial. Evidence is material only if there is a reasonable probability that the result of the trial would have been different if the suppressed evidence had been disclosed to the defendant.



The Prosecutor's Brady Obligation

Favorable evidence can include evidence that might mitigate punishment or directly or indirectly support the defendant's case. Evidence that bears on the witness' credibility or bias is also considered material evidence and must be disclosed. This includes any benefits the witnesses may have received such as transportation costs, hotel accommodations, or leniency bargained for or obtained in their pending case.

If all discovery is not tendered to the defense, this could result in sanctions which may include a reversal of conviction, a new trial, and other appropriate sanctions by the court or by the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission. A Brady violation impacts everyone involved in the criminal justice system including the victim, the defendant, and the community. By providing training for law enforcement and all members of the prosecution team regarding the rules of discovery, you can educate team members to

recognize and document discovery in an appropriate manner.

In *Berger v. United States* 295 U.S. 78 (1935), the United States Supreme Court stated: The prosecutor "is the representative not of an ordinary party to a controversy, but of a sovereignty... whose interest, therefore, in a criminal prosecution is not that it shall win a case, but that justice shall be done. As such, he is in a peculiar and very definite sense the servant of the law, the twofold aim of which is that guilt shall not escape or innocence suffer. He may prosecute with earnestness and vigor—indeed, he should do so. But, while he may strike hard blows, he is not at liberty to strike foul ones. It is as much his duty to refrain from improper methods calculated to produce a wrongful conviction as it is to use every legitimate means to bring about a just one."

These words still resonate with prosecutors today. As prosecutors, we must adhere to this guidance and to our discovery obligations to ensure due process for all of the entities we represent and serve.

Written by Marilyn Hite Ross



FIRST AMENDMENT: A STATE'S ATTORNEY PERSPECTIVE



As citizens of the United States, we are guaranteed certain inalienable rights that are endowed by our creator. During the Constitutional Convention, it was imperative that certain rights be guaranteed with the formation of a new government. The Bill of Rights which encompasses the original 10 Amendments to the Constitution. The most widely quoted amendment that is used during civil unrest is the First Amendment. However, the courts have consistently ruled that while we are guaranteed these Constitutional rights, they are not without restraint. When the exercise of a Constitutional right infringes on the Constitutional rights of others, there must be a balance.



Community Outreach



Volunteering for Rosie's Birthday Club



Rosie's Birthday Club began 10 years ago with 5 founding volunteers. Ten years later Rosie's has remained an all volunteer organization and is blessed to have the same core of volunteers however small, gigantic in heart and energy. This group has taken the organization from celebrating 1 child at 1 location to over 10,000 children celebrated at over 10 locations. How did this happen? It could only happen because of hundreds of volunteers throughout the community who have supported the mission to celebrate and honor children in poverty on their birthdays.

Rosie's volunteers are anyone, or any group who believes in recognizing children on their special day and of course love to party! Who does not like a birthday party! Below is a list of volunteer options that will fit a broad range of time and talent. We hope that you will choose a special way that you can assist, no matter how small or how big, our children will feel your caring and generosity!

- ◆ Pick up and deliver cakes and/or balloons to a party site.
- ◆ Volunteer at a birthday party site {listed on web site}
- ◆ Decorate the party room prior to the kids' arrival.
- ◆ Share a craft or game idea for kids ages 5 to 12.
- ◆ Contact a group (adult or youth) that might want to host a party.
- ◆ Donate a new or partially used gift card.
- ◆ Donate party supplies such as forks, birthday plates, birthday gift bags etc.
- ◆ Donate \$25 or purchase a gift from one of our children's wish lists.
- ◆ Let us know if your company has matching funds or a foundation.
- ◆ Celebrate your birthday, or the birthday of a loved one, with proceeds going to Rosie's
- ◆ Honor a loved one by donating in their name. We will celebrate a child with a gift in the name of your honoree.
- ◆ Endowment gift: If you would like your gift to continue to give, ask us about Rosie's Birthday Club's established endowment fund.
- ◆ Donate toward the purchase of a book that every birthday child receives.
- ◆ Host a toy drive or a gift-card drive at your place of employment.
- ◆ Contact us if your company has a matching fund or foundation.
- ◆ We always need batteries – especially AA and AAA.
- ◆ Host a garage sale. Some people have held a garage sale, with their children having a child's corner, with those proceeds going to Rosie's.
- ◆ An adult or a child can host a birthday party with gifts for Rosie's kids.
- ◆ Chose Rosie's as your charity on AMAZON SMILE. There is no cost to you with all donations coming directly from AMAZON

Thank you! Please check out our website www.RosiesBirthdayClub.org or our face book page!



This is the joy we were able to create the last **10 years** because of the community's belief in our mission and continued support. Rosie's Birthday Club is a nonprofit **all volunteer** organization that honors and recognizes children in poverty on their special day, their birthday. Without Rosie's most of these children would go unrecognized on their birthdays. Rosie's is the only organization with this mission in this region. Matter of fact there are not many in the entire country who do what we do, and those who do mostly serve homeless children. Our children range from homeless to children of working poor families and other levels of poverty in between. Our goal is to celebrate **all** no matter their circumstance and to let them know that their birthday matters; **that they matter**. We believe that we exist to brighten their human spirit and let them know, no matter their circumstance, that they matter to us and the world.

We celebrate children ages 1 to 18 at 10 locations in Rockford: Boys and Girls Clubs at Blackhawk, Orton Keyes, Fairgrounds, Riverdahl; Northwest Community Center, MOSAIC, Patriots Gateway, ROCKHOUSE Kids, Shelter Care Ministries and Washington Park Community Center. We host a birthday party weekly and celebrate approximately 125 children a month with cake, presents, a special book of their choice and a party. Since it may be their only celebration, we make each party as joyous as possible to hopefully create lasting memories of feeling special.



We celebrate children ages 1 to 18 at 10 locations in Rockford: Boys and Girls Clubs at Blackhawk, Orton Keyes, Fairgrounds, Riverdahl; Northwest Community Center, MOSAIC, Patriots Gateway, ROCKHOUSE Kids, Shelter Care Ministries and Washington Park Community Center. We host a birthday party weekly and celebrate approximately 125 children a month with cake, presents, a special book of their choice and a party. Since it may be their only celebration, we make each party as joyous as possible to hopefully create lasting memories of feeling special.

Rosie's is totally dependent on the community to adopt our birthdays, much like Angel Tree at Christmas. We love that people participate so they know these children by name and know without their generosity this child would not be celebrated on their birthday. Most importantly the children see that someone truly cared to honor them. Presents have brought tears to the eyes of even the toughest of teens! We firmly believe it is never just the present, it is the idea of being recognized in such a caring way.





As mentioned, we are an all-volunteer organization with a very small but mighty board. Even though we are small in numbers, our budget is high in costs to cover our birthdays. We operate with the generosity of donations and small grants. All monies go directly to celebrate the children. We have grown from one location, Northwest Community Center, and \$25 for that first gift to over 10 locations and 9500 gifts. We have only been able to do this with the support of churches, individuals, companies, and various other organizations. We know that there are so many more children unrecognized in our community, so we need your help for us to continue to celebrate. Rosie's is a friend of your time, talent, and donations. What we need is simple: attend a party and have fun with the kids, sponsor a child and donate a present, pick up a cake, pick up balloons, have a toy drive. There are many repeated toys we need like basketballs, barbie dolls, etc. We have been the recipient of donations from a garage sale as well as those who chose to honor their birthday with gifts for Rosie's instead. Others honor their loved ones by donating a present to Rosie's in their name.

We have a party every week and YOU are invited to attend! The COVID virus has prevented us from face to face parties, but we are continuing at some sites to donate gifts. When we return to face to face parties, please consider joining us, bring a smile for a child and you will leave with more joy than you can ever imagine!

Written by Vicki Benson



8,329 Balloons, 9800 Party Hats, 38,000 Pieces of Cake, 9,800 presents, and 100's of volunteers..... this is the joy that over 9000 children in poverty experienced because of Rosie's Birthday Club



Carrie Lynn Children's Center Partnership with the Winnebago County State's Attorney

The Carrie Lynn Children's Center is the only Children's Advocacy Center serving Winnebago and Boone Counties. Our primary goal is to ensure that children disclosing abuse are not further victimized by the systems response to their disclosure. We are a child-focused facility where representatives from many disciplines (law enforcement, IL DCFS, State's Attorney's, etc.) can work together to effectively investigate, prosecute, and treat child abuse.

At our Center, we have Forensic Interviewers who conduct child sensitive interviews, Crisis Intervention Therapists who offer free counseling to the victims and their family members, and Victim Advocates who go to court with the families.

In addition, we offer personal safety programs (sexual abuse prevention) and informational presentations on the dynamics of sexual abuse for children in the classroom setting. We also provide training to parents, educators, and other professionals covering indicators of abuse, handling disclosures, mandated reporting and the role of the Center. We have received referrals of 656 child victims this year and conducted 352 Forensic Interviews.

Our services are considered critical to the investigation of child abuse making our Center essential. While we are not technically considered "first responders," our partners are first responders and we must be readily available to them.

It goes without saying that 2020 has been a difficult year for all of us. Our work at the Carrie Lynn Center is routinely challenging in many ways, but COVID-19 has significantly increased the difficulties we have experienced. We remained open and accessible despite the stay at home order and have worked to create a welcoming environment for children; while still providing the necessary safety measures to minimize risk of further spread.

We are alarmed to report that child abuse reports decreased during the pandemic. It is important to note that this does not mean, however, that incidents of child abuse decreased.



Kathy Pomahac

Rather children were more isolated and potential reporters were not accessible. In fact, the severity of the abuse in the cases that we did see increased.

I'm incredibly proud of my staff and our partners; including State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross and her staff. The challenges of the pandemic has not deterred them from providing quality services to child victims and their family members. In fact, the knowledge that children were likely suffering without intervention only increased their resolve to have a positive impact.

We are eternally grateful to our supporters and our donors! Besides the pandemic, we experienced the theft of our air conditioners as well as increased incidents of violence around our Center. Our pleas for help are clearly being heard as many members of our community have generously stepped forward to assist us.

For further information about the Center, please go to www.carrie-lynn.org.

Written by Kathy Pomahac



DECREASING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE FOOTPRINT: CANNABIS EXPUNGEMENT



"It is my duty and responsibility to be proactive in reducing the criminal justice footprint regarding these previous convictions that might pose barriers to employment and housing for individuals. Justice should always be pursued with integrity, trust, and respect. My endeavor in seeking to vacate these convictions and expunge these records exemplify the mission and goals of the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office."

Winnebago County State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross

On January 1, 2020, Illinois joined several other states in legalizing recreational cannabis. Included in the legislation were several social justice components. The statute identified several lower level cannabis convictions that are eligible for automatic expungement. In Illinois there are several ways to clear a criminal record. The first method is to "seal" the record which protects the record from public view. However, the record is still viewable by law enforcement and the record is not physically destroyed. The second method is to "vacate" the conviction as if it never happened and petition the court to expunge or destroy the record. A third method is a "pardon" that can be granted only by the Governor. A pardon forgives a conviction and permits the underlying record to be expunged. The final method is to "expunge" the record which results in the record being physically destroyed and not available to anyone. The automatic expungement provision in the legalization cannabis statute provides the broadest relief possible for individuals who were previously convicted under these eligible offenses. The automatic expungement eligible offenses include cannabis cases less than 30 grams Class A, Class B misdemeanors and Class 4 felonies. However, to be eligible for automatic expungement, these offense cannot be connected to other arrests with violent offenses.

The Illinois State Police is tasked with identifying these cases. However, State's Attorneys may file petitions on behalf of the individuals impacted by these previous convictions.

As Winnebago County State's Attorney, I am excited to play a pro-active role in expunging qualified cannabis convictions that have disproportionately impacted the minority community. In collaboration with Winnebago County Circuit Clerk, Tom Klein's Office, we have identified more than 3,000 cases charged between January 1, 2013 and January 1, 2020 that are eligible for automatic expungement.

We have worked together to prepare the appropriate petitions and orders to present to the court. Once the orders are signed, the Clerk's office will mail notices of expungement to the last known address of these individuals. This collaboration provides a new start for individuals previously convicted of possession of less than 30 grams of cannabis. This endeavor is consistent with my goal as Winnebago County State's Attorney to decrease the criminal justice footprint in our community and to continue to pursue justice with integrity, trust and respect for all who enter the criminal justice system.



The duty of the prosecutor is to seek justice, not merely to convict.

DECREASING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE FOOTPRINT: CANNABIS EXPUNGEMENT

Please see the timeframe below for when eligible cannabis convictions must be automatically expunged. (Public Act 101-0027)

1. Cases filed between January 1, 2013 and January 1, 2020 must be expunged by January 1, 2021
2. Cases filed between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2012 must be expunged by January 1, 2023
3. Before January 1, 2000 must be expunged by January 1, 2025

Once your record has been cleared, the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Winnebago County will send notice via mail or e-mail to your last known address. Winnebago County residents and former residents whose conviction took place in Winnebago County can update their address through the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Winnebago County.

This process only applies to the eligible minor cannabis offenses. Cannabis offenses that were accompanied by a conviction for a violent offense are NOT eligible for automatic relief under the statute. However, an individual may file a petition to expunge these, and any other eligible records, with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Winnebago County.

Written by Marilyn Hite Ross



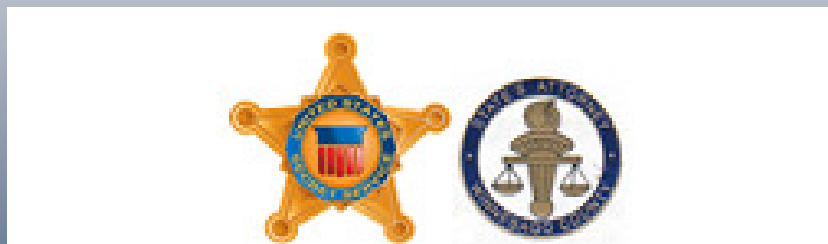
The Winnebago County State's Attorney Partners with the United State's Secret Service for Virtual Training.

Rockford, IL – Today Winnebago County State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross and the U.S Secret Service in collaboration hosted both clergy and school administrators in two virtual training seminars.

The first virtual seminar was presented to school administrators. This presentation focused on how communities can use a multidisciplinary approach to identify and intervene with students who are exhibiting concerning or threatening behaviors.

The second virtual seminar was presented to local clergy. This presentation focused on how communities can use a multidisciplinary approach to identify, assess, and intervene with individuals exhibiting concerning or threatening behaviors.

“Like our homes, children should feel safe in schools and individuals should feel safe in their places of worship. With schools and houses of worship being targeted with gun violence, I thought it prudent as part of my goal to increase public safety to bring this training to the Winnebago County Community. I appreciate the collaboration with the United States Secret Service in providing vital information for the attendees.”



Celebrating Black History Month

Keynote Speaker

Tuesday February 18, 2020
Plant 6 Atrium 10 am to 11 am
African American Forum Presents



Black History Month keynote speakers Marilyn Hite Ross, Winnebago County State's Attorney. She's the first woman and first African-American to hold her current position. Join us to hear key insights from her experiences in historical roles in Rockford.

**ENGAGE
INSPIRE
EMPOWER**



Winnebago County State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross was the Keynote Speaker at Collins Aerospace for their Black History Month event on February 18, 2020.

Winnebago County State's Attorney's Junior Ambassador Program

The Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office has launched the a Junior Ambassador Program for high school students who may be interested in pursuing a career in criminal justice studies or who have a volunteer service requirement to fulfill. The State's Attorney's Office Junior Ambassador Program core values are Respect, Integrity, Trust and Communication.

The Purpose

The Winnebago County State's Attorney's Junior Ambassadors Program will give students in grades 6-12 an overview of the workings of the criminal justice system and share the values of prosecutors with the participants who will then, in turn, share their experiences with students in their schools.

Program Outline

Each session will be conducted by two volunteer Assistant State's Attorneys. The discussion of each Shared Core Value will begin with a skit or role playing exercise demonstrating the importance of the value in particular situations that young people are likely to face in everyday life. The program will include a tour of the Winnebago County Jail and a visit with the Chief Judge of the 17th Circuit Court. Participants will also "shadow" an assistant state's attorney as part of the Communications presentation.

Program Time Commitment

The Junior Ambassador Program will consist of 6 weekly meetings of 1 hour each. The meetings will be at a location determined by the State's Attorney and may include churches and community centers. Participants must attend all sessions in order to successfully complete the program. Each participant will sign a Junior Ambassador's Creed acknowledging the importance of the Shared Core Values in our daily lives and pledging to share the message of the Shared Core Values with fellow students in their schools.

Shared Core Values

The shared core values that will be basis for the Junior Ambassador Program will be are Respect, Integrity, Trust and Communication. Each core value will be the subject of 2 meetings (first two meetings on Respect, second two meetings on Integrity, third two meetings on Trust and last two meetings on Communication)

Graduation

Students who successfully complete the Junior Ambassador Program will be presented with a graduation certificate by the State's Attorney at a celebration at the end of the program.



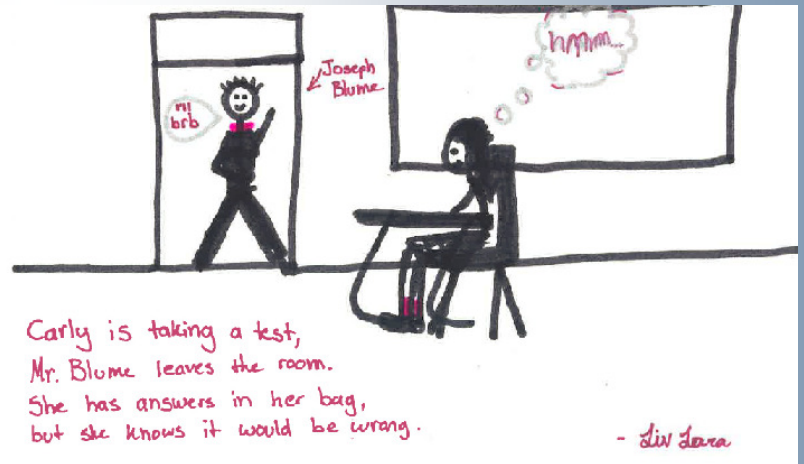
ASA Heather Kruse & Joel Mathur with students from
Washington Park Community Center

Winnebago County State's Attorney's Junior Ambassador Program



ASA Heather Kruse & Joel Mathur with students from
Washington Park Community Center

Students from Washington Park Communi-
ty Center participate in the Winnebago
County State's Attorney Junior Ambassador
Program's Integrity Campaign.



It is Halloween night. Bobby and Sue are trick-or-treating when they come to a house with a bowl full of candy. There is a sign next to the sign saying, "Please only take 2 pieces.". Bobby and Sue demonstrate integrity by only taking 2 pieces.



ASA Joe Tumminaro, Spencer Griffin, Monique Langrehr &
Alexeus Bender at Washington Park Community Center

State's Attorney's Office Photo Gallery



State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross at Veterans Memorial Hall on Saturday, February 15, 2020 honoring African-American Female Service Members for Black History Month.



State's Attorney Hite Ross Celebrates Black History Month at Washington Park Community Center on Saturday February 29, 2020. From left Ashley Williams, Sophia Buchanan, State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross, Derricka Davis, Representative Maurice West and Ostella Lockett.

State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross speech in reference to women's suffrage



Good afternoon. This is an honor and a privilege to be here today. I want to thank each of our Honorees for their stellar service. I know it wasn't easy and I know that you are the face of courage today and you are our living history, so thank you. I was asked to give a brief overview of the history of the 19th Amendment, and I have a short slide show for you. But I want to start out by saying the accomplishment of the 19th Amendment came about because of various groups within the community. It started and it totally intertwined with the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendment. So it started with the abolitionist groups, so it ended up being very active in putting an end to slavery so that the 13th Amendment was passed; then we got to the 14th Amendment that gave black males the right to vote, so the black male suffrage was accomplished; and then several years later, 1920, we finally got the women suffrage amendment passed. But I want you to know all of those historical acts are intertwined and I'm just going to give you a nutshell view of what occurred, if I could, please. So given the efforts of the Civil War, most of the women in the activist groups suspended their activities regarding women suffrage to dedicate their efforts on the Civil War and ending slavery between 1861 and 1865. In 1866 Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony formed the American Equal Rights Association, an organization dedicated to accomplishing suffrage for women. Those are the names that you hear most often, but you're going to hear a few names today that you don't hear as often as these two connected to the women's suffrage movement. In 1867 that organization had issues and they were divided. Why were they divided? They were divided because of the controversy over the 15th Amendment. The women -- the white women wanted suffrage for women and there was an intersection of disagreement regarding the suffrage for African-American men. So that group split in 1867, and what's displayed is an executive membership of the group that was formed when that group split, the National Women Suffrage Association, and you can see some of the figures that are recognized in the middle there, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In 1869, as I indicated, there was a disagreement again over what, black male suffrage. The next slide just shows a picture again of the most familiar faces you see when you think about women suffrage, that's Elizabeth Cady Stanton who was sitting, and Susan B. Anthony who was the taller woman in the photo. So what happened in 1870? 1870 the 15th Amendment gave black men the right to vote. The National Women Suffrage Association refused to work for its ratification and they wanted to advocate for the 16th Amendment for women suffrage, and at this time they split with Frederick Douglas who had previously worked with these women's groups. In 1878 a women's suffrage amendment was first pro-

State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross speech in reference to women's suffrage

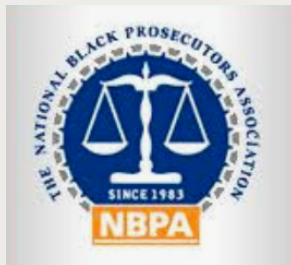
In 1887 the first vote on women's suffrage is taken in the Senate and it is defeated. Now, in 1890 you then had the various groups working again for women suffrage, the NWSA, the AWSA which were the two groups that had previously flourished and they formed the National Association for Women Suffrage. Along those same lines you had the first state in the union, Wyoming, who was admitted, and in its constitution it gave women voting rights. You also had other groups that were supporting women suffrage that you don't hear about most often, for example, The American Federation of Labor declared its support for women's rights to vote. The State of South Dakota campaigned for women suffrage. In the next slide you see pictured again the most famous faces regarding women suffrage at the National American Women Suffrage Association building. Now, between 1890 and 1925 the progressive era begins and women from all classes and backgrounds enter public life. Women's roles began to expand and the politicization of women continued. The women suffrage movement finally becomes a mainstream issue in politics. In 1894 more than 600,000 signatures are presented to the New York State Constitutional Convention in a failed effort to allow women the right to vote in the State of New York. So as you see, there were various strategies approached by these groups. They were approached at the state level and they were also approached at the state -- at the national level at the same time. In 1895 we have Elizabeth Cady Stanton who publishes *The Woman's Bible*. After its publication many of the women who had previously worked with her felt she was too radical and they distance themselves from her. In 1896 you have Mary Church Terrell, she's listed in your program, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Frances E.W. Harper, and among others founded the National Association of Colored Women's Club, and they actually founded also the National Association of Colored Women that you will see on your next slide. Again, these are faces that you don't usually see when people talk about women suffrage, but, again, I want to just indicate to you and share with you that there were various groups involved, and the National Association of Colored Women was very active. They were formed in 1896 and by 1900 they had over 5,000 members. In 1913 the suffragists organized a parade down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. Does that sound familiar? When you want to get national attention to an issue, you go to the capital of our country and you march. The women paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue. It was organized by the National American Women Suffrage Association, commonly known as NAWSA. If you'll go to the next slide, you'll see a picture of the march in 1917. These are women marching for women's suffrage. Concurrently in 1917 you see that states are beginning to take notice of the -- the State of New York recognized women suffrage. In Arkansas women were allowed to vote in primary elections. The National Women's Party picketers appear in front of the White House holding the banners that you saw in the last slide. So they're getting closer to seeing success for their efforts. In 1919 Representative Rankin opened the debate on suffrage amendment in the house. The amendment passes, but the amendment fails to win the required two-third majority vote in the Senate. Meanwhile, again, the states are starting to take notice that women are going to get the right to vote and they're going to recognize that individually as states if the United States Government refuses to do so. So you have Michigan, South Dakota, and Oklahoma adopting legislation to allow women the right to vote. You also now have President Woodrow Wilson entering the arena in supporting the women's rights to vote. President Wilson actually addresses the Senate advocating for women suffrage at the end of World War I. Finally, in 1919 the Senate passes the 19th Amendment and the ratification process begins. So on August 26, 1920, three-quarters of the state legislature ratify the 19th Amendment and women finally, finally, get the right to vote. I just want to share with you that, you know, we should not take this vote lightly. You know, we are here -- we are here because we stand on the shoulders of all of these very diverse groups, diverse ethnicities who sacrificed their personal life to allow women the right to vote. Why, because it was the right thing to do. I feel very blessed to serve as your 18th State's Attorney, the first woman, the first African-American or person of color to serve in that position, and I certainly wouldn't be allowed to serve in that position without the sacrifices of these women who allowed us to now be in this office. And so what does it mean to vote? Victory occurs with tenacious efforts and that's exactly what these women did. I just want to again thank you and again applaud our Honorees today for their service because victory occurs because of their tenacious efforts. Thank you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

The National Black Prosecutor's Association



Noran S. Early Jr.

The National Black Prosecutor's Association was created from the idea of Norman S. Early Jr. in early 1982 when he was Chief Deputy in the Denver District Attorney's Office. At that time, Mr. Early recognized the need to connect prosecutors of color throughout the country. With the leadership and guidance of then Denver District Attorney Tooley and former Cook County State's Attorney and former Chicago Mayor, Richard Daley, the network was set to connect all black prosecutors under the umbrella of one organization. In 1984, with Norm Early as president, the NBPA held its first official meeting with the goal of recruitment and retention of prosecutors of color. Despite initial challenges, with the support of numerous prosecutors throughout the country, the NBPA has thrived as a leading organization in criminal justice equity and reform. The NBPA also seeks to recruit and mentor aspiring lawyers for leadership roles within the legal community. State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross has been a proud member of the NBPA for over twenty years. During the NBPA National 2020 virtual conference, State's Attorney Hite Ross participated in a panel discussion on officer involved shootings. During the panel discussion, State's Attorney Hite Ross discussed her role as a member of the trial team lead by Kane County State's Attorney Joe McMahon, who was appointed as a Special Prosecutor in the case. The case involved the prosecution of Chicago Police officer Jason Van Dyke for the murder of seventeen year old Laquan McDonald. Van Dyke was convicted of Second Degree Murder. It was the first murder prosecution of a Chicago Police officer in several decades. State's Attorney Hite Ross has previously been recognized by the NBPA for her years of service as a prosecutor.



National Black Prosecutor's Conference 2020 PANELIST:
TOPIC 'IS IT CRIMINAL?'

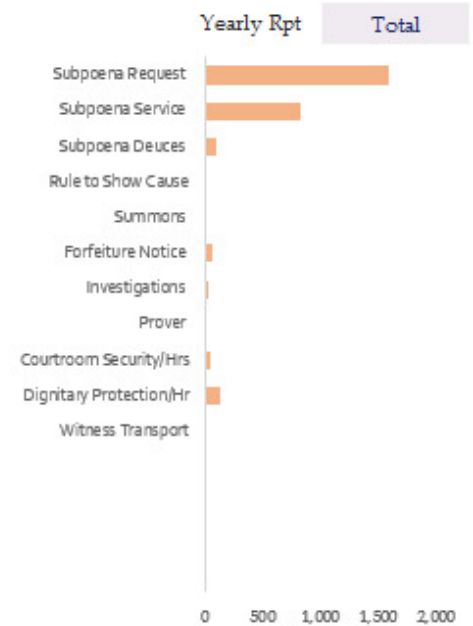
Investigative Division

Winnebago County State's Attorney's 2020 Investigation Unit Annual Report

Winnebago County States Attorney Investigative Unit



2020 Yearly Report	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Total
Subpoena Request	542	450	601		1593
Subpoena Service	278	244	310		832
Subpoena Deuces	29	38	37		104
Rule to Show Cause	8	2	5		15
Summons	9	0	6		15
Forfeiture Notice	44	11	10		65
Investigations	10	9	8		27
Prover	4	2	4		10
Courtroom Security/Hrs	10	0	38		48
Dignitary Protection/Hr	53	35	45		133
Witness Transport	6	0	11		17



The Investigative Unit of the Winnebago County States Attorney's Office consists of three sworn officers who provide dignitary protection and transportation for the State's Attorney during special events. The unit works with Assistant State's Attorneys in pre-trial meetings with witnesses to help prepare them for testimony during trials.

The responsibilities of the unit include but are not limited to; serving as Grand Jury Bailiffs, locating and serving subpoenas to victims and witnesses, providing protection and security for witnesses, and at times providing transportation to court for victims and witnesses. Working collaboratively with local law enforcement, Investigators have been able to interact with reluctant and uncooperative witnesses. The unit provides these witnesses with assistance and security, giving them the confidence they need to testify in court.

The Investigative Unit also serves forfeiture notices, juvenile summons, subpoena deuces tecums to hospitals for medical records, and rule to show causes when witnesses do not show for served subpoenas.



SAO Photo Gallery

Photo gallery



Winnebago Boone County Integrity Task Force
From left ISP Lieutenant Sam Thomas, Boone County Sheriff
Dave Ernst and ISP Commander Chuck Davidson



State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross along with
Arnie Harris from Harris & Harris Collection
Agency at a press conference acknowledging the
milestone of collecting over 14 million dollars
for Winnebago County.



Winnebago County State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross
with Winnebago Boone County Integrity Task Force
From left ISP Lieutenant Sam Thomas, Boone County
Sheriff Dave Ernst and ISP Commander Chuck
Davidson

State's Attorney's Office Photo Gallery



Socially Distant Attorney “swearing in” ceremony. From left Katelyn Ditzler, Clayton Zamudio & Ak’Kowa Alexander



State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross



Final State's Attorney Office Meeting via Zoom 11/30/2020



Allison Huntley with State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross on Allison's last day with the office.

In recognition

Lt. Tammie Stanley is the first female to serve as a Deputy Chief in the history of the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office. Stanley is a 16 year veteran of the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminology and a Master of Business Administration. In addition, Deputy Chief Stanley has completed the Police Staff and Command program at Northwestern University. Stanley was the recipient of the Officer of the Year in 2008 and 2018. She also received the Outstanding Contributor of the Year for 2018 for her help with Rockford Area Crime Stoppers. Stanley is currently on the Board of Directors for the YWCA.



Tammy Stanley



Winnebago County Sheriff swears in Tammy Stanley as the first Deputy Chief in Winnebago County History



Nancy L. McPherson
Winnebago County Recorder of Deeds Congratulations on your retirement December 1, 2020.

In Remembrance



Sara Hohe passed away peacefully in her home on Tuesday, August 18, 2020. Sara served as an Assistant State's Attorney in the Winnebago County State's Attorney's office since May, 1 1990.



Charles "Chuck" Prorok passed away on September 3, 2020. Chuck served as an assistant state's attorney in the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office from 2/1/1978 until 10/29/2007.

A Pleasure to Serve



Winnebago County State's Attorney Marilyn Hite Ross

It has been a blessing, honor and privilege to serve as State's Attorney for the people of Winnebago County. My duties as the chief legal and law enforcement officer for the County has been to seek justice for all. When I was sworn in as State's Attorney, I indicated my goal was to continue the mission of the office that began ten years ago with my predecessor, the Honorable Joseph P. Bruscato. On December 1, 2020 that mission will be completed and my tenure as Winnebago County State's Attorney will come to an end. I have executed my duties without partiality or favoritism to ensure that those who seek justice receive nothing less. This is a duty and a commitment that the residents of Winnebago County deserve. I thank God for blessing me with the phenomenal opportunity to make a difference and have a positive impact on those who live and work in the Winnebago County community.

After joining the office in 2008, I was fortunate to be serve in the highest appointed position under former State's Attorney Joseph P. Bruscato. During that time, I had the opportunity to work with law enforcement partners to create the Winnebago-Boone County Integrity Task Force which has become a recognized model for investigating an officer's use of deadly force. In restructuring the Criminal Bureau, I created and implemented the Special Prosecution Division which includes the Public Integrity Unit, Cold Case Unit, Elder Abuse Unit, Child Advocacy Protection/Sex Crimes Unit, Domestic Violence and the Gang Crimes Unit. These specialized units within the office have enhanced our ability to get justice for victims and increased our efficiency and success in prosecuting these cases. Over the years, I have conducted multiple continuing legal education courses by providing training for prosecutors and law enforcement in the Northern Illinois region. In 2016, I was honored to be selected as a special assistant state's attorney to Kane County State's Attorney Joseph McMahon in the prosecution of Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke. Despite the challenges in this landmark prosecution, the trial team remained committed to seeking justice.

It has been a pleasure to serve as General Counsel to the elected officials of Winnebago County. We have together navigated the waters of litigation and the waves of the Covid-19 pandemic while remaining steadfast in providing services for the residents of Winnebago County. Despite these challenges and limited resources, these public servants have persevered with the best interest of Winnebago County as their motivation.

The many achievements of the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office are reflective of the hard-working staff and dedicated public servants who are committed to serving the community. As I leave office, I look forward to working with the State's Attorney Elect, Jay Hanley, for a smooth and seamless transition. I am confident that he is inheriting an office of integrity and professionalism with staff members who are committed to serving Winnebago county residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the eighteenth Winnebago County State's Attorney.

Winnebago State's Attorney History



Predecessor:
Joe Bruscato



Current:
Marilyn Hite Ross



Successor:
J Hanley

Joseph P. Bruscato was elected Winnebago County State's Attorney on November 4, 2008 and was sworn into office on December 1, 2008. After serving ten years as State's Attorney he ran for and was elected to serve as a 17th Judicial Circuit Court Judge on November 6, 2018 and was sworn in on December 3, 2018. Marilyn Hite Ross was appointed Winnebago County State's Attorney on December 1, 2018 to finish out the term vacated by Joe Bruscato. SA Hite Ross decided not to run for the 2020 election. In the 2020 election J Hanley ran as the Republican candidate against the Democratic candidate Paul Carpenter. J Hanley was elected on November 3, 2020 and will be sworn into office on December 1, 2020



Winnebago County Criminal Justice Center
650 W. State Street
Rockford, Illinois



Winnebago County Courthouse
400 W. State Street
Rockford, Illinois



Juvenile Justice Center
211 S. Court Street
Rockford, Illinois



Lincoln Statue
400 W. State Street
Rockford, Illinois



911 Memorial
650 W. State Street
Rockford, Illinois