

2018

ANNUAL REPORT

STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
MELISSA W. NELSON

FLORIDA'S FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



The mission of the State Attorney's Office is to pursue justice for the citizens of the Fourth Circuit of Florida and fairly and impartially enforce the law.

Pursue justice, always.

Our Pledge

- To treat all participants in the criminal justice system with respect;
- To empower crime victims and treat them with dignity;
- To strive for fairness and impartiality in our use of prosecutorial discretion;
- To pursue just punishment and accountability for those guilty of crimes;
- To actively seek input from the diverse communities we serve;
- To be transparent in our actions and decision-making;
- To seek effective and innovative strategies for preventing and controlling crime;
- To support alternatives to the penal system when appropriate;
- To act as good stewards of public resources entrusted to us for our work;
- To stay abreast of best practices in our field and employ technology effectively;
- To collaborate with other government and law enforcement agencies and community partners to enhance public safety;
- To act with professionalism.



In 2018, I challenged our office with one word to inspire and lead our thoughts and actions – that word, innovation. Our office took this theme to heart and applied this word across the spectrum of our operations. From employing innovative ways to improve workflow processes, to researching and implementing crime-fighting technologies, in 2018 this office sought to improve our service to you.

In the pages of this, our second Annual Report, you will read the myriad ways we pursued innovation, beginning with the publication of our Mission, Vision, and Values Statement – the culmination of a year-long project and a statement of the principles that guide our work.

This past year, we continued our success in criminal courtrooms, resolving some of the most important cases in our circuit.

We hired our second class of prosecutors, who all come from varied backgrounds, who each share the common goal to seek justice, to do the right thing, and to do so with fairness and impartiality.

We enhanced our targeted prosecution efforts by expanding the division and dedicating additional, strategic resources to the unit.

We employed new initiatives in collaboration with our law enforcement partners, not only allowing their agencies to save money, but keeping their officers in service and focused on the community's safety.

We made changes that increased the efficiency of our budget, held more internal events for our employees, attended more community events and meetings, and fought hard to make this community a better and safer place for all who live here.

Our investments in alternatives to arrest and traditional prosecution are paying remarkable dividends. Data is demonstrating the success of juvenile civil citations – keeping kids out of jail who do not need to be there, and saving millions of dollars for taxpayers in doing so. We launched KEYS 2 Drive and, because of it, have seen the issuance of over 400 valid driver's licenses.

In 2019, we will open the doors to a state-of-the-art Crime Gun Intelligence Center, housed in our building. We will receive the recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, and we will report to the community on the progress of the Conviction Integrity Review Unit.

The innovations enacted by our office this year will have long-lasting ripple effects on this community – with our daily goal of being better today than we were yesterday.

Thank you for your interest in our work. It is an honor to serve you.

Melissa

THE OFFICE AT A GLANCE

The State Attorney's Office for Florida's Fourth Judicial Circuit serves more than 1.2 million residents throughout Northeast Florida. The office has 114 prosecutors who represent the people of Clay, Duval, and Nassau counties, with Duval being the largest in both population and office size. The office disposed of 37,933 cases in 2018 and had 123 felony jury trials with a conviction rate of 86 percent. The office has an appropriated budget of \$28.7 million.

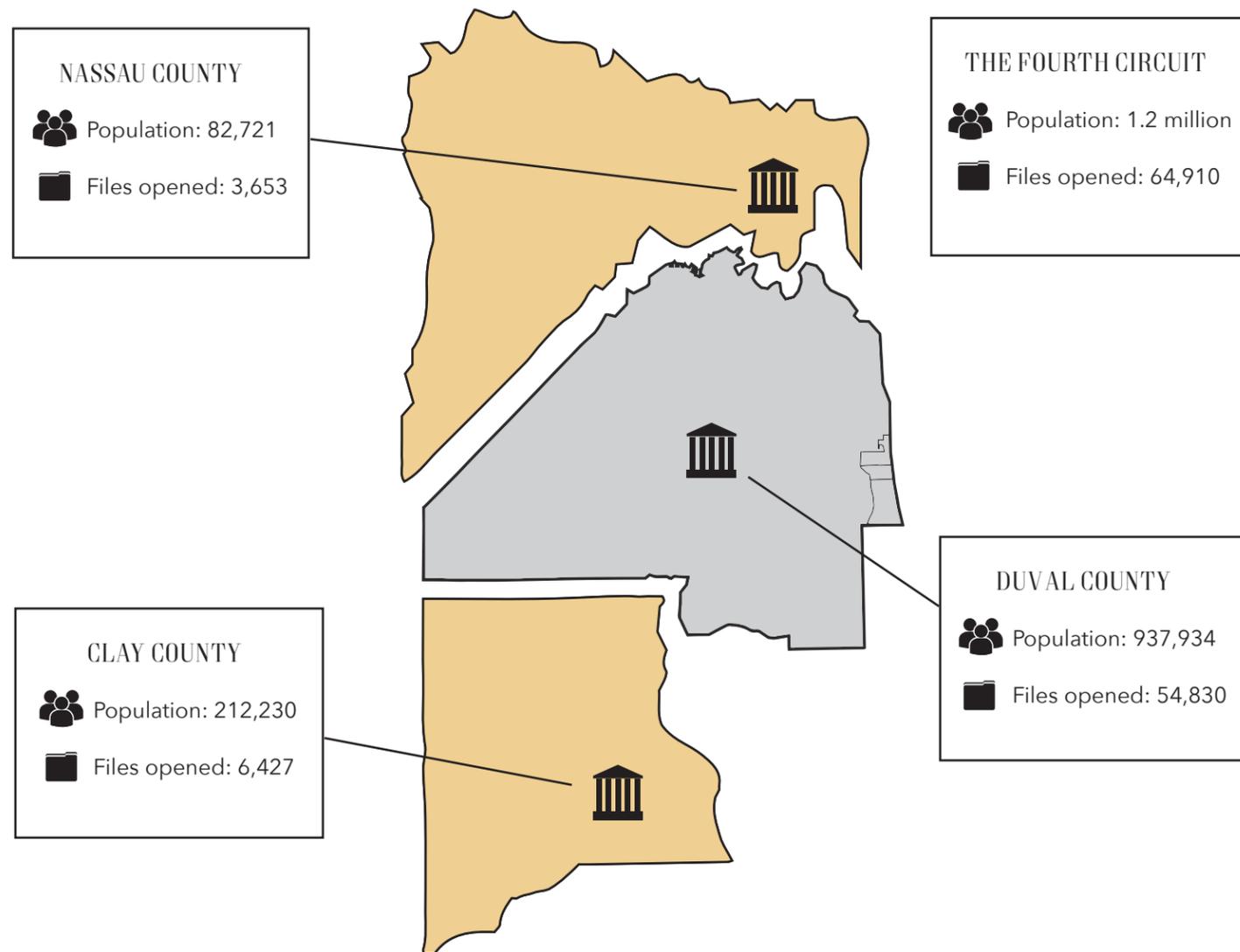


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement	1
My Commitment to the Community	2
The Office at a Glance	3
2018 by the Numbers	6
Enhancing Public Safety	7
In the Courtroom	12
Cold Case Initiative	15
Expanding Smart Justice	17
KEYS 2 Drive Accelerates	17
Civil Citations Are Working	18
Drug Court Making a Difference	20
Conviction Integrity	21
Engaging Our Community	23
Where We Were	23
Impacting Our Youth	24
Outstanding Officers	25
Helping Others	26
In Your Neighborhoods	28
Elevating Office Culture	29
The Class of 2018	29
Honoring Our Past and Present	29
Our Work with Victims	30
Opening Our Doors	31
A Clear Commitment to Transparency	32
Well-Earned Recognition	34
A Culture of Service	35
Lecture Series	36
A Historic Look Back	38





2018 BY THE NUMBERS

Dollars saved through
the expanded use of
civil citations¹

\$3.2+ million

+

Dollars saved through
initiatives to keep officers
on the street²

\$700,000+

+

Dollars saved
through KEYS 2 Drive³

\$65,000+

=

Total dollars saved through
Smart Justice Initiatives⁴

\$4+ million

Felony files opened

15,971

Misdemeanor files opened

42,840

Cases disposed

37,933

Licenses granted through
KEYS 2 Drive

400+

Fines and fees paid
to the State of Florida
from KEYS 2 Drive⁵

\$100,000+

Increase in civil citations
issued to youth over 2016

128%

Increase in referrals to
Adult Drug Court over 2017

60%

Number of community
events the office attended

277

Diversity of September 2018
new ASA class

33%

Improvement in response time
to public records requests

50%

[1] The estimated savings from using civil citations rather than arrests are \$3,248,256. Florida DJJ Civil Citation Initiative, <https://juvjustice.org/sites/default/files/ckfinder/files/STTAC%20Civil%20CitationWebinar.pdf>, September 22, 2014, pg. 27; Florida DJJ Roadmap to System Excellence, <https://www.scribd.com/document/162251091/Florida-Department-of-Juvenile-Justice-Roadmap-to-System-Excellence>, August 1, 2013, pg. 32; Florida DJJ Civil Citations, <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/quality-improvement---residential/2012-civil-citation-powerpoint>, May 2012, pg. 7.

[2] Based on data received from 4th Circuit law enforcement agencies. Estimated savings is \$702,000.

[3] Court Options, KEYS 2 Drive 6 Month Report, Fourth Judicial Circuit, Duval County, Florida, Section I, pg. 2. Estimated savings from May 21-November 26, 2018 is \$66,500.

[4] Total estimated savings from smart justice initiatives is \$4,016,256.

[5] Court Options, KEYS 2 Drive 6 Month Report, Fourth Judicial Circuit, Duval County, Florida, Section I, pg. 3. Estimated fines and fees paid to the State of Florida from May 21-November 26, 2018 are \$104,000.

VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGY RELEASED

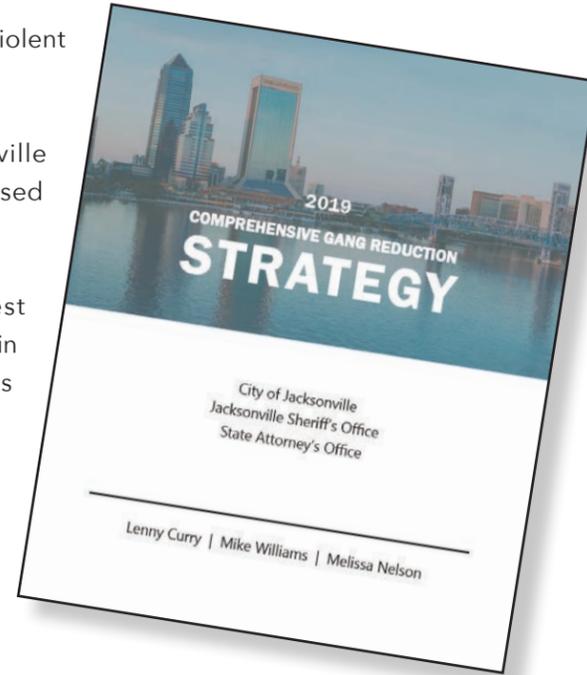
There is no simple solution to combating gangs and violent crime.

In early 2019, the State Attorney's Office, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, and City of Jacksonville publicly released their joint Comprehensive Gang Reduction Strategy.

The detailed and transparent report identifies best practices and lays out crime-reduction initiatives currently in place. It also highlights successful programs in other cities that have potential for local implementation.

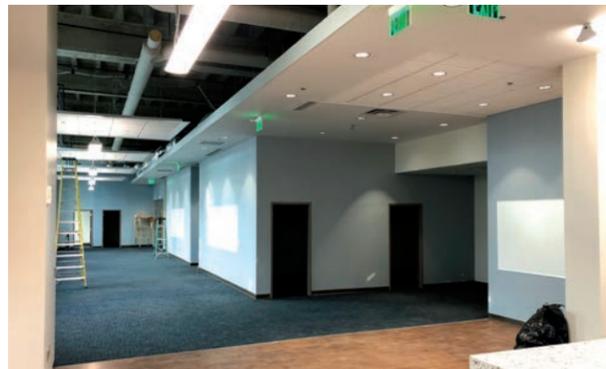
The ideas incorporate research-based prevention, intervention, and prosecution strategies the agencies believe will keep the public safe.

Read the report at <https://bit.ly/2CmK83Q>.



State Attorney Melissa Nelson joined law enforcement leaders to announce the arrests of members of the Rollin' 20s gang.

CRIME GUN INTELLIGENCE CENTER



The Crime Gun Intelligence Center opens in spring 2019.

jacksonville.com

High-tech ways to track a bullet and gun in crimes now part of Jacksonville crime-fighting arsenal

By: Dan Scanlan, December 22, 2018

Law enforcement's efforts to tackle violent crimes are about to receive a boost. Construction of a Crime Gun Intelligence Center is underway at the Jacksonville office of the State Attorney's Office.

Opening in spring 2019, the center will house members of the State Attorney's Office and partnering agencies committed to solving crimes involving firearms. Tools like ShotSpotter, a gunfire detection system, and the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), a real-time lead generator, will be coordinated from the facility.

Greater coordination among agencies, quicker response times, and expedited evidence – all are key enhancements in the fight against gun crimes.

TAKING DOWN GANGS: ROLLIN' NO MORE

"Jacksonville is safer because of this. Lives will be saved because of this."

- State Attorney Melissa Nelson

Nearly 50 gang members responsible for some of the most violent local crimes have been removed from Jacksonville's streets. In partnership with local, state, and federal agencies, the State Attorney's Office dealt a significant blow to a street gang known as the Rollin' 20s, a group closely associated with the Bloods.



Crime guns seized as part of the Rollin' 20s bust.

OFF THE STREETS

- 30 firearms
- 396 grams of powdered cocaine
- 42 grams of crack cocaine
- 72 grams of marijuana
- 31 grams of Molly
- 6.5 grams of heroin
- 39.2 grams of ecstasy

Following a multi-year investigation, local law enforcement leaders announced 46 members of the Rollin' 20s gang were arrested and charged with offenses including drug trafficking, carjacking, kidnapping, and illegal possession of firearms by convicted felons. Several members are associated with area murders.

The investigation was a joint effort among the State Attorney's Office and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

MORE BOOTS ON THE GROUND

The State Attorney's Office implemented several initiatives to keep law enforcement on the streets and save taxpayer dollars.

The office updated and expanded filing procedures to allow officers to file their cases electronically, rather than take time to appear in person.

It reinstated a referral card system for victims to report municipal and misdemeanor offenses directly to the State Attorney's Office, which saved officers time.

The office also instituted a new Beaches Filing Initiative that included a prosecutor traveling to the Beaches on a weekly basis to handle filing, which largely eliminated the need for officers to travel Downtown.

These improvements in 2018 saved law enforcement \$702,000 and kept officers on the streets, making our community safer.

**MONEY SAVED:
OVER \$700,000**

TARGETING VIOLENT OFFENDERS

The State Attorney's Office expanded its Targeted Prosecution Unit, a group that specializes in identifying, investigating, and prosecuting the community's most violent offenders.

The reinforced unit is now divided into proactive and reactive divisions specializing in long-term investigations and dealing with serious violent offenders.

NEW TOOLS TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

The State Attorney's Office is investing in an Arrest Alert System that will assist its intelligence-driven prosecution efforts. Such systems link the office with other law enforcement and community partners to drive down violent crime through timely information sharing.

How it works: When an offender is arrested, a record is created in a database. Prosecutors are immediately notified of certain individuals, charges, or arrest locations based on that specialized record, which helps build cases against violent offenders.

PROBLEM-SOLVING PROSECUTION STRATEGY

The office made substantial progress in its Community Prosecution initiative, which assigns prosecutors to law enforcement zones and Citizen Planning Advisory Committees.

The goal is for prosecutors to build relationships with those who live and work in impacted areas – business and church leaders, nonprofit heads, and neighbors – to help solve problems before they arise.

FIGHTING FOR VULNERABLE VICTIMS

Eradicating Human Trafficking

The fight against human trafficking and holding traffickers accountable are priorities of the State Attorney's Office.

One success: Patrick Trottie used drugs and force to hold several women captive until they repaid their "debt" through prostitution services. An investigation led to his arrest and prosecution in state court that resulted in a 10-year prison sentence.



Bryan

The office has two human trafficking attorneys. One is cross sworn as an Assistant U.S. Attorney.

The office also helps human trafficking survivors expunge their records for crimes committed while force and threats were used against them.

"People do not realize the importance of expungement, even for something as simple as getting a place to live," said Renata Bryan, one of the first assisted survivors. "I could not be happier with the way they treated me. They took my trauma into consideration."

In 2018, there were:

- 36 human trafficking-related arrests
- 38 potential human trafficking victims - including three juveniles - identified
- 4 federal indictments
- 224 human trafficking-related calls investigated by the Florida Department of Children and Families

The Fight Against the Opioid Epidemic

As the opioid crisis continues to impact the community, the State Attorney's Office pursues strategies to better address this deadly epidemic. Chief Assistant Mac Heavener joined a national team that released a report on state and local responses to the problem.

In partnership with the U.S. Attorney's Office, the State Attorney's Office assisted with two death-by-overdose cases as homicides that concluded in successful convictions.

Aggressive prosecution will continue of these opioid-fueled deaths.



Protecting Our Elderly

Over the past two years, the office successfully protected elders through the work of its Human Rights Division. Under the leadership of Assistant State Attorney Octavius Holliday, the division handles cases of exploitation and aggravated neglect or abuse; battery, abuse, or neglect; and grand theft of elderly individuals.

In one example, a jury found Anna Savage guilty of cashing the stolen checks of an 80-year-old man who lived at a senior living facility. Savage dated the son of the victim's neighbor. The victim did not know she cashed the checks until he was unable to pay for breakfast the next day.

In 2017, there were 325 elder abuse cases – a number that increased to 395 in 2018, a 60 percent increase in number of cases.

"LONG ROAD" TO JUSTICE FOR CHERISH PERRYWINKLE



Perrywinkle

On June 21, 2013, Cherish Perrywinkle was shopping with her family for a cross-country trip to see her father. Donald Smith targeted them and cut Cherish's life short. He brutally raped and murdered the young girl, shocking a community.

Smith met the family and offered to take them shopping at a nearby Walmart. Near closing time, he went to buy them food and walked out the front doors with Cherish. Her body was found the next morning hidden under debris in a marsh. Smith was arrested during a traffic stop.

"Cherish Perrywinkle was 8 years old. She weighed 67 pounds. Separated from her mother, her little

sisters – from all she knew that was safe in this world. She spent the last petrifying hours of her life with him," State Attorney Melissa Nelson told the jury in her opening statement.



State Attorney Melissa Nelson in court for the Donald Smith trial.

Nelson and Assistant State Attorneys Mark Caliel and Vanessa Wheeler-Sanchez delivered justice. It took a jury about 15 minutes to find Smith guilty of First-Degree Murder, Sexual Battery, and Kidnapping. That jury imposed the death penalty.

"We were happy to be able to get justice for Cherish," Caliel said after the trial. "It has been a long road."

GANG WAR STEALS YOUNG AIDEN MCCLENDON



McClendon

The State Attorney's Office aggressively prosecutes criminal gang members who cause violence in our communities.

In July, family members of 22-month-old Aiden McClendon saw his killers prosecuted after little Aiden was tragically murdered in a senseless drive-by shooting. The 2016 shooting stemmed from an ongoing violent dispute between gang members of Problem Child Entertainment and 1-8-7. Aiden was strapped in his car seat when he was caught in the crossfire. Henry Hayes IV and Kquame Richardson were arrested for his murder.

Over the course of the trial, Assistant State Attorneys London Kite, L.E. Hutton, and Brooke Gasson detailed for two juries – one for each defendant – the inner workings of criminal gangs, their language, and the platforms they use to spread their violent messages.

The juries found Hayes and Richardson guilty of First-Degree Murder as criminal gang members, Attempted Second-Degree Murder, and Discharging a Firearm from a Vehicle. Both were sentenced to life in prison.

"The [Prosecuting] Attorney 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."

Trial Support Services Director Jim McMillan paints a quote from Berger v United States, 295 U.S. 78, 88 (1935).

Woman sentenced to 18 years for kidnapping baby from hospital, raising her as her own



By Ray Sanchez,
June 8, 2018



Jacksonville man who killed ex in front of their son sentenced to life in prison

March 23, 2018



JACKSONVILLE MAN CONVICTED OF WESTSIDE DOUBLE MURDER, JURY WILL NOW DECIDE BETWEEN DEATH PENALTY OR LIFE IN PRISON

By: Sarah Thompson,
October 29, 2018



Jacksonville man sentenced to 35 years in prison for death of 3-year-old boy

October 16, 2018



Jacksonville felon found guilty of sexual battery on disabled victim

By: Dan Scanlan,
May 2, 2018



'Don Juan' con man gets 10 years in prison for grand theft

By: Zachery Lashway,
November 30, 2018

SEEKING JUSTICE

JACKSONVILLE MAN SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN FLORIDA STATE PRISON, AFTER PLEADING GUILTY TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING-RELATED CHARGES

By: Sarah Thompson,
February 15, 2018



Guilty verdict for Jacksonville man after North Carolina contractor killed in 2016

By: Dan Scanlan,
August 17, 2018

Macclenny mom sentenced to 12 years in prison for poisoning child

By: Bridgette Matter,
October 3, 2018



\$4 million Swisher embezzlement scheme widens to tax manager's husband

By: Dan Scanlan,
December 14, 2018



OUR COLD CASE EFFORTS

Cold cases are never forgotten – but sometimes they need new technology or a fresh set of eyes to develop new life.

The office is rolling out a program for attorneys to further investigate cold cases.

State Attorney Melissa Nelson also joined the Florida Sheriff's Association Cold Case Advisory Commission as the sole prosecutor on the commission. It meets quarterly to discuss strategies and hear cold case presentations from agencies.

NCIS Investigative Review Specialist Lou Eliopoulos (pictured, right) taught a cold case training session for attorneys in 2018.



AFTER 34 YEARS, ANSWERS FOR WELCH



Welch

On Aug. 27, 1984, 10-year-old Tammy Welch was found in a courtyard behind her Westside apartment. She was strangled and the victim of a brutal sexual assault. Tammy had been playing with her younger sister while her mother and brother helped movers – the family was preparing to relocate to Navy housing. Tammy's father was deployed at the time.

"It's a parent's worst nightmare. It's been our worst nightmare, our life for the past 35 years," Michael Welch, Tammy's father, told a courtroom last year.

The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and Naval Criminal Investigative Services pursued Tammy's killer, but the case turned cold. It stayed that way until technological advancements led law enforcement to reactivate the case in 1999. DNA was collected from numerous people, including neighbor James Jackson. He was originally a person of interest, but told investigators he was asleep by himself when the crime occurred. DNA from Tammy's rape kit told another story.

After a weeklong trial for the long-standing cold case, a jury agreed with the evidence Assistant State Attorneys Pam Hazel and Alan Mizrahi presented: it found Jackson guilty of First-Degree Murder and Sexual Battery. Jackson was sentenced to life in prison.

"She got justice," Jennifer Roache, Tammy's sister, said after the trial.

COLD CASE INVESTIGATIONS HEATING UP



The State of Florida v. Victor Reed trial team received the office's Group Achievement award for work in the prosecution of a decade-long cold case.

As technology improves and new evidence emerges, attorneys and investigators are able to strengthen leads in cold cases and achieve justice for victims.

The office is currently prosecuting more than a dozen cold cases handled by its Special Victims Unit, some of which are aided by the results of the office's Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (see

column) after DNA matches generated leads. The cases of Victor Reed and Terrence Payne are two examples of successful cold case prosecutions.

Reed was found guilty of three counts of sexual battery after past rape kits from cases in 2007 and 2008 linked his DNA to the crimes. He was sentenced to life in prison. Payne committed an armed sexual battery in 1996 that went cold until a rape kit in 2014 identified him as the perpetrator. He was also sentenced to life in prison.

The office has strengthened its commitment to solving cold cases and will continue to fight for victims and their families.

PARTNERSHIPS AT WORK



Project: Cold Case Director Ryan Backmann and State Attorney Melissa Nelson.

Northeast Florida has invaluable resources in Project: Cold Case and its director, Ryan Backmann.

The local organization has a national database that spotlights unsolved homicides to generate leads. The State Attorney's Office frequently partners with the organization on that important work.

SAO AWARDED \$2.3 MILLION TO SUPPORT SEXUAL ASSAULT KIT INITIATIVE

The U.S. Department of Justice awarded the office a \$2.3 million grant to continue and expand its pursuit of justice for victims of sexual assault.

The grant supports the National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative, also known as SAKI, which facilitates resolutions for past crimes in cold cases when sexual assault kits provide new evidence.

The majority of the grant, \$1.5 million, will support investigative and prosecutorial efforts on cases in 2019 and beyond.

The remaining funds, almost \$881,000, will expand DNA databases through the collection of lawfully owed DNA from convicted offenders and arrestees. These added profiles will contribute to more arrests and prosecutions of violent offenders and provide justice for victims.

KEYS 2 DRIVE ACCELERATES



State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces the launch of KEYS 2 Drive.

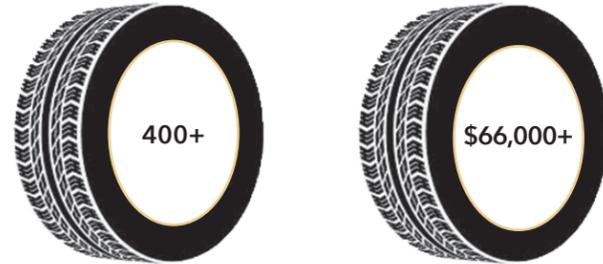


The partners behind the KEYS 2 Drive launch: ASA Coral Messina; Nelson; Circuit Judge Linda McCallum; Clerk of Courts Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Rose Devoe; Clerk of Courts Ronnie Fussell, and Jacksonville Sheriff Mike Williams.

The office launched its KEYS 2 Drive program, a smart justice initiative that provides certain individuals a streamlined opportunity to obtain a valid driver's license and puts them back on the road to success.

The Clerk of Courts, judiciary, and law enforcement partnered with the office to offer the program to those whose primary charges are driving with a suspended or revoked license, or not having a valid driver's license. Participants have paid outstanding fines and fees totaling more than \$104,000 to the State of Florida.

The program provides an opportunity for participants to emerge from a cycle of fines and fees often accumulated by getting caught driving without a license and, most importantly, helps them receive a valid license.



The number of licenses granted since program launch and the estimated savings to the criminal justice system.

SUCCESS STORY



Bryant

Keys 2 Drive initiative slated to hit roads to give a second chance to drivers

CBS 47 FOX 30 ACTION NEWS JAX By: Brigette Matter, May 30, 2018

"Once a person obtains a driver's license, they can exit the cycle they find themselves caught in, and hopefully, not re-enter through arrest or citation."

- State Attorney Melissa Nelson

Reynaldo Bryant participated in the KEYS 2 Drive program after learning his license was suspended.

Getting back on the road took six months and was not easy, but Bryant vividly remembers the feeling when he completed the program and was handed a valid license.

"It was so much weight lifted off my shoulders," he said.

CIVIL CITATIONS ARE WORKING

jacksonville.com

Friday's Lead Letter: Duval County may be top performer in juvenile civil citations

By: Dewey Caruthers, July 29, 2018

"Too few counties are willing to embrace the civil citation concept. But Duval is no longer one of these and instead is poised to lead the state in prearrest diversion for common youth misbehavior."

- Florida Times-Union

The Problem, the Solution



Chief ASA L.E. Hutton oversees the Juvenile Division.

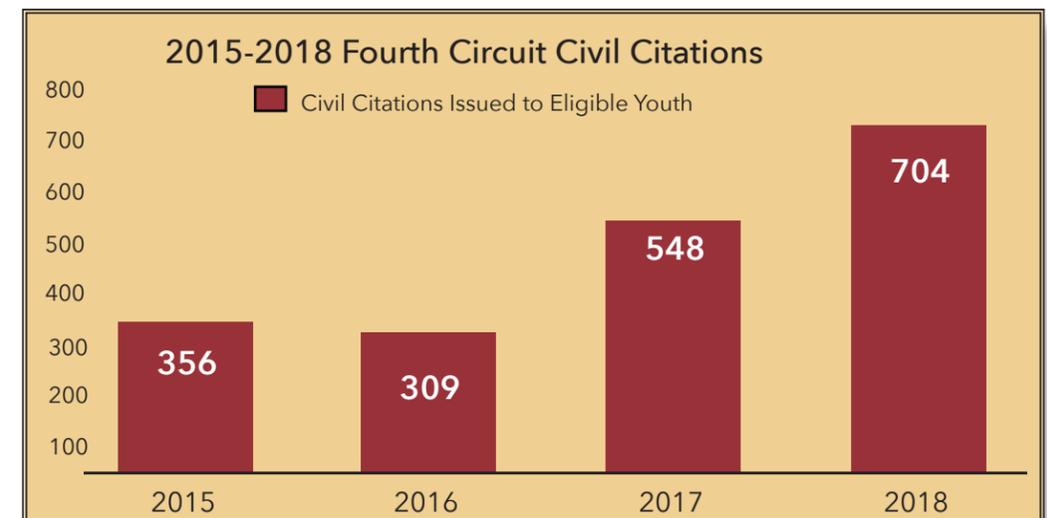
In 2017 the office, law enforcement, and juvenile justice stakeholders partnered to expand the use of juvenile civil citations as a smart-justice approach. In 2018, more youth received citations; fewer reoffended; law enforcement saved resources; and taxpayers saved through fewer arrests and incarcerations. Juveniles who completed the program with 96.6 percent success. Estimated cost savings from using juvenile civil citations rather than arrests is more than \$3.2 million (see page 14).

Report: Duval poised to be a state leader in juvenile civil citation use

jacksonville.com By: Tessa Duvall, June 26, 2018

"In the first three months of 2018, law enforcement agencies across Duval County issued civil citations instead of making arrests about 90 percent of the time. Previously, Duval had a 27 percent utilization rate in 2016 and 59 percent in 2017, according to the report."

- Florida Times-Union



SMART JUSTICE COORDINATOR

The office introduced Assistant State Attorney Coral Messina as its first Smart Justice Coordinator (SJC).

Smart justice is a way of addressing criminal justice issues that aim to solve crime and reduce recidivism through lower cost and data-driven methods.

The SJC position is the office's latest step toward benefiting all criminal justice stakeholders.

Part of Messina's responsibility will be to manage the diversionary programs and problem-solving courts in the Fourth Circuit to strengthen what works, change what does not, and examine best practices throughout the country that could improve our local system.



LEARNING FROM OUTSIDE LEADERS

The intersection of mental health and the criminal justice system is a focus of the office in 2019. The conversation gained momentum in 2018 when community service providers and stakeholders, nonprofits, and members of the State Attorney's Office, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, and City of Jacksonville attended a day-long meeting on the topic.

The Honorable Steven Leifman of the 11th Judicial Circuit in Miami-Dade County guided attendees through his experience, his observations of Florida systems, and provided feedback on local efforts on the topic. Leifman is a leader on the issue after spearheading the creation of the Criminal Mental Health Project, which diverts South Florida offenders suffering mental and substance abuse disorders and places them in treatment facilities and support services.

Arrests and recidivism significantly declined in these areas since Leifman started the project in 2000. Other results: the county was able to close a jail, officer-involved shootings dropped, and bond ratings increased. News reports state the reduction in arrests and incarceration have saved about \$12 million per year.

Leifman suggested State Attorney Melissa Nelson seek appointment to the state's Steering Committee on Problem-Solving Courts. She did just that and was appointed by Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice Charles Canady.

The office will continue to be a leader in improving the system for all stakeholders.



The Honorable Steven Leifman, 11th Judicial Circuit.

DRUG COURT MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Danielle Ciccarelo holds her Drug Court graduate certificate while standing next to her mother, Pat Smith.



Derrick Martin reads aloud his journey through addiction to a packed courtroom.



Clay County Judge Tim Collins holds Becca Bradshaw's daughter, Hadley. Bradshaw successfully completed Adult Drug Court.

Drug Court Changing Lives

Danielle Ciccarelo was homeless, living in the woods, and doing drugs with no hope or confidence. Her mother, Pat Smith, tried to get her into rehabilitation programs, but nothing worked until she had her daughter arrested on an outstanding warrant.

Derrick Martin said he only cared about getting high. He was living in a hotel with his wife and children when police knocked on the door and arrested him for drug possession and other crimes.

Becca Bradshaw had a beautiful baby, Hadley, to take care of, but she had to become clean and sober to be the parent she needed to be.

Each story demonstrates the determination and perseverance of those who graduate from Adult Drug Court.

The intensive treatment program requires drug testing, counseling, case management, and regular court appearances for eligible offenders whose crimes are deemed to stem from drug use.

This treatment court is being used with more regularity and is producing results. In 2018, attorneys referred 470 cases to the program, up from 293 in 2017.

INCREASED USE
In 2018, the office diverted 60% more defendants to Adult Drug Court.

Alternative Forms of Justice

The office uses many forms of diversion programs and alternatives to the traditional court system, including several highly successful treatment courts. These options enable offenders to get needed treatment and reduce recidivism. Explore the programs offered at <https://bit.ly/2MPGpAL>.

The Importance of Conviction Integrity

The Florida Bar News

November 15, 2018

“It’s about getting it right, but it’s also ensuring that if we make mistakes, we as a system learn from them so that we can hopefully work to prevent replicating them.” - State Attorney Melissa Nelson

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



Thibodeau

In 2017, with help from state legislators who saw value in the project, State Attorney Melissa Nelson created Florida’s first Conviction Integrity Review.

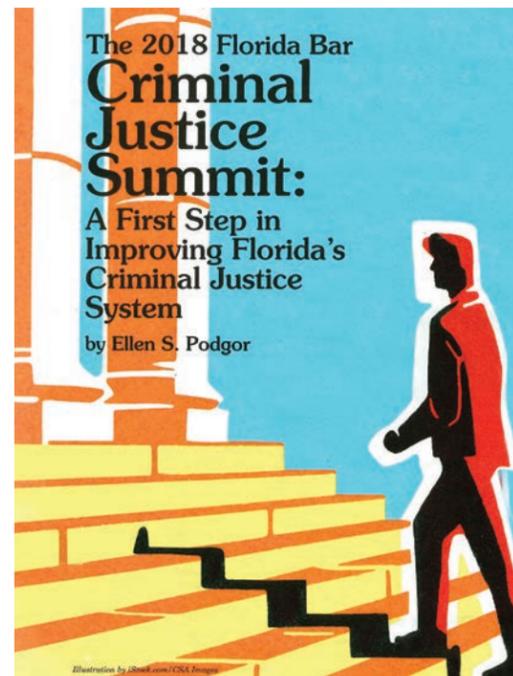
In 2018, Shelley Thibodeau was hired as the Director of the Review. Outside interest was abundant: Thibodeau arrived to many requests waiting for her and spent this year reviewing petitions and investigating claims of innocence. More than 200 people contacted the Review, and 60 people submitted formal petitions. Thibodeau also initiated more than a dozen investigations, some of which require research of past cases, re-interviewing witnesses, resubmitting evidence for testing, and other efforts.

The Review also:

- Established its official policies and procedures.
- Formalized an agreement with the Innocence Project of Florida to collaborate on appropriate cases.
- Secured a nearly \$200,000 U.S. Department of Justice grant to support the Review’s work.

“The work of the CIR will lead to learning opportunities and improved processes in the review and prosecution of cases, and – just as important – it shows the people of the fourth circuit our commitment to accountability and transparency in the work we do every day,” Nelson told the Florida Times-Union in January 2018.

For more information about the Review, visit <https://bit.ly/2szOlr9>.



“Fourth Circuit State Attorney Melissa Nelson was on hand to discuss how she started the first Conviction Integrity Unit in the state, which is serving as a model for new units in Orlando and Tampa.”
-The Florida Bar Journal, Volume 93, No. 1.



Kids Hope Alliance, HabiJax Build[Her], Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast, **JASMYN**, KHA Mayor's Young Leaders Advisory Council (MYLAC), Mandarin High School Career Fair, Clay County State of the County Luncheon, **New Town Success Zone**, Nassau County Inn of Courts, 16th Annual Raymond Ehrlich Trial Advocacy Seminar, **Missing Adult Day**, Holland & Knight Women's Initiative, Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project, LISC Workshop: For the Love of Jacksonville, Fletcher High School, Junior Achievement Career Fair, New Town Success Zone, **National Conference on Preventing Crime in the Black Community**, Yoga4Change, Edward College, Ribault High School Career Fair, Coastal School of Law, Generation Jax, **Interfaith Coalition for Action, Reconciliation and Empowerment**, Lee High School, Young Men's Leadership Conference, **"Together We Can" Justice Coalition Breakfast**, Rethreaded, Uptown Civitan Club, Jax Police Athletic League (PAL), PACE, Elder Abuse Awareness & Prevention Fair, **GlobalJax**, Hubbard House, Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech, **Mayor's Victim's Assistance Advisory Council**, Southside Middle School Career Fair, Lakeshore Middle Career Fair, Keiser University, Muscular Dystrophy Association, Mandarin Middle School Career Fair, Lee High School College Fair, Sandalwood High School Career Fair, **Crime Victim's Rights Week**, Young Men's and Women's Leadership Academy, Dupont Middle School Career Fair, Oceanway Middle School Victim's Rights Week, Mental Health Resource Center, Community Transition Center, **Operation New Hope**, East Arlington Rotary Club, Arlington Council of the Chamber, Darnell Cookman Law Day, Cathedral Arts Project, Wolfson's Children's Hospital, JSO Torch Run, **Vision Keepers**, Community Foundation, Women's Center of Jax, Ralph W. "Buddy" Nimmons, Jr. Federal Practice Seminar, Inaugural Law Day / Duval County Schools, **Operation Save Our Sons**, First Coast Tiger Bay Club, COJ Senior Expo, **Safe Haven of Northeast Florida**, The Parent Help Center, Clean Slate Centers, YMLA/YWLA Career Fair, Matthew Gilbert Career Fair, **Arlington Middle School Career Fair**, Eugene Butler Middle School, Regency Zone Two Safety Fair, Bridge to Success Career Fair, Bartram Springs Elementary School Career Fair. **Yulee Chamber**

Waters Florida

WHERE WE WERE

Members of the office were everywhere in 2018. In all, attorneys, investigators, and staff attended more than 275 different events that connected, engaged, and supported the community in a meaningful way. A civic organization, a community walk, a visit to schools – it was a diverse and successful year.

JJAC HEADS TO THE FINISH LINE



The committee was hard at work in 2018.

It was an eventful year for members of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee.

The group of 23 nonprofit and community leaders, judges, attorneys, child experts, and advocates continued their important work to identify what a top-notch juvenile diversion system entails. That effort included numerous meetings, research projects, talking with national leaders, and discussing the topics in subcommittees to prepare for final recommendations.

"Members have worked tirelessly for the past year, and I am proud of everyone involved," said Buddy Schulz, Holland & Knight partner and JJAC chairman. "We all want to help bring an evidence-based

program that is uniquely tailored to Northeast Florida's needs."

Schulz said the goal of these diversion system improvements is to reduce recidivism, which will keep the public safer and benefit all criminal justice stakeholders.

Watch for the committee's recommendations in 2019 and follow its work at <https://bit.ly/2Cvzl7p>.

JJAC Subcommittee Focuses:

- Mentoring and Community Service
- Restorative Justice
- Education
- Employment and Life Skills
- Wraparound and Alternative Programming
- Juvenile Brain Development and Mental Health

FROM COURTROOM TO CLASSROOM



ASA Mark Caliel at Englewood High School.



ASA Octavius Holliday at Henry F. Kite Elementary.



ASA LaTasha Campbell at Ribault High School.

The office's partnership with Duval County Public Schools progressed in 2018, as attorneys were assigned to every middle and high school throughout the county. Whether it was in classrooms, at assemblies, or during career fairs, prosecutors had a presence with these schools and young people.

OUTSTANDING OFFICERS



The office honored law enforcement throughout the circuit at the Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer awards in May.

Each day, law enforcement representatives risk their lives to ensure the safety of citizens and communities. In an effort to recognize and honor that commitment, State Attorney Melissa Nelson launched the inaugural Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer (OLEO) awards.

THE 2018 OLEO AWARDS

Lifesaving Awards

- Officers Gary Stucki and Rick Wood (Neptune Beach Police Department)
- Officer David Alexander (Jacksonville Sheriff's Office)
- Deputy Jacob Hawkins (Clay County Sheriff's Office)

Investigative Excellence Awards

- Detective Dustin Kling (Jacksonville Beach Police Department)
- Detectives Margaret Rhatigan and Glenn Warkentien (Jacksonville Sheriff's Office)



Hawkins



Rhatigan and Warkentien

SERVING CHEER TO VETERANS



Excited expressions for an early Christmas.



Staff throughout the office showed an outpouring of support.



A Wounded Warrior Project family portrait by ASA Mai Tran.

Once again, the office came together to show more than a dozen Wounded Warrior Project families holiday cheer by presenting them with gift baskets of their favorite items.

The ongoing tradition always draws a crowd, but the 2018 event was the biggest and best yet – one the office will look to beat in 2019.

EDUCATING ELDERERS

Members of the office took time over two days in early May to set up shop at the annual Senior Expo, hosted by the City of Jacksonville. Staff educated attendees on the role of the State Attorney's Office and informed them of common scams that may impact them.



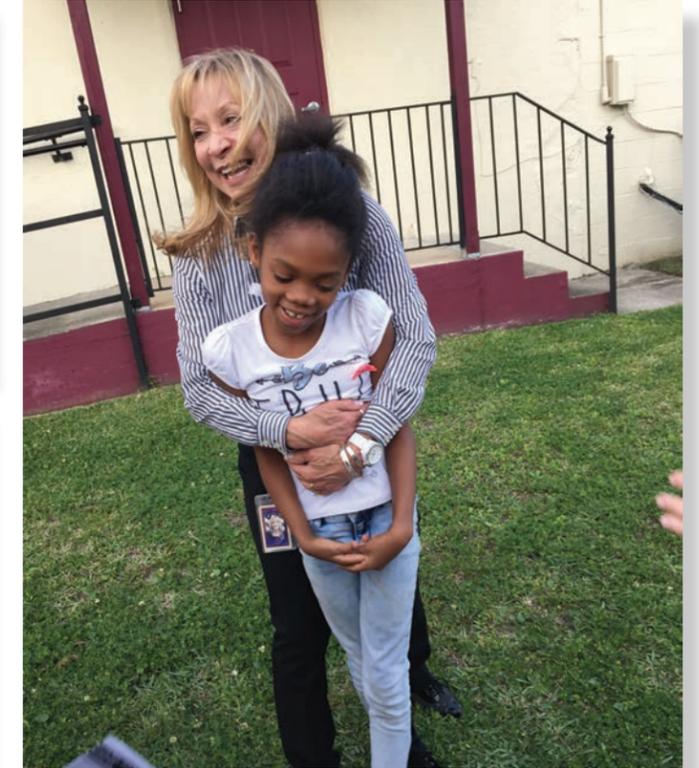
ASA Andy Kantor talks with an attendee of the 2018 Senior Expo.



Employees spent time helping citizens understand common scams.



IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOODS



Investigators John Sheppard and Christi Petrie made friends during a community walk. Members of the office visited several neighborhoods in 2018.

Attorneys, investigators, and staff traveled to talk to people in their own backyards and find out about issues happening in their neighborhoods. Being present, being visible, and being open with citizens builds community trust in the work the office does.

BUILDING THE FUTURE: INSPIRING INTERNS



The summer 2018 interns and State Attorney Melissa Nelson.

The State Attorney's Office regularly recruits interns from law schools and colleges throughout the country who are looking to learn from the best the Fourth Circuit has to offer.

The office welcomed more than 50 interns in 2018 and will continue to provide learning opportunities for those interested in the criminal justice system.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM, CLASS OF 2018



Bottom row: County Court Division Chief Katelyn Johnston, Brittany Johnson, Sabrina Marcos, Jacqueline Hutchins, Katie Borello, Starleigh Smith, and State Attorney Melissa Nelson. Top row: County Court Director John Kalinowski, Goliath Davis, Maxwell Wesemann, Spencer George, Marcus Isom, and County Court Division Chief Corey Milo.

The State Attorney's Office is committed to building a diverse and high-quality workforce. This past year, the office added nine young men and women from law schools including the University of Florida, University of South Carolina, and Cornell University. After weeks of rigorous training, the group began in County Court handling misdemeanor cases and were paired with more senior attorneys for mentoring and guidance.



RECRUITING DIVERSE TALENT

Director of Recruitment and Community Development Lisa Page and Assistant State Attorney Octavius Holliday (pictured) traveled to Atlanta to recruit attendees of the Southeastern Minority Job Fair. The office was presented with the Diversity Award by the Jacksonville Bar Association, which State Attorney Melissa Nelson accepted on its behalf.

HONORING OUR PAST AND PRESENT



The office paid homage to the people who have made it the esteemed fixture it is today – the employees, both past and present. The office hosted its inaugural Alumni Celebration in Downtown's beautiful Hemming Park in late November, inviting more than 3,000 employees who work or have worked in the office.



THE VOICE OF VICTIMS



Crime victims visited the office to take part in a training session organized by ASA London Kite.

Crimes have no greater impact than on victims and their families.

Several victims and their family members visited the State Attorney's Office to speak with prosecutors, investigators, and victim specialists as part of a training session to improve the office's work with them. The group shared their individual stories and offered feedback on their experiences with the office.

"It was hard, to be honest, but I think it was an effective program," said Sierra Vidal. "It was good to see how hard it hit them and that it had some teachable moments."

Vidal witnessed her mother's murder at her father's hands in 2013. She read her victim impact statement from his sentencing date.

Assistant State Attorney London Kite organized the training session and received extremely positive feedback from those who attended.

"It is important for all of us to remember the names and faces behind every file that crosses our desk," said Kite. "This was a way for us to reconnect to the reason why we became prosecutors."

FLORIDA ATTORNEY GENERAL HONORS HARMS

Victim Specialist Carl Harms works with nearly every family of slain victims during their greatest time of need. He has done so with compassion and commitment, often going above and beyond for those families.

For his dedicated efforts, Harms was named a 2018 Distinguished Services Award winner by then-Attorney General Pam Bondi.

"The families of crime victims go through so many different emotions and thoughts after losing a loved one," said Harms. "My goal has always been to be there for them however I can."

Harms' efforts stretch beyond the criminal justice system.

"His victim advocacy is not a job," said State Attorney Melissa Nelson. "It is a calling."



Victim Specialist Carl Harms (second from right) was presented the honor by then-Attorney General Pam Bondi (second from left).

OPENING OUR DOORS

What's Inside Your Local Prosecutor's 'Black Box'?

By: Jonathan Haggerty and Arthur Rizer,
February 12, 2019

THE CRIME REPORT
YOUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE NETWORK

MacArthur
Foundation

Vera
INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

FIU FLORIDA
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY

FJ
FAIR AND JUST
PROSECUTION

"(We) should applaud transparency efforts and reward prosecutors like Nelson who share this information. And we should all hope that more elected prosecutors, both present and aspiring, continue to support the data-transparency movement."

By: Jonathan Haggerty and Arthur Rizer

The State Attorney's Office works with groups seeking to improve the local criminal justice system for all stakeholders.

- **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Florida International University.** As part of a \$1.7 million MacArthur Foundation grant, the office is one of four in the country being examined by researchers with the goal of improving prosecutorial data. "It's completely unprecedented," said Besiki Kutateladze, the FIU criminal justice professor overseeing the study. "There are more than 2,300 local prosecutor offices and very few have opened themselves up to this type of examination ... that level of transparency should be commended."

- **Vera Institute of Justice.** The office is working with the Vera Institute of Justice, which is developing recommendations on policy and practice changes dealing with jail admissions and incarceration within the Fourth Circuit. Vera is also working with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office on the subject.

- **Fair and Just Prosecution.** The office continues to work with Fair and Just Prosecution on effective prosecutorial reforms that improve the local criminal justice system and save taxpayer dollars.



A CLEAR COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY

Public Records

As a public agency, one responsibility of the State Attorney's Office is the lawful and timely response to citizen requests for information. New leadership in the Public Records Division led to a 50 percent reduction in response time and greater transparency. The City of Jacksonville's Open Government Task Force praised the office's efforts in June after a presentation outlining the office's commitment to serving the public.

"The consensus was that the SAO should serve as a model to other agencies, for the efforts toward improvements and cultural shift toward transparency."

-City of Jacksonville Open Government Task Force



Improving Access



Following feedback from the public, the office became the first in Florida to accept credit card payments for public records.

That success led to further expansion when the office began accepting credit cards for diversion program payments for the public and the discovery process for attorneys, and launched its new online records portal for improved access.

EVENTS THAT ENERGIZE



The office hosts different internal events to show appreciation for the employees who make the office the energetic place it is. A few popular events are Bring Your Dog to Work Day (above, left), football tailgates (middle), and the annual Thanksgiving luncheon.



Special Victims Unit Director Adair Newman hugs Josie Rodriguez after recognizing her with the Outstanding Administrative Assistant award. See the full list of award recipients on the next page.

WELL-EARNED RECOGNITION

Office attorneys, investigators, and staff excel at the work they do for the people of the Fourth Circuit. Their accomplishments are worthy of recognition. The office hosted its annual internal awards ceremony to recognize the exceptional efforts of employees from the past year. Twelve awards, along with work-anniversary milestones, were presented this year:

- **Outstanding Administrative Assistant** – Josie Rodriguez, Special Victims Unit
- **Outstanding Trial Support** – Renae Lewin, victim specialist
- **Outstanding Investigator** – John Sheppard, investigator
- **Leadership** – Brian Hughes, paralegal
- **Community Service** – J.J. Thurne, investigator
- **Group Achievement** – *State of Florida v. Victor Reed* trial team
- **Significant Achievement** – Tom Mangan, assistant state attorney
- **Trial Advocacy** – Lauren Anderson, assistant state attorney
- **Rookie of the Year** – Christina Stifler, assistant state attorney
- **Distinguished Service** – Pam Hazel, Clay County director
- **State Attorney Award** – Chris Huband, assistant state attorney
- **Employee of the Year** – Jim McMillan, Trial Support Services



ASA Christina Stifler with her mother, ASA Theresa Simak.



Brian Hughes, winner of the leadership award.



Karen Eakin receives an honor for 35 years of service.



Jim McMillan accepts his Employee of the Year Award.



Danny Clark
1957 - 2018

REMEMBERING DANNY CLARK

Clay County Investigator Danny Clark passed away unexpectedly Oct. 8, 2018. He spent his nearly 13-year career with the State Attorney's Office in Clay County.

Prior to his service with the office, Danny was a longtime member of the Orange Park Police Department, joining the organization at the early age of 17 and serving until his retirement in 2001.

RECOGNIZING OUR OWN

A CULTURE OF SERVICE



Assistant State Attorney Rachel Algee was awarded the Judicial Victim Advocate Award from the Mayor's Victim Assistance Advisory Council.

Clay County Director Pam Hazel was selected to serve on the board of Operation New Hope, a nonprofit that creates opportunities for, and supports, individuals re-entering society following incarceration.



County Court Director John Kalinowski was awarded the Prosecutor of Excellence Award by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, an organization that seeks to end drunk and drugged driving.

Juvenile Director Laura Lambert presented at the Statewide Civil Citation Conference hosted by the Department of Juvenile Justice. Lambert also was invited to present at the Prosecutor/Defender policy convening hosted by the National Juvenile Defender Center in Miami, and at Delaware's Annual Juvenile Justice Conference.



Assistant State Attorneys Ashleigh Brooks and Matthew Silverstein were accepted into the Leadership Jacksonville Collegiate Experience, a limited-participation group that interacts with community leaders and explores issues facing the community.

Assistant State Attorney Coral Messina, Clerk of Courts Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Rose Devoe, and Circuit Court Judge Linda McCallum were named "2018 Women of Influence" by the Jacksonville Business Journal for their efforts in launching the KEYS 2 Drive program.



State Attorney Melissa Nelson joined law enforcement leaders from around the country as the newest member of the Crime Gun Intelligence Board, an initiative of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. She is one of only a few prosecutors to join the board that will use technology, smart prosecution, and partnerships to fight violent crime.

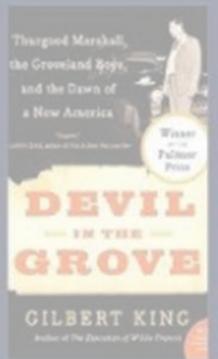
Assistant State Attorneys Brooke Gasson and Sam Friedman were selected to participate in the Gerald T. Bennett Prosecutor / Public Defender Trial Training Program at the University of Florida, a skills training program developed for government lawyers in the field of criminal law.



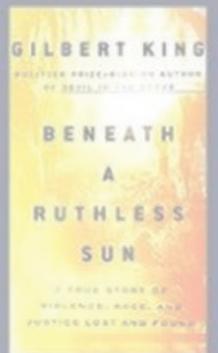
Assistant State Attorney Leigh Rosenbloom was accepted into the latest class of Leadership Jacksonville, which educates future leaders about important local issues.

GILBERT KING

Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author



"Devil in the Grove is a compelling look at the case that forged Thurgood Marshall's perception of himself as a crusader for civil rights. . . King's style [is] at once suspenseful and historically meticulous."
-Christian Science Monitor



"Compelling, insightful and important, Beneath a Ruthless Sun exposes the corruption of racial bigotry and animus that shadows a community, a state, and a nation. A fascinating examination of an injustice story all too familiar and still largely ignored, an engaging and essential read."
-Bryan Stevenson, author of Just Mercy

INTRODUCING SAO LECTURE SERIES



King

The office recently launched its Lecture Series as a way to educate and inspire attorneys, investigators, and staff in their everyday work for the people of the Fourth Circuit. The first session featured author Gilbert King, who penned "Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the Dawn of a New America." While describing the book's plot and historical racial inequalities behind it, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author told attorneys how they, more than many others, can create change within the criminal justice system.

The day after King visited the office, he was in Tallahassee at a Florida Board of Executive Clemency meeting where officials granted a posthumous pardon to the Groveland Four, 70 years after the injustices took place.

A HISTORIC LOOK BACK



Augustus Hartridge
1893 - 1909



Francis Dancy
1917 - 1918



Frank Wideman
1921 - 1923



William Madison
1924



John Harrell
1933 - 1937



Ed Austin
1969 - 1972



Ed Austin
1974 - 1991



Angela Corey
2009 - 2016

William Hallows, Jr.
1909 - 1917



A.D. McNeill
1918 - 1921



P.I. Gaskins
1924



Charles Durbance
1925 - 1933



William Hallows III
1937 - 1969



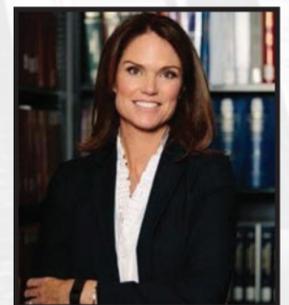
Donald Nichols
1972 - 1974



Harry Shorstein
1991 - 2008



Melissa Nelson
2017 - present



History is made each and every day at the State Attorney's Office as employees serve the people of the Fourth Circuit. Cases are opened, cases are closed, and justice is delivered. The office and its buildings have a storied history of their own in Northeast Florida. There has been youth: Augustus Hartridge, who was appointed in 1893 at the age of 24, was the youngest to fill the position. And there has also been great longevity: State Attorney William Hallows III served as the area's lead prosecutor for more than 30 years. One common aspect of the 100-plus year history of the office has been the professionalism and dedication of the men and women who represent the people of Northeast Florida. Just as the faces of the office have changed, so too have the buildings. The former two-story Clay County Courthouse built in 1889 served the people in the courtroom until 1972, when a new

courthouse was built. It has been remodeled several times and the complex now houses the Clay County office. In the heart of Fernandina Beach, the historic Nassau County Courthouse, built in 1881, is still in use by the office's Misdemeanor Division. In 2002, renovation of the courthouse and construction began on a new Judicial Annex – now known as the Robert M. Foster Justice Center – that became home to the Nassau County office in 2004. The Duval County office has undergone the most recent transformation, as the largest office in the circuit moved into the Ed Austin Building (named after the former longtime state attorney and mayor) in 2015. Prior to that, the office was housed along the riverfront in the former City Hall Annex. The current office is located in a former federal post office and courthouse.

Follow us on social media or connect with us online



@SAO4FL



@SAO4Florida



www.sao4th.com



Clay County Office

825 N. Orange Avenue
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
904-269-6319

Duval County Office

311 West Monroe Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202
904-255-2500

Nassau County Office

76347 Veterans Way, Suite 2105
Yulee, FL 32097
904-548-4700