

A LETTER FROM YOUR STATE ATTORNEY:

Dear Friends,

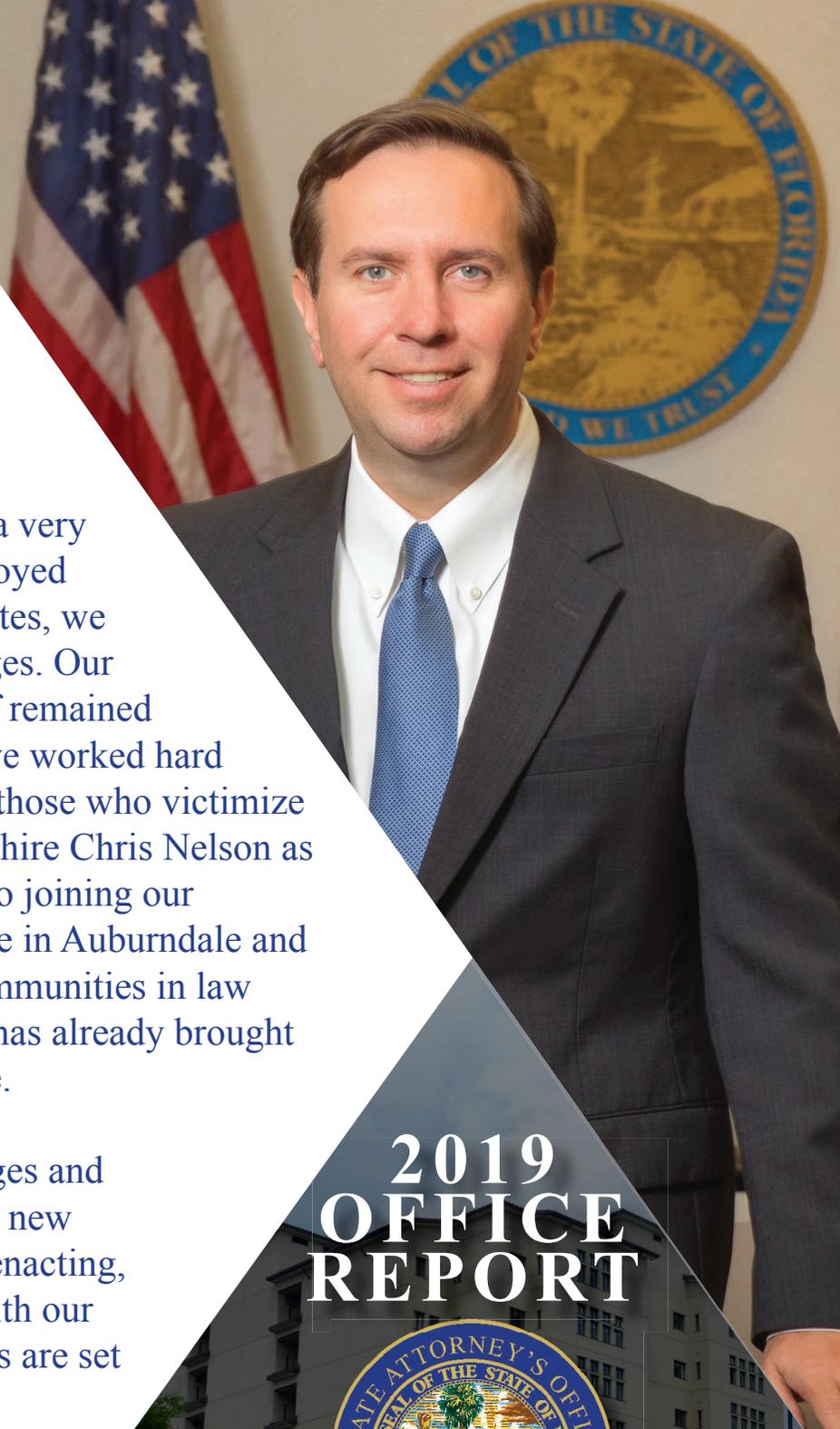
I am pleased to share with you the 2019 Office Report. Last year was a very eventful year. While our circuit enjoyed another year of record low crime rates, we still were faced with many challenges. Our prosecutors, investigators, and staff remained very busy throughout the year, as we worked hard to serve our citizens and prosecute those who victimize them. In August, I was fortunate to hire Chris Nelson as our new Executive Director. Prior to joining our office, Chris was the Chief of Police in Auburndale and has spent his career serving our communities in law enforcement. Since his arrival, he has already brought many positive changes to our office.

The new year brought new challenges and opportunities. We are excited about new programs and services that we are enacting, including new ways of engaging with our citizens. Many of our new programs are set forth in this Office Report.

Sincerely,



BRIAN HAAS
STATE ATTORNEY



**2019
OFFICE
REPORT**



BRIAN HAAS
STATE ATTORNEY
10TH CIRCUIT
*Polk, Hardee and
Highlands Counties*



THE TENTH CIRCUIT



The Office of the State Attorney, 10th Judicial Circuit, represents the people of the State of Florida in all criminal prosecutions in Polk, Highlands and Hardee Counties. This office also advises the grand juries for those three counties.

Additionally, this office's Child Support Enforcement Division establishes and reinforces Title IV-D laws.



90 Assistant State Attorneys



140 investigators & clerical staff



20 agencies send us cases



43,659 cases handled



322 cases tried before a jury



\$7.1M collected in Child Support

DEATH SENTENCES HANDLED DOWN



Two defendants in the Tenth Judicial Circuit have been sentenced to death under the new death penalty law, which was signed by the governor in March of 2017 and requires jurors to have a unanimous vote instead of a majority vote in order to recommend death.



Benjamin Smiley, 27, of Lakeland.

Johnathan Alcegaire, 30, of Miami.

Benjamin Smiley was sentenced to death by Judge Jalal Harb on Feb. 23, 2018, for the 2013 fatal shooting of 53-year-old Clifford Drake.

Johnathan Alcegaire had three death sentences handed down by Judge Harb on March 8, 2019. Alcegaire was one of three men who traveled to Lakeland for a drug-related home-invasion robbery and murdered 24-year-old David Washington, 31-year-old Stacy Branch, and 23-year-old Angelica Castro.

Prior to sentencing by the Judge, jurors must recommend that the defendant is sentenced to death. The aggravating factors, their sufficiency, the defendant's eligibility, and the death penalty itself must be established beyond a reasonable doubt. Juries found that they were, and both Smiley and Alcegaire were sentenced to death.

AUBURNDALE CHIEF JOINS SAO RANKS



Former Auburndale Police Chief Chris Nelson joined the SAO as the Executive Director on August 27. He is responsible for day-to-day operations and oversees the budget, human resources, IT, facilities, investigations, records retention, and Child Support Enforcement.

As Executive Director, Nelson's ultimate mission is to ensure all prosecutors, investigators, and State Attorney's Office staff have the best tools possible to do their jobs in a professional, efficient, and productive environment, all while serving the citizens of the Tenth Circuit.

He is respected state-wide and is influential in coordinating work for the Tenth Circuit in Tallahassee during the legislative session.

Nelson has served communities in our state for more than 25 years, both as a veteran law enforcement officer and a State Attorney's Office investigator. His

experience as a leader in law enforcement greatly benefits this office in his role of Executive Director.

Nelson graduated from Bartow High School and began his law enforcement career in 1992. After serving several years as an officer, he became the Assistant Chief of Police in Live Oak. He then worked for the Office of the State Attorney, Third Judicial Circuit, as an investigator. Nelson became the Auburndale Police Chief in 2012.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminology from St. Leo University and a Master of Science in Criminology from Florida State University. Nelson is also a graduate of the 209th Session of the FBI National Academy.

"Chris brings a wealth of experience to this position and will be instrumental in helping us to continue to pursue justice for victims," State Attorney Haas said.

LAST DEFENDANT SENTENCED IN BANKS MURDER

After sexually battering and brutally beating Robert Banks to death, Nathan Johnson took photos of his body to keep as trophies.

He then discarded the body in the woods, doused it with gasoline, and lit it on fire. Johnson and his accomplices were caught on film minutes later laughing while buying drinks at a nearby convenience store.

On September 6, the fifth and final defendant was sentenced for the violent murder of Robert Banks in January 2016.

Assistant State Attorney Mark Levine prosecuted all five defendants, successfully securing convictions and sentences for all.

Nathan Johnson was convicted of first-degree murder, sexual battery, abuse of a dead human body, and tampering with physical evidence. He was sentenced

to 75 years and was labeled a sexual predator.

Michael Gunn was convicted of first-degree murder, conspiracy to commit first-degree murder, abuse of a dead human body, and tampering with physical evidence. He was sentenced to life.

Anthony Johnson was convicted of first-degree murder, tampering with physical evidence, conspiracy to commit first-degree murder, and battery. He was sentenced to life.

Brian Johnson Jr. was convicted of second-degree murder, abuse of a dead human body, tampering with physical evidence, and battery. He was sentenced to life.

Brian Johnson Sr. pled to accessory after the fact to a capital felony and abuse of a dead human body. He was sentenced to eight years.

ASA SPOTLIGHT

ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEY JESSICA EMBREE



Instead of watching cartoons like most children her age, Jessica Embree watched “America’s Most Wanted.”

“I was one of those weird kids,” she said. “I loved watching crime shows.”

While her interest in crime was sparked with a television show, it was a comment from Embree’s mother that caused her to think about becoming a lawyer.

“You could argue with a brick wall if it would talk back,” her mother told her.

Embree, who grew up in Jacksonville, started working as a paralegal and secretary for a law firm while she was in college at University of North Florida.

When Embree graduated from UNF in 2013, she went to the University of Florida to get her law degree. But it wasn’t until she started taking classes that she

realized exactly what type of law she didn’t want to practice.

“I fell asleep reading everything that wasn’t criminal law,” Embree said.

Embree joined the SAO in August of 2016 and has been trying felony cases for the past two years.

While she’s learned a lot in the last three years as an ASA, Embree said she feels like she could do this job for the rest of her life and still be seeing and learning new things.

On the days when the responsibility of being a prosecutor can feel overwhelming, it’s Embree’s faith and family that keep her moving forward.

“It’s a whole lot of Jesus, a whole lot of coffee, and a whole lot of laughter,” she said. “My fiancé and family keep me grounded and remind me of the good that’s easy to lose sight of in this line of work. The humor and camaraderie I have with coworkers here brings levity and lightness to what can be really dark and serious.”

ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEY ROGER POWELL



Prosecution is in Roger Powell’s blood.

“Throughout my whole childhood, I would hear my dad tell stories about his trials and about the cases he was handling,” Powell said, “and it sank in.”

He said he’s always known that a job as an Assistant State Attorney would be a fit for him.

Powell’s father was a lifetime prosecutor and worked for this office from 1982-1984. His father retired from the United States Attorney’s Office in Miami.

“He passed the torch off, so to speak,” Powell said.

Powell, who grew up in Ft. Lauderdale, graduated from the University of Florida in 2015 and went to Nova University to earn his law degree.

In Powell’s first year of law school, he had an opportunity to participate in a mock trial. From the moment he stepped up to the podium, Powell said, he knew he was meant to be in a courtroom.

He joined the SAO in September of 2018 and was moved up from misdemeanor to felony three months later.

“I just knew I would thrive being in an environment where you try a lot of cases,” Powell said.

ASA SPOTLIGHT

COUNTY COURT DIRECTOR MIKAELA PERRY



In Mikaela Perry's first trial, the defendant was an animal.

A wolf, to be exact.

Perry's middle school gifted teacher assigned her the role of defense attorney in her class' mock trial of *The Big Bad Wolf v. The Three*

Little Pigs.

And she won.

"That was not the side I wanted," Perry said, laughing, "but I liked it so much, I decided that was what I wanted to do with my life."

Perry, who grew up in Proctorville, OH, graduated from Marshall University in 2008 and earned her law degree from the University of Tennessee in 2011.

Perry originally thought she wanted to prosecute medical malpractice cases, but after taking classes on criminal law, she realized that was what she was most interested in.

When Perry began looking for internships while she was in law school, her husband – who is originally from Lakeland – suggested this office because he had a friend who worked here.

Perry received the internship and worked at our office during the summer between her second and third year of law school.

During law school, Perry also had the opportunity to work at the District Attorney's Office in Knoxville, where she was part of the child abuse unit.

So when she interviewed for a full-time position with State Attorney Jerry Hill, she told him she'd become very passionate about prosecuting those who commit

crimes against children and hoped to hold that position one day.

Perry was hired by Mr. Hill in November of 2012 and was assigned to the Crimes Against Children division in 2014.

She became a Felony Division Chief in July of 2017 and was just appointed as the Director of County Court in March.

Perry said the most challenging part about being a prosecutor is knowing that every decision she makes can have a serious outcome.

"Whether it's the choice to move forward with a trial, plea someone to an offer, or seek a long sentence, every decision we make has lasting effects on the lives of other people and the community," Perry said. "It is an honor and great pleasure in being a prosecutor, but it is also a huge responsibility."

In order to avoid mentally carrying that weight home with her, Perry said, she tries to do all of her work in the office.

The goal, she said, is to only think about the bad things people do while at the courthouse and not at her house.

"By physically separating them, it helps to mentally separate them," Perry said. "That and a good round of cardio makes everything better."

In the end, it's the victims and their families that keep Perry going.

"When a victim hugs you and thanks you for the job you've done, for giving them an end to the process, and serving justice so they can move forward, it's a great feeling," Perry said.

"Because that's what we're here for," she said. "We're here for them."

FRAUD PREVENTION IN A SMALL BUSINESS

One of the main reasons fraud occurs is simply because there was an opportunity to do so. In order to help small business owners prevent fraud, State Attorney Brian Haas teaches seminars to educate business owners on some of the signs associated with an employee committing fraud in his or her workplace.

HOW DOES FRAUD HAPPEN?

- When employees have access – invoices, inventory reports, payroll, etc.
- With cash receivables – the theft occurs at the register
- When sales are omitted – employees fail to ring items up
- When merchandise is taken – from either storage or receiving areas

WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS OF FRAUD?

- A change in spending habits, like employees purchasing big-ticket items
- Employees purposely working unsupervised, a change in their behavior
- Missing items or an increase in damaged merchandise and misplaced product
- Suspicious cars parked near loading areas or dumpsters, family or friends showing up repeatedly

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF?

- Run background checks on all your employees
- Don't leave cash where employees can take it
- Avoid using signature stamps – sign documents by hand
- Minimize the number of employees with signature authority
- Cross-train your employees
- Check the monthly credit card statements
- Perform an audit
- Know that criminal charges can be filed if fraud is uncovered
- Package the complaint for law enforcement to verify
- Do periodic checks on employees in sensitive areas

If you believe you have become a victim of fraud, contact the State Attorney's Office.

If you would like to schedule a time for State Attorney Brian Haas to educate business owners in your area, please call 863-534-4801.



CHILD SUPPORT: MAKING DEADBEAT DADS PAY

This office is one of two State Attorney's Offices in Florida with a division of attorneys that establishes child support and enforces existing orders.

If a custodial parent is receiving government benefits, prosecutors go to court to ensure the non-custodial parent is paying his or her fair share and that the entire burden is not left on the state.

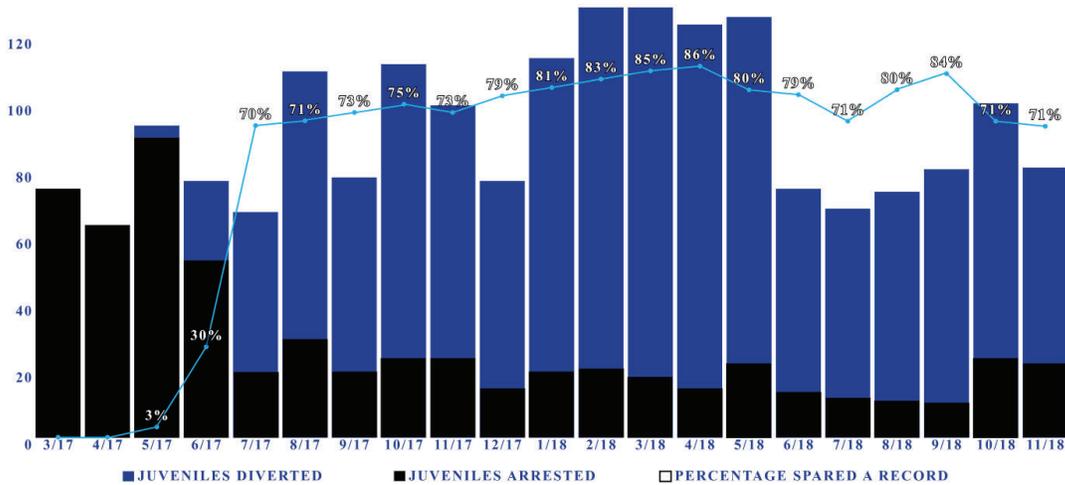
On behalf of the Department of Revenue, this office handles an average of 7,000 child support cases annually and helped collect \$7,113,498 from parents in 2018, including deadbeat dads and moms who tried to avoid supporting their children.

JUVENILE CRIME: AVOIDING ARREST RECORDS

In June of 2017, this office collaborated with multiple Polk agencies to draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in an effort to minimize the criminal history of juveniles who commit eligible, non-serious criminal acts. Before the MOU was implemented, juvenile defendants received a formal arrest record.

Since the program went live on June 19, 2017, more than 1,700 juveniles were entered on the “Prevention Web.” These juveniles will not receive a formal arrest record, as long as they successfully complete Teen Court.

Since June 2017, 1,760 Polk County children have avoided an arrest record.



ENGAGING OUR STUDENTS



PRE-ARREST DIVERSION IMPLEMENTED



Some law enforcement officers in the Tenth Circuit now have the ability to divert first-time, non-violent offenders prior to arrest.

In areas of the circuit where this program is active, officers can use their discretion and choose to send someone through the pre-arrest diversion program by filling out a form instead of arresting them on the spot.

This program is currently being used by the Lakeland Police Department and deputies in a few Polk County Sheriff's Office districts and will soon be active circuit-wide.

Below is a list of charges that are eligible for pre-arrest diversion. Officers can also list the statute number for any other non-violent misdemeanor they feel should qualify for diversion.

- _____ Possession of Cannabis (F.S. § 893.13, M1)
- _____ Possession of Drug Paraphernalia (F.S. § 893.147, M1)
- _____ Possession of Cannabis Resin (F.S. § 893.13, F3)
- _____ Petit Theft (F.S. § 812.014, M1 & M2)
- _____ Worthless Check (F.S. § 832.05, M1 & F3)
- _____ Failure to Redeliver (F.S. § 812.155(3), F3)
- _____ Dumping (F.S. § 403.413, M1 & F3)

YOUTH MOCK TRIAL SUMMER PROGRAM

In June, we hosted our second-annual mock trial program for high school students who are interested in pursuing a legal career.

Ten students joined us for a week-long program. We covered how the court systems work, and students were able to learn from prosecutors about what it takes to prepare a case for trial.

Each student was assigned a role in the courtroom, from prosecutors to the bailiff, witnesses to the judge. Students worked alongside prosecutors to prepare opening and closing statements and discuss best practices for examining and cross-examining witnesses. During the mock trial, students presented their

opening statements, questioned witnesses, and gave closing arguments in a courtroom with a jury made up of employees from this office, who found the defendant not guilty.



SENIORS VS. SCAMS



Mr. Haas is dedicated to helping keep communities in this circuit safe, and one way he does that is by educating residents on how to prevent crimes before they happen.

He has been visiting senior living communities across this circuit to talk about ways they can protect their personal information from criminals. He discusses recent phone, email, and computer scams that some residents are falling victim to. Since the program started in 2017, hundreds of senior citizens in the circuit have been educated on how not to fall victim.

If you would like Mr. Haas to speak to your community, please call 863-534-4801.



FORMER PROSECUTORS TAKE THE BENCH

We were proud to watch as three of our former prosecutors were sworn in as Judges in the past year.

Former County Court Director Stacie Kaylor (left) and Hardee County Director David Stamey (center) were sworn in as Judges of the County Court on Feb. 5, 2019. Former Homicide Division Chief Hope Pattey (right) was sworn in as a Judge of the County Court on Oct. 18, 2018. Congratulations, Judges!



STATE ATTORNEY BRIAN HAAS PRESENTS

The 10th Judicial

Circuit's Inaugural

CITIZENS



ACADEMY

On March 7, State Attorney Brian Haas launched the SAO's Inaugural Citizens Academy.

Understanding the criminal justice system is vital, as it plays an important role in all of our lives. This nine-week program is designed to give citizens in our circuit a behind-the-scenes look at the criminal justice system and the work that goes into the prosecution of a case.

This in-depth academy provides a unique look at the criminal justice system from the perspective of a prosecutor. Twenty-five participants were selected for the inaugural class by Mr. Haas after completing a competitive application process.

"This is an incredibly unique experience," Haas said,

"and I'm excited to share it with our community."

Throughout the program, participants hear from the top prosecutors in the Tenth Circuit about how cases are built – from the crime scene all the way to jury selection and a trial – and how this office works with law enforcement to pursue justice for our victims. Topics covered during the academy include the criminal justice system as a whole, the jury trial process, homicide investigations, crimes against children, vehicular crimes, cyber crimes and more.

After nine weeks of teaching and working alongside Assistant State Attorneys, participants will then try a mock case in a courtroom. We will then host a graduation ceremony for the participants to celebrate their successful completion of the academy.



LAW ENFORCEMENT RECOGNITION

State Attorney Brian Haas started a new tradition in 2017 that has continued. At this office's annual awards ceremony, some special law enforcement officers who went above and beyond the call of duty to serve the community were recognized.

"We are blessed in the Tenth Circuit to have many wonderful officers and deputies. Each day and night, they put on their uniforms to protect us, not knowing if they'll ever return home," Mr. Haas said. "They investigate cases and do not give up until every lead is pursued and every angle is worked."



PCSO DETECTIVE TONYA WRIGHT



Polk County Sheriff's Office Detective Tonya Wright was honored for her work on the Lenard Masten case.

Wright investigated the case and located several key pieces of evidence, but her interview with the defendant was critical to successful prosecution. ASA Michael Nutter said Wright carefully confronted Masten with all the evidence, causing him to break down and admit to what he did. "With the exception of the confession, it was 100 percent a circumstantial case," Nutter said.



LWPD DETECTIVE DAVID HERNANDEZ



Lake Wales Police Department Detective David Hernandez was honored for his work on the Willie Watson III case.

ASA Mikaela Perry said Hernandez's ability to quickly and thoroughly follow leads was essential to this case. He went to the crime scenes and took photos himself, which helped him quickly piece together circumstantial evidence that developed into leads. Perry said Hernandez's willingness to go from scene to scene himself and put the pieces together quickly were critical.



LPD DETECTIVE TIMOTHY MCDONALD



Lakeland Police Department Detective Timothy McDonald was honored for his work on the Chauncey Rollins case.

Witnesses kept pointing at leads that would never pan out, so McDonald hit the streets to gather info. He learned the name of a key witness and got her to talk, which led to her identifying Rollins as the fatal shooter. Without tracking that key witness down, ASA Nutter said, he would not have had a case. McDonald also testified twice for this case, as the jury hung after the first trial.

HIGH-PROFILE CASES

Man guilty of attempted lewd battery on a child, sentenced to 10 years in prison



Norris, 30, of Jacksonville

When Eric Norris found an ad on Craigslist about a sexual encounter with a minor, he promptly replied: "I am interested."

Norris had graphic discussions about what he would do to the 12-year-old girl and sent explicit photos of himself. Norris drove from Jacksonville to Davenport, where he thought he would be meeting the girl for sex. He was met by undercover PCSO detectives instead.



Assistant State Attorney Jake Orr

Lakeland man given three life sentences for violent attempted murder



Bennett, 25, of Lakeland

Kaheem Bennett violently beat Derek Maude before unlocking the doors of the car he was trapped in. While Maude was running away, Bennett shot him in the back, leaving him paralyzed.

Bennett received three life sentences for each charge: attempted first-degree murder, robbery with a firearm, and armed kidnapping. In the three years after his arrest, Lakeland's violent crimes and shootings decreased by 32 percent.



Assistant State Attorney Bonde Johnson

Lakeland man convicted in fatal drive-by shooting sentenced to life in prison



Robinson, 74, of Lakeland

Derrick Deon Robinson killed one woman and injured another when he fired multiple rounds into a crowd at a gas station.

Two rival groups got into a fight at a nightclub, and law enforcement forced them to leave. When the opposite group met at a nearby gas station, Robinson told someone he planned to drive by and shoot at them. The two women were among the crowd socializing with friends when they were struck.



Assistant State Attorney Lori Winstead

Auburndale man sentenced to 30 years in prison for fatal hit-and-run



Marx, 46, of Auburndale

Paul Marx consumed numerous alcoholic drinks and drifted off the roadway while driving home, striking and instantly killing a pedestrian.

Marx visited three different bars before getting into his truck that evening. He drove off the side of the road for 224 feet and struck the victim, throwing him 141 feet from the point of impact. Marx did not swerve or attempt to hit the brakes to render aid, and he was sentenced to 30 years in prison.



Assistant State Attorney Mattie Tondreault

HIGH-PROFILE CASES

Lake Wales man who shot at helicopter, stole three vehicles receives life sentence



Grace, 34, of Lake Wales

Wesley Grace led law enforcement on a three-day manhunt from Lake Wales to Haines City before he was finally apprehended.

Grace fired five rounds at a Sheriff's Office helicopter, stole three vehicles, assaulted three people, burglarized a home, and led law enforcement on a high speed chase, racking up more than 10 charges.

Grace received a mandatory life sentence.



Assistant State Attorney Michael Nutter

Winter Haven man sentenced to 10 years in prison for rape from 2003



Berouty, 48, of Winter Haven

Stephen Berouty raped his victim at knife point after she refused his advances.

A rape kit was completed on the victim in 2003, but leads on the suspect went cold, as the kit remained untested until 2015. DNA results confirmed Berouty as the suspect of the sexual battery, and he was taken into custody by law enforcement.

He was sentenced to prison on May 25, 2018.



Assistant State Attorney Jennifer Mott

Zolfo Springs man gets 45 years for lewd behavior with 11-year-old



Wingo, 44, of Zolfo Springs

Stephen Wingo made a child hold his cell phone for him while it played pornographic videos.

Wingo would then make the child watch him as he touched himself inappropriately. Jurors convicted him of lewd and lascivious exhibition and showing pornographic material to a minor. He was sentenced to 45 years in prison, which will run consecutive to a different yet similar case with a minor where he was sentenced to 26 years in prison.



Assistant State Attorney Courtney Lenhart

Babysitter sentenced to 40 years for killing 8-month-old in her care



Bradley, 23, of Lakeland

Adrianna Bradley waited 8 minutes to call 911 after the baby she was watching stopped breathing.

Bradley claimed the child accidentally fell and struck his head on the floor, and when she checked on him after his nap, he wasn't breathing and was cold to the touch. But autopsy reports revealed that the baby's injury wasn't an accident. The medical examiner found that the child died of brain swelling after being violently shaken.



Assistant State Attorney Ashley McCarthy

HIGH-PROFILE CASES

Woman receives two life sentences in fatal stabbing of 95-year-old man



Heflin, 39, of Ft. Lauderdale

Lace Heflin admitted to repeatedly stabbing a 95-year-old man and slitting his throat.

Heflin did housecleaning work for the man and told deputies she killed him with a kitchen knife so she could steal money and settle a debt with a drug dealer. Deputies tracked her down after she began using the victim's stolen credit cards.

Her criminal history includes multiple violent crimes.



Assistant State Attorney Steve Houchin

Polk City man sentenced to 10 years for fatal wrong-way crash on Interstate 4



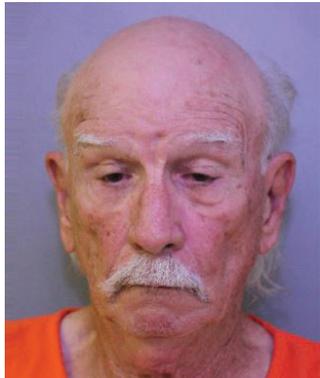
Travis Coats, 26, of Polk City

Travis Coats pled guilty to DUI manslaughter after he drove the wrong way on Interstate 4 and killed another driver in a head-on collision.

Florida Highway Patrol Troopers determined Coats drove the wrong way for more than 5 miles before the fatal crash, and his blood-alcohol level was more than twice the legal limit. At the sentencing hearing, Coats told the Judge he understood he made a mistake and now had to pay for what he'd done.



Lake Wales man found guilty of hit-and-run killing woman, injuring deputy



Lewis, 73, of Lake Wales

Charles Luther Lewis admitted to seeing a stopped patrol car with its emergency lights on but claimed he didn't know how to avoid it.

Lewis, who was returning home from a bar, swerved and slammed into PCSO Deputy Adam Pennell and the woman he'd stopped to help, shattering the deputy's hip and killing the woman. He was convicted of vehicular homicide and leaving the scene involving serious injury and was sentenced to 13 years.



Assistant State Attorney Mikaela Perry

Davenport man guilty of attempted lewd battery on a child



Hawkins, 54, of Davenport

When Bentley Hawkins found out that the person he planned to have sex with was only 14, it didn't deter him from attempting to meet with the child.

Upon arriving at the child's address, Hawkins was arrested by undercover detectives in a sting to identify those who wish to exploit children. Hawkins was compliant and told detectives he knew why he was being arrested. He was sentenced to 5 years in prison on January 11.



Assistant State Attorney Ralph Guerra

HIGH-PROFILE CASES

Lake Wales woman convicted of trafficking meth, receives 20 years



Hughes, 62, of Lake Wales

Karen Hughes purchased a kilogram of methamphetamine in a reverse sting and admitted she'd done it before.

Hughes negotiated the time frame and amount she would pay the officer back for the drugs. She also gave him \$2,400 of "owed debt" from previous deals she'd completed. Hughes has been previously convicted of armed trafficking in amphetamine, trafficking in meth, and two counts of possession of meth.



Assistant State Attorney Jennifer Swenson

Tennessee man faces mandatory life for sexually abusing Polk County teen



Salter, 56, of Tennessee

Jerry Salter Jr. started abusing his victim at the age of five. Salter groomed the boy to perform sexual acts by using food.

Salter told the boy not to tell his mother. But after years of silence, the victim came forward in May of 2017. In a controlled phone call with law enforcement, Salter said he liked having sex with the child because he was "like milk chocolate." Salter's mandatory life sentence will be imposed April 12.



Assistant State Attorney Lauren Randall

Man given two life sentences for sexually abusing 10-year-old girl



Diaz Fundora, 25, of Miami

Jonathan Diaz Fundora groomed a 10-year-old Lakeland girl he met online and drove over four hours to sexually batter her.

Days before Diaz Fundora was going to trial, he pled no contest to 13 charges, including sexual battery on a victim less than 12, kidnapping, and traveling to meet a minor, among other charges. Nearly four months after Diaz Fundora kidnapped the girl and molested her, she took her own life.



Assistant State Attorney Randi Daugustinis





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GET CONNECTED



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