

**2020**

**Annual Report**





# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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*David P. Fornshell*  
WARREN COUNTY PROSECUTOR

## *A Message from the Prosecuting Attorney*

Thank you for your interest in the Warren County Prosecutor's Office and for taking the time to read our Annual Report. I am honored to be completing my tenth year as Prosecuting Attorney and I am so appreciative of the voters' decision this past November to elect me to another term of service.

The Warren County Prosecutor's Office prosecuted several noteworthy cases throughout 2020. In March, our Office obtained convictions on 34 counts of gross sexual imposition on John Austin Hopkins, a former first grade gym teacher at Clearcreek Elementary School. The 34 counts related to 27 different first grade girls that Hopkins inappropriately touched during class. The sheer volume of Hopkins' victims and potential victims made the Hopkins case one of the most complex investigations and prosecutions our Office has ever handled.

Also in March, our Office obtained a conviction against Jack Welninski for the aggravated murder of his cellmate at Lebanon Correctional Institution. Welninski and his cellmate had no prior history. Rather, Welninski's stated motive for murdering his cellmate was to obtain a transfer to a different prison. Welninski was serving time at LCI for previously attempting to kill a police officer in Wood County, Ohio. Although the jury found that Welninski should receive the death penalty, the judge disagreed, sentencing Welninski to life without the possibility of parole.

In May, our Office obtained a death penalty conviction against Joel Drain for the aggravated murder of a fellow inmate at Warren Correctional Institution. Drain had previously been convicted of aggravated murder in Hancock County, Ohio in 2016.

In November, our Office obtained our first ever human trafficking conviction. Human trafficking cases are some of the most difficult to prosecute because perpetrators prey on very vulnerable victims — those with significant substance abuse issues, housing issues, employment issues, even criminal histories. To the world, sometimes these women don't look like victims at all. But they absolutely are. The perpetrators force these victims to engage in sexual activity against their will, and if they refuse, the perpetrators will beat, torture, and threaten them. And these victims rarely report their situation to law enforcement because the perpetrators have convinced them, "Who will believe you?" Fortunately, the jury did believe the testimony of David Barron's victim, convicted Barron of several counts, and the court sentenced Barron to 14-15 years in prison.

Also in November, our Office obtained a mandatory sentence of life without the possibility of parole against Springboro realtor Timothy Hall for multiple counts of rape for sexually assaulting his step-daughter, who was under the age of 13 at the time of one of the offenses. The court also designated Hall as a sexual predator. Of particular note in the Hall case was the very moving victim impact statement the victim gave to the court during sentencing. She articulated better than I would ever be able as to how sexual abuse impacts victims. It is so moving and poignant, I am doing something unprecedented and including it in this Annual Report (page 10).

In closing, I would like to dedicate this Annual Report to the women and men in the Warren County law enforcement community. 2020 has been a challenging year for law enforcement nationwide, and some have judged our women and men in blue through the lens of some high-profile cases around the country. While there are certainly bad actors in the law enforcement ranks, just as there are in every profession, I am honored to serve alongside law enforcement officers here in Warren County that are committed to administering equal justice under the law, and working every day to improve confidence in our criminal justice system. Warren County is very fortunate to have these brave women and men protecting our community, and they deserve our sincere gratitude for their efforts and sacrifice.

It has been a privilege to serve you this past year. If you have any comments or suggestions where you believe we can improve our service in any way, please contact me at 513-695- 1325 or [david.fornshell@warrencountyprosecutor.com](mailto:david.fornshell@warrencountyprosecutor.com).



DAVID P. FORNSHELL



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Criminal Division

In 2020 the Criminal Division of the Warren County Prosecutor's Office continued its aggressive prosecution of violators of the laws of the State of Ohio, handling 2,672 misdemeanor cases, and over 1,200 felony cases, including homicides, other violent felonies, thefts, sexual assaults, drug trafficking, domestic violence, driving under the influence, traffic offenses, and watercraft and fish and wildlife violations. The prosecutors in the Criminal Division represent the State of Ohio in the Warren County Common Pleas Court and Warren County Court. Some of the significant criminal cases prosecuted in 2020 are highlighted in this section.

### Homicides



**Joel Drain**, 39, was sentenced to death after being convicted of aggravated murder with capital specifications, as well as additional felony offenses. On April 13, 2019, Drain, an inmate at the Warren Correctional Institution, lured the victim to his cell under the pretext of exchanging drugs. Upon arrival at the cell, Drain beat the victim with a fan motor, stuck a pencil into his eye socket, stomped his foot on the victim's neck, and pulled the fan cord around the victim's neck. The victim ultimately died from his injuries while at the hospital. Drain had previously been convicted of aggravated murder in Hancock County in 2016.



**Jack Welninski**, 34, was sentenced to life in prison without parole after a jury convicted him of aggravated murder for the 2018 killing of Kevin Nill, who was Welninski's cellmate at Lebanon Correctional Institution (LCI). He was also convicted of a capital specification for committing the murder while under detention at a state correctional institution; a specification for committing the murder after having previously being convicted of the purposeful attempt to kill another; and a specification for being a repeat violent offender. Welninski and Nill were placed in a cell together in a restricted housing block at LCI for a little over an hour before Welninski strangled Nill to death, in part because Welninski believed it would get him transferred to another prison. Welninski confessed to law enforcement that the entire plan was "premeditated."



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Criminal Division



**Cody Colwell**, 28, of Franklin, Ohio, was convicted of voluntary manslaughter and endangering children and sentenced to an indefinite term of nineteen to twenty-four-and-a-half years in prison. On April 11, 2019, Colwell caused the death of his two-month-old son. The Hamilton County Coroner determined that the victim's cause of death was blunt force injuries to the head with subdural, subarachnoid, and retinal hemorrhages. Colwell is required to register with the Violent Offender Database.



**Ladarius Hawkins**, 30, of Middletown, Ohio, was sentenced to an indefinite term of fifteen to twenty years in prison after being convicted at trial of aggravated vehicular homicide, aggravated vehicular assault, and operating a vehicle while under the influence. On March 30, 2019, Hawkins was operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol and marijuana. As Hawkins was traveling northbound on Dixie Drive, he ran a red light and collided with a vehicle being driven by the victim, Roger Lohman. Mr. Lohman was pronounced deceased at the scene. His wife, Norma Lohman, who was in the front passenger seat survived, but sustained serious injuries as a result of the crash. In addition to his prison sentence, Hawkins' driver's license was suspended for the rest of his life.



**Dakota Cox**, 19, of Dayton, Ohio, was sentenced to five years in prison after he pled guilty to involuntary manslaughter with a firearm specification for his involvement in a conspiracy with four juvenile offenders to rob another individual, and during which one co-conspirator was killed. See page 15 for a more detailed description of this case, which was jointly handled by the Juvenile Division.



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Criminal Division



**Brandon Dunham**, 33, of West Chester, Ohio, was sentenced to four years in prison after being found guilty by a jury of involuntary manslaughter and corrupting another with drugs. On February 24, 2019, the victim, Elijah McDonald, overdosed on drugs provided to him by Dunham. The coroner listed the cause of death as intoxication by fentanyl and acetylfentanyl.



**Arnold Satterwhite Jr.**, 25, of Dayton, Ohio, was convicted of involuntary manslaughter and tampering with evidence and sentenced to five years in prison. On December 14, 2018, Satterwhite sold drugs containing cocaine, heroin, and fentanyl to the victim, Adam Marlow. Marlow overdosed on the drugs Satterwhite sold to him in the early morning hours of December 15, 2018. The coroner listed Marlow's cause of death as fentanyl and cocaine intoxication, with cardiomegaly and history of drug abuse contributing.



Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys Steven Knippen and Carrie Heisele preparing for trial in State v. Welninski.



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Criminal Division

### Other Violent Crimes



**Dalvir Singh**, 25, of Middletown, Ohio, was sentenced to an indefinite term of ten to eleven-and-a-half years in prison after being convicted at trial of one count of robbery and two counts of kidnapping. On April 25, 2019, the sixty-nine-year-old victim and her two grandchildren (ages 10 and 8) were at the Atrium Medical Center. At that time, Singh forcibly stole the victim's car and attempted to flee with the two children still in the backseat. The victim attempted to stop Singh, but Singh pulled the door closed and started speeding away. The victim was drug to the ground and received injuries to her elbow, hand, and knee. As Singh was driving away, the younger child opened the door and pulled the older child out of the vehicle with him. Neither child was injured.



**Christopher Edwards**, 39, **Bryan Parker**, 47, and **Lindsey Parker**, 23, were all convicted of felonious assault and sentenced to prison for their role in causing significant injuries to the victim, Patrick Coleman. Between October 16, 2019 through October 19, 2019, the defendants physically assaulted the victim with numerous items and burned him on different parts of his body. Edwards was sentenced to an indefinite term of four to six years in prison and both Parkers were sentenced to an indefinite term of six to nine years in prison.



**Jesse Jividen**, 19, of Elmwood Place, Ohio was sentenced to an indefinite term of ten to thirteen-and-a-half years in prison after being convicted at trial of one count of aggravated robbery with a firearm. On January 14, 2020, Jividen requested an Uber to pick him up in Mason. When the driver arrived at Jividen's requested destination in Clermont County, Jividen threatened him with a firearm and stole \$143 in cash and personal property from him. Detectives located Jividen through cell phone, credit card, and customer records from Uber.



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Criminal Division



**Mason Roberson**, 20, of Cincinnati, Ohio was sentenced to an indefinite term of nine to twelve years in prison after he was convicted at trial of one count of aggravated robbery with a firearm. On May 30, 2020, Roberson and two accomplices entered the Days Inn in Middletown and brandished an AR-15 rifle and a handgun. Roberson jumped the counter and threatened the clerk into opening the cash register. Roberson and his accomplices then fled with \$160 in cash. Roberson was identified in July when he was investigated for other crimes in Cincinnati.



**Mark Lunsford**, 59, of Hamilton, Ohio, was sentenced to ten years in prison, after pleading guilty to three counts of robbery, felonies of the second degree. From 2016 to 2019, Lunsford robbed three different Peoples Bank locations in Franklin, Springboro, and Carlisle. In each bank, Lunsford handed a note to the bank teller that said this is a robbery, and demanded money so that no one would be hurt. Bank surveillance cameras captured all of the robberies, but Lunsford was unable to be identified at the time of the incidents. After an ongoing investigation, police ultimately located the vehicle Lunsford drove during the robberies. Inside the vehicle were the exact clothes Lunsford wore during the robberies, as well as another note similar to those handed to the tellers. Lunsford was located in Indiana and extradited back to Ohio to face these charges. In addition to his prison sentence, Lunsford was ordered to pay back \$13,942 in restitution to Peoples Bank.

## Sexual Offenses

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**John Hopkins**, 26, of Springboro, Ohio was sentenced to eight years in prison after being convicted of 34 counts of gross sexual imposition. Hopkins was a first grade teacher at Clearcreek Elementary School. He was found guilty of having sexual contact with 27 female students during class between December 2018 and March 2019. Hopkins was designated a Tier II sexual offender and will have to register his address every 180 days for the next 25 years.



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Criminal Division



**David Barron**, 39, of Cincinnati, Ohio was convicted by a jury of three counts of human trafficking, two counts of felonious assault, three counts of promoting prostitution, and one count of unlawful restraint. He was sentenced to an indefinite term of 14 to 15 years in prison, and he is labeled a Tier II sex offender. From March through May of 2020, Barron compelled a female victim to prostitute herself from two hotels in Mason, Ohio and one in Blue Ash, Ohio. Barron posted photographs of women online and offered prostitution services. When someone would respond to an online advertisement, Barron used the hotel rooms for the encounters. Afterward, Barron required the victim to pay all of the money she received to Barron. Barron required the victim to stay in a room against her will and punished her by using physical force, beating her with phone cords, and burning her with a methamphetamine pipe.



**Justin Fannin**, 42, of Carlisle, Ohio was sentenced to life in prison after a jury convicted him of three counts of rape and one count of gross sexual imposition. During the time period of February 1, 2017 through January 31, 2019, Fannin engaged in sexual conduct and had sexual contact with a female child under the age of eight on three separate occasions at Fannin's residence, which was in Clearcreek Township at the time of the offenses. Fannin is not eligible for parole for 33 years.



**James Deck**, 46, of Franklin, Ohio was convicted of rape and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for sexually assaulting a child who was less than ten years old at the time. Deck was also designated a Tier III sexual offender.



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Criminal Division



**Alexander Wood**, 20, **Quentin Smith**, 19, and **Dominic Cboins**, 19, were convicted and sentenced to prison for their participation in the sexual assault of an intoxicated minor at a party at the Mason Inn, and then sharing videos of the victim via social media. Wood was convicted of sexual battery and pandering sexually oriented matter involving a minor or impaired person and sentenced to three years in prison. He is a Tier III sexual offender. Smith was convicted of pandering sexually oriented matter involving a minor or impaired person and sentenced to an indefinite term of two to three years in prison. He is a Tier II sexual offender. Cboins was convicted of sexual battery and sentenced to three years in prison. He is a Tier III sexual offender.



**Timothy Hall**, 57, of Waynesville, Ohio was convicted of three counts of rape and sentenced to life in prison for sexually assaulting his step-daughter over a period of time during the mid-to-late 1990's. Hall's step-daughter was under the age of 13 at the time of one of the offenses. Hall, a former prominent realtor, was also designated a sexual predator.

At Hall's sentencing hearing, his victim made the following statement:

“ I'm standing up here today, not because I am a vindictive person. When I started this journey I always had one ultimate goal in mind, and it wasn't justice for myself, but for protection of others. I will not and should not be made to feel guilty for that, or the outcome of today. Tim—the punishment you receive is for choices you made.

[continued on next page]



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Criminal Division

[Continued from page 10]

**I** am a sexual abuse SURVIVOR.

A few years ago to say those words brought so much shame and embarrassment. I thought I could run away from my childhood trauma. I thought I could lock my secret in a closet, and never think about it again.

Growing up, I was a good girl, I wanted to please, and I was always willing to help. But inside, I was a broken and scared child, seeking approval. I've spent my lifetime trying to be 'the good daughter.' For years, I struggled with finding myself and feeling worthy of others' love. Having once been voiceless, I now choose to use my voice on behalf of those who cannot. I will dedicate my life to do everything I can to help end child sexual abuse.

**"As I see it, I had two impossible choices."**

Child sexual abuse is a silent epidemic that thrives in secrecy. One in five children is sexually abused before age 18. Children know their abusers in

90% of sexual abuse cases.

To everyone listening—the only way to prevent and reduce the risk of sexual abuse is by having open communication with your kids about their bodies, boundaries, and consent.

Let them know they have trusted people to turn to. In some ways, the greatest gift you can give to a survivor of child sexual abuse is to believe them. There are many reasons a sexually abused child may fear coming forward. They may be afraid of the reaction they'll receive; they may fear that they won't be believed, fear that they'll be blamed, fear that the person who abused them will get in trouble, fear that someone they love will be hurt if they talk about their abuse, fear that they will be rejected. If they are abused by someone in their family, they are especially likely to stay silent. In this case they may be afraid

of "ruining" the family, they may want to protect their abuser, or they may fear that they will be kicked out of the family.

The thought of losing my adopted family was one of the main reasons I stayed silent for so long. This family holds all my childhood memories. As it turns out, 13-year-old-me was right. I stand here today with no members of that family speaking to me. If they don't believe me now, with evidence, they certainly wouldn't have believed me then.

As I see it, I had two impossible choices.

Choice 1—Keep silent, keep pretending it never happened. Keep it bottled up until he hurts another child. What if this is your child or grandchild? Would you hate me for not speaking up sooner and preventing it? I would have hated me.

Or,

Choice 2—Make the decision to tell. Finally reveal the deepest darkest secret. Letting the truth come out.

Either way, I lose you.

So what I am struggling with is the decision to hurt me wasn't made by me. He made those choices. The decision to sneak into my room at night was HIS decision. But I am the one you won't look in the eyes. I have become unlovable to you because of the choices HE made.

You've decided I am not a part of this family anymore for the choice HE made. Do you think if this happens to someone else you love that you would be a safe person for them to tell? They are watching you. They are studying how you are reacting and let me tell you, they are going to keep that abuse a secret. You are creating the very environment why victims do not speak up. They will be afraid of being treated the way you are treating me.

Tell me, what choice did I really have? What about HIS choices? Why is ALL the blame on me?



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Criminal Division

[Continued from page 11]

“**Hope** exists for me through the eyes of my own two children. When you become a parent, you are offered the gift to experience childhood once more, this time from their perspective. It is such a wonderful and precious gift. I’d relive the darkest parts of my past all over again if it means they’ll never have to know that same pain.

It’s been almost two years since I finally broke the silence about my abuse. I’m so proud of myself for speaking my truth and acknowledging my past. I’m so blessed to feel the lightness and freedom of not having to hide anymore. I carry myself differently now; I’m more confident and outspoken. I look back on all those years of silence with love and compassion for myself and pride for what I’ve come through. The process of healing is not easy, some days harder than others, but I am getting there.

To anyone out there who has experienced child sexual abuse, you might think you are alone in this, but you are not. We are so often a silent majority, but are quickly becoming an army of collective voices. I am no longer a prisoner of my past. Instead, I am a prisoner of hope. I am more than my circumstances. I am more than what happened to me. I am more than a victim. I am a survivor. I am a warrior, and so are you.

Only when we create a no-tolerance policy for child abuse ... Only when we believe and embrace the victim, will we begin to lighten the shroud of blame, shame, and fear that surrounds child sexual abuse. It is our inherent duty to protect children, not the perpetrators. The only sin greater than abusing a child would be protecting those who abuse a child. No one deserves to live in the darkness abuse creates.

To my sister, I want to say that I am so proud of your strength and courage.

I want to thank my husband for his unending love and support. Without you as my rock, I could not have made it through this.

“As it turns out, 13-year-old-me was right ...

If they don’t believe me now, with evidence, they certainly wouldn’t have believed me then.”

Thank you to Detective Dunkel. He was the first stranger I told my story to. That was one of the most difficult conversations I ever had. His response and reaction fueled my courage to accomplish my goal to protect others. He is a true hero.

To Carrie and Travis, thank you for fighting so fiercely for justice, and for reminding me there was purpose in every setback and every forward motion, and to Melissa for being a wonderful advocate to my sister and I, and answer my many, many, many questions.

Thank you to the 13 jurors who put their lives on hold for five days to hear my story.

And to all my family and friends who believed me, and believed IN me from day one, with a grateful heart, **THANK YOU.**”

- Victim Impact Statement read at the sentencing of Tim Hall, November 24, 2020



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Criminal Division

### Drug Offenses

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**Ruth Stidham**, 40, of Maineville, Ohio was sentenced to an indefinite term of six to nine years in prison after being convicted of engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity and aggravated trafficking in drugs for her role in running an organization that trafficked methamphetamine throughout Warren County.



**Reco Ricks**, 34, of Loveland, Ohio was convicted of money laundering and sentenced to two years in prison after the Warren County Drug Task Force seized \$44,149.00 from his apartment that was connected to drug trafficking.

### Financial Crime

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**Alison McGaughey**, 40, of Maineville, Ohio was convicted of telecommunications fraud and identity fraud and was sentenced to four years in prison for embezzling more than \$286,000 from her employer.



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Parole Watch

**James Smith**  
Inmate A192-496



In April 1986, Warren County Sheriff Deputies responded to the Kings Island Campground where they discovered the dead body of Robert Wright in a trailer owned by James Smith. Smith claimed that Wright had “mainlined” Cocaine, and that when Smith awoke around noon the next day, he discovered Wright was dead. Smith searched Wright’s pockets and the trailer to determine whether Wright had hidden any drugs, and then cleaned up the trailer before calling the police.

Although Smith maintained that Wright had died of an overdose of Cocaine, blood analysis showed only a possible trace amount of cocaine, no alcohol, a small amount of Codeine and Diazepam, and .07 milligrams percentage of Morphine, a lethal concentration. The Coroner determined the cause of death to be acute intoxication due to a morphine derivative.

Earlier in 1986, police officers in Reading, Ohio had responded to a trailer park where James Smith had been living in Hamilton County. At that time, they had discovered the dead body of Steven Tittle. Smith told Reading police officers a similar story as to how he had discovered Tittle dead after ingesting marijuana and valium. He told Reading officers that he tried to revive the victim and cleaned up the trailer before the officers arrived.

No criminal charges were filed at that time. However, after the autopsy in the Warren County case, the Hamilton County Coroner re-tested a sample of Tittle’s blood and determined that Tittle’s death was also due to morphine ingestion.

James Smith was indicted for aggravated murder and tampering with evidence by the Hamilton County Grand Jury and found guilty on both charges.

In 1987, Smith was tried and found guilty in Warren County on charges of aggravated murder, tampering with evidence, and obstruction of official business. At trial, the State proved that James Smith, with prior calculation and design, caused the death of Robert Wright by administering a lethal amount of heroin to Wright, causing his death. Smith was sentenced on the aggravated murder charge to life in prison, with parole eligibility after 20 years. The Warren County sentence was to be served consecutively to his conviction in Hamilton County.

Smith’s parole request was ultimately denied. His next parole hearing is scheduled for August 2025.



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Parole Watch

### **Rodney Brown** Inmate A326-830

In February 1996, Brown was convicted of murder with a firearm specification and sentenced to 18 years to life in prison for killing his girlfriend.

On November 29, 1995, Brown and the victim, Beth Davenport, were living together at a residence in Lebanon, Ohio. That evening, they got into a verbal altercation after Davenport expressed concerns about Brown being physically abusive. During the altercation, Brown retrieved a .20-gauge shotgun, pointed the weapon at Davenport's face, and asked her, "Is this shell yours?" Brown then discharged the firearm at almost point-blank range, killing Davenport.

Brown's parole request was denied, and he is not eligible for another hearing until August 2024.



## Appellate Division

**T**he Appellate Division is responsible for handling all criminal appeals, including briefing and argument at the Supreme Court of Ohio and at the Twelfth District Court of Appeals, which hears appeals from the trial courts in Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Fayette, Madison, Preble, and Warren County. The Appellate Division also assists with researching legal issues and briefing at the trial court level. In 2020, the Warren County Prosecutor's Office handled 47 of the 93 total cases at the Twelfth District Court of Appeals and three new appeals to the Supreme Court of Ohio. Notable appeals included the following:

**Terry Froman** was convicted of aggravated murder and kidnapping and was sentenced to death for his fatal shooting of his ex-girlfriend and her 17-year-old son. He appealed his convictions and death sentence to the Supreme Court of Ohio. The case was heard at oral argument on June 12, 2019. On September 24, 2020, the Supreme Court of Ohio affirmed Froman's convictions and death sentence.

**Jason Milby** was convicted of felonious assault and endangering children and sentenced to eight years in prison in 2012 after he caused a traumatic brain injury to his girlfriend's two-year-old son. The child's injuries were so catastrophic that if left him in a permanent vegetative state. In 2016, the child died from medical complications from the injuries Milby inflicted, and the State charged him with murder. A jury convicted Milby of murder in 2019. The Twelfth District Court of Appeals affirmed the murder conviction on December 7, 2020.



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Appellate Division

In 2007, police responded to the home of **Lindsey Williams** on a domestic violence call. Williams barricaded himself inside his home and fired over 100 rounds at police officers and their cruisers. Williams then stole a police cruiser and led police on a pursuit on I-71, I-275, and I-75 before he was apprehended and taken into custody. Williams pled guilty to 12 counts of felonious assault on a police officer, aggravated robbery, inducing panic, improperly discharging a firearm at or into a habitation, failure to comply with an order or signal of a police officer, and aggravated menacing. He was sentenced to 22 years in prison. Williams filed a petition for post conviction relief, claiming a violation of *Brady v. Maryland*, which was dismissed by the trial court on March 23, 2020. The Twelfth District Court of Appeals affirmed the dismissal of the petition on November 23, 2020.

Springboro school teacher **Amy Panzeca** allowed her minor son to sell drugs out of their basement to other minors. She was convicted of permitting drug abuse and endangering children. On February 4, 2020, the Twelfth District Court of Appeals affirmed her conviction.

**Ronald Gene Long, II's** conviction for gross sexual imposition involving a child victim and his sentence of 72 months in prison was affirmed by the Twelfth District Court of

Appeals on April 27, 2020. His appeal to the Ohio Supreme Court was not accepted. His most recent attempt to vacate his conviction and sentence through a petition for post-conviction relief was also unsuccessful.

**Eric Ruggles's** convictions for rape, gross sexual imposition, and sexual battery, involving two child victims, and his sentence of 15 years to life in prison was affirmed on May 11, 2020.

**Jerry Hurst's** convictions for gross sexual imposition involving a child victim and his sentence of 60 months in prison was affirmed on May 11, 2020.

**Andrew Jones's** convictions for falsification and illegal voting were affirmed by the Twelfth District Court of Appeals on May 11, 2020.

**Ronald Rowland's** convictions for rape of a child under the age of 13, rape by force or threat of force, and gross sexual imposition, and his sentence of 56 years to life in prison were affirmed by the Twelfth District Court of Appeals on May 19, 2020.

**Michael Schneider** was classified as a sexual predator based on his sexual assault of a disabled and elderly patient in a retirement home where he was working as a nurse's aide in 2000. On September 28, 2020, the Twelfth District affirmed the sexual predator designation.



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Juvenile Division

The Juvenile Division works to ensure that minors who violate the law are punished and rehabilitated. The cases handled within the Juvenile Division range from truancy and traffic to school threats to rape and other violent felonies. The goal in these cases is to protect Warren County from juvenile delinquency, while at the same time preventing the juvenile offenders from becoming the next generation of defendants in the adult criminal system.

Additionally, the Juvenile Division is responsible for handling child protection cases on behalf of Warren County Children Services. These cases involve situations where children must be removed from their parents because of abuse, neglect, or dependency, while WCCS works with the parents to reunify the child and parent in a safer environment from which the child was removed.

One notable case handled by the Juvenile Division in 2020 involved a conspiracy between five juveniles and one adult, **Dakota Cox**. On December 11, 2019, Cox and the five juveniles met and planned to rob another individual. Leading up to the robbery, they discussed types of weapons to use, necessary tools, and how they would lure the victim into their planned attack. They planned to knock the victim unconscious, strip him of his clothing, and steal his personal belongings, money, and drugs.

On December 13, 2019, all of the co-conspirators proceeded to the location of the planned attack at 1869 Oregonia Road. They took up their respective positions and waited for the victim to arrive. They trailed him through a wooded area of the property, approached him from behind, and attempted to strike him in the head with an aluminum baseball bat. At that time, the victim fired his gun, striking and killing one of the co-conspirators.

Two of the juvenile co-defendants, **Logan Dean** and **Kayla Carmack**, were bound over to the Warren County Common Pleas Court to be tried as adults. Dean and Carmack, along with adult defendant Cox, all pled guilty to involuntary manslaughter charges with firearm specifications. Dean was sentenced to eleven years in prison. Carmack was sentenced to ten years, and Cox was sentenced to five years in prison.

The two other juvenile co-defendants admitted to involuntary manslaughter charges with firearm specifications in Warren County Juvenile Court. They were committed to the Department of Youth Services until their 21st birthdays.





# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Civil Division

**T**he Civil Division serves as the county's in-house law firm, providing legal services to county officials, the courts, and to the county's many departments, agencies, boards, and commissions. The Civil Division also provides legal services to eight townships and five public libraries. The Civil Division provides legal services related to litigation, employment issues, zoning and land use planning matters, contract negotiations, and public records law.

The Civil Division also represents the Warren County Treasurer in delinquent tax collection. In 2020, the delinquent tax division collected \$8.5 million in delinquent real estate and manufactured home tax for its reporting year. This represents an approximately \$600,000 or eight percent increase over the previous year's collection. As of December 1, 2020, the percentage of delinquent taxes and assessments outstanding owed to Warren County compared to the total amount of taxes and assessments to be collected is 0.6 percent, which is among the lowest rates in the State of Ohio.

## Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA)

**T**he Child Support Division of the Prosecutor's Office handled more than 12,700 cases and served more than 16,750 children in 2020, providing the full range of Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) services, including collection and enforcement of support orders, establishment of paternity and child support orders, location of parents, and modification and termination of orders.

The CSEA collected more than \$44.5 million dollars, including more than \$4.3 million to recoup public assistance money, and nearly \$11.5 million collected for 2,800 children of lower-income working families at risk of going on cash assistance. The division also collected \$289,312 to reimburse IV-E foster care costs.



The Warren County CSEA was again recognized by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services for Best Performance in Support Order Establishment in a large caseload. The Agency continues to be one of the most effective CSEAs in the State of Ohio, collecting over \$16.50 per dollar spent, nearly double the State average for cost effectiveness.



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Community Involvement

In 2020, members of the Warren County Prosecutor's Office continued to participate in community outreach activities, including the Blue Ribbon Nite Gala to benefit the Child Advocacy Center of Warren County, the Law Enforcement Torch Run to benefit the Special Olympics, and the Sergeant Brian Dulle Annual 5k walk.



In February 2020, members of the Warren County Prosecutor's Office attended the Blue Ribbon Nite Gala to benefit the Child Advocacy Center of Warren County, which serves child victims of abuse and neglect (above). In October 2020, members of the Warren County Prosecutor's Office participated in the Sergeant Brian Dulle Annual 5k walk (below).





# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Outstanding Team Member

Warren County Prosecutor's Office Assistant Prosecutor Kirsten A. Brandt recently received the "Outstanding Team Member Award" from Warren County Prosecutor David P. Fornshell. The award is based on nominations from members of the Office, and is given to the employee who exhibits outstanding commitment to their colleagues while carrying out the ideals and principles of the Warren County Prosecutor's Office. Kirsten serves as the Office's appellate attorney, handling the Office's appeals in both state and federal courts, as well as assisting Office members with trial issues and other legal research matters.

Kirsten's co-workers included the following comments about her in their nominations:



**“Kirsten carries the load of the whole office on her shoulders. Not only is she an excellent attorney, but her job is to have the backs of the attorneys in the Office. She is the one that attorneys look to when they have legal questions, and she is the one doing last minute research when an issue arises during trial. She seems to always have a positive attitude in the Office and takes the time to have friendly personal conversations to get to know members of the Office. She has had quite a few victories this year and works extremely hard to ensure that outcome, but does not always get the same recognition as the other attorneys do because her victories do not happen in this courthouse. She is extremely pleasant and kind to everyone. She is always more than willing to stop what she is working on and listen to what the rest of us deem to be “emergencies” and advise accordingly. She prioritizes and puts in a LOT of extra hours in the evenings, on the weekends, and in her car at her kid’s soccer practices to make sure that all of her deadlines are met and that our Office is well represented. Although Kirsten is quieter than most and it is easy to overlook her contribution to the Office because she is not standing in the courtroom in front of a jury, both her commitment and contribution to our Office through her work and through her representation in extra activities and volunteer projects is without question.”**

Thank you for allowing us  
to serve you.



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