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My Dallas County Community,

As we embark on 2022, I cannot help but reflect on this Office's accomplishments during the last two years. While we have certainly navigated new territory during an unprecedented global pandemic, your Dallas County District Attorney's Office has continued to diligently and ethically seek and obtain justice on your behalf.

In my ongoing effort to maintain transparency, I have released my biennial report on the *State of Justice* in Dallas County. In it, not only will you find a summary of this Office's accomplishments, but you will also understand the challenges faced and how we have been able to adjust our operations and policies in order to best serve you, *the people*.

After this in-depth look, it is my hope that you will be just as proud as I am of our role in both maintaining and improving the public safety of this community.

As your District Attorney, I promised and remain committed to a data-driven approach to seeking justice for the people of Dallas County while ensuring the safety of *our* community through collaboration, innovation, and integrity. Thank you for entrusting your confidence in me.

Wishing you a safe and prosperous new year,

John Creuzot  
Dallas County District Attorney

# And Justice For All



## THE STATE OF JUSTICE IN DALLAS COUNTY

A Biennial Report of the  
Dallas County  
District Attorney's Office



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# Your Dallas County District Attorney



**Dallas District Attorney  
John Creuzot**

John Creuzot is a retired judge and an award-winning lawyer with more than three decades of experience in the criminal justice system, including more than 21 years as a Felony District Court Judge. His background also includes seven years of service as a Dallas County Assistant District Attorney and Chief Felony Prosecutor as well as a criminal defense lawyer while in private practice.

In addition to his trusted service and experience on both sides of the bench, John Creuzot has earned a national reputation for his innovative work on drug courts, criminal justice reform and evidence-based sentencing. He regularly appears in the news and on television as an expert on these and other criminal justice topics. He has lectured and taught courses at the National Drug Court Institute, the National Judicial College, and the National Center for State Courts. He has also presented at several national training conferences for the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, and has taught drug court teams from across the country. Creuzot has lectured and directed seminars for the Texas Center for the Judiciary, the Texas Bar Association, and the National Association of Drug Court Professionals.

After his retirement from the judiciary, Dallas County honored Creuzot by renaming its drug treatment facility the Judge John C. Creuzot Judicial Treatment Center in May of 2013. The center provides an intensive residential program as an alternative to incarceration for Dallas County probationers. The facility is coordinated with the Dallas Community Supervision and Corrections Department and the Dallas County Courts. The center works to ensure successful substance use disorder treatment and reintegration into the community. It also offers education

and skills training and job search assistance to probationers, and education and counseling for family members.

As a public servant, John Creuzot stays actively engaged in the community through both professional and civic organizations. He has served on multiple boards and commissions including:

- U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Science Advisory Board, appointed by Attorney General Loretta Lynch
- Texas Punishment Standards Commission, which rewrote the Sentencing Provisions of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure
- Judicial Advisory Council to the Texas Board of Criminal Justice
- Texas Bar District Six Grievance Committee
- City of Dallas Ethics Task Force, appointed by Mayor Ron Kirk, which rewrote the Rules of Ethics for Officials for the City of Dallas
- City of Dallas Task Force on Homelessness, including spearheading The Bridge Homeless Recovery Center
- Dallas Urban League Block Grant Board
- Unlocking DOORS, Inc. Board and Chair
- Promising Youth Alliance Board
- Phoenix House of Texas Board

John Creuzot was born in New Orleans and spent his youth in Houston before coming to the Dallas area in the 1970s and graduating from the University of North Texas in 1978 and Southern Methodist University School of Law in 1982. He is a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church and lives in East Dallas.

# A Message From John

January 2022

## TO MY FELLOW DALLAS COUNTY CITIZENS:

I am pleased to offer this “**And Justice for All - Biennial Report**” for your review and assessment. It is my goal to update you on the state of justice in Dallas County as well as the status of and news from divisions within the Dallas County Criminal District Attorney’s Office.

While this report is a deeper dive into the inner workings of the DA’s Office, I wanted to also take a moment in this introduction to share with you some of my personal goals for the office, as well as some of the obstacles that we have faced and results we have accomplished in what has proven to be a very challenging first two years in office.

Having served decades on the bench as a judge, I have seen the best and worst our society has to offer. I have seen good people turn bad, and bad people redeem themselves. I’ve commiserated with victims and looked pure evil in the eye. With all that I have observed/witnessed, I have come to learn that our system of justice needs a more commonsense approach—not only for those who have to deal directly with our system of justice (victims and perpetrators alike), but for society as a whole as well.

That is precisely why I wanted to offer my service as Dallas County District Attorney. With this commonsense approach, we are seeking the right solutions that serve the interests of each and every resident of Dallas County; adhering to the law in an equitable manner; and utilizing our understanding and experience of the history of policing and prosecution in order to reduce and eliminate (hopefully) implicit bias in the criminal justice system in Dallas County.

In addition to pursuing our ultimate duty of protecting the public and removing dangerous criminals from our streets, I was sworn into office with four top priorities: 1) stop the prosecution of misdemeanor marijuana cases; 2) stop criminalization of the unhoused and mentally ill; 3) provide a pathway to wellness and a home to the unhoused and mentally ill; and 4) enhance conviction integrity. As you will see in this report, we are making headway on these important challenges, but still have much to be accomplished.

Like everyone else on the planet, our toughest challenge the last two years has been COVID-19. The court system has and will continue to face operational and systemic challenges – just as our office has as well. Leading my staff of over 500 people during a global pandemic has been one of the toughest challenges so far, but one in which we have come together as a team for the greater good of the community.

When it comes to accomplishments, I’d have to say I’m most proud of reducing the number of people – especially people of color – who are arrested and prosecuted for misdemeanor marijuana offenses. Our new, commonsense approach benefits taxpayers and law enforcement, while at the same time reduces jail populations and combats systemic racism.

Through it all, I try to remind myself and my staff daily to stay true to our mission to enhance public safety, hold perpetrators accountable, and engage the community to prevent harm where and when we can.

I take my oath to serve and protect to heart and very seriously. Hopefully you will see that reflected on the pages of this report as I want to make sure you have all the facts.



# Our Mission

The mission of the Dallas County District Attorney's Office is to enhance public safety and community well-being by supporting victims, holding people who commit crimes accountable, and engaging the community to prevent harm. We strive to enhance the quality of life for all persons in Dallas County by promoting greater public safety and well-being through data-driven approaches to criminal justice that recognize the dignity of all persons with whom we interact. We further seek to reduce recidivism and to end mass incarceration by prosecuting crimes fairly, honorably, and without regard to societal biases.

## Our Guiding Principles:

- To utilize taxpayer money efficiently;
- To make evidence-based decisions about criminal cases;
- To strive for equality in the use of prosecutorial discretion;
- To treat all crime victims with dignity and fairness;
- To treat those accused of criminal offenses with dignity and fairness;
- To designate specialty court diversion prosecutors to cases in which defendants suffer from mental illness and/or substance use disorders, or in cases where the community and defendant may be best served by alternative approaches;
- To recognize mental illness and substance use disorder as public health concerns;
- To collaborate with law enforcement partners to prosecute crimes more effectively;
- To actively seek input and participation from the diverse communities of Dallas County;
- To utilize technology to improve case management, service to our community, and employee accountability;
- To inform the community about the work we do and the outcomes of our efforts;
- To act with professionalism in every situation.







# Criminal Justice Reforms

In 2018, 41 Law Enforcement Agencies filed at least one Class B marijuana possession case. In 2020, 27 Law Enforcement Agencies filed at least one Class B marijuana possession case with this office.

As the newly elected Dallas District Attorney, John Creuzot promised changes to our criminal justice system. The Dallas County District Attorney's Office strives to create policies that promote racial justice; end the criminalization of poverty; and combat mass incarceration by relying on incarceration as a last—and not first—resort, while making our community safer by ensuring limited resources are spent where they can do the most good. Our system of justice, above all else, should be fair, reasonable, and equitable to everyone. Justice has to be blind to race, creed, wealth, and social status. The law should treat all Dallas County citizens the same. While that has not been the case historically in Dallas County, my office is working hard every day to implement the following commonsense reforms:

## FIRST-OFFENSE MARIJUANA

Reducing racial disparity in Dallas County marijuana prosecutions was among District Attorney John Creuzot's early priorities. In April 2019, he announced his office would decline to prosecute most misdemeanor cases of first-time marijuana possessions. SMU's Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center released findings ([The ABCs of Racial Disparity](#), May 2021) that Black people were up to 10.1 times more likely to be referred to the Dallas County District Attorney's Office for Class A or B prosecution for possession of marijuana than their non-Black counterparts.

In its [second study](#), the Center found

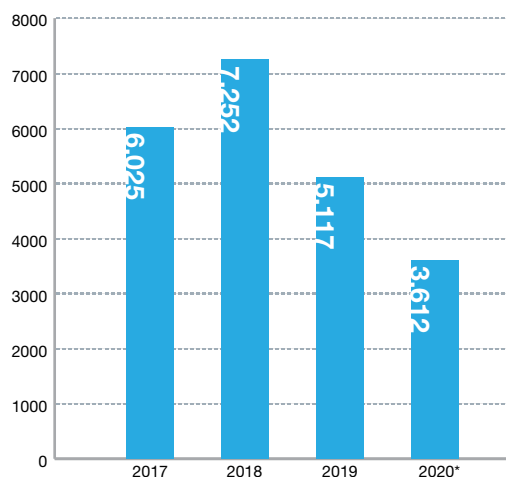
that this policy had a profound effect on police behavior. The report concludes that "DA Creuzot's 2019 policies were associated with significant reductions in police enforcement of misdemeanor marijuana laws."

*"The decline we have seen over the past few years in marijuana possession arrests shows that the criminal justice community can analyze what it's doing and change when needed."*

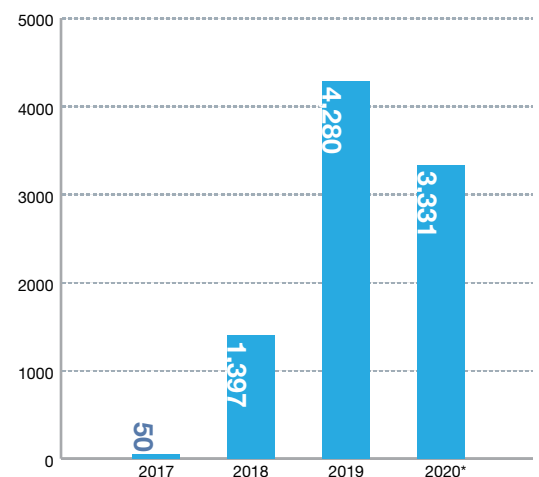
— John Creuzot

The office also processed almost 6,000 dismissals of pending misdemeanor

## FILING OF MARIJUANA CASES WITH THE DALLAS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



## REJECTION OF MARIJUANA CASES BY THE DALLAS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



# Criminal Justice Reforms **Continued**

marijuana cases filed prior to January 2019 when DA Cruzot took office.

## **DRUG POSSESSION CASES WITHOUT LABORATORY REPORTS**

Historically, when an individual is arrested for felony drug cases they are taken to jail and may wait months for the testing of the alleged contraband. To prevent persons sitting in jail awaiting lab results, the DA's office returns these cases to the law enforcement agency until the laboratory report is completed. If the lab report comes back as a controlled substance, the office requests that the District Clerk issue a summons instead of a warrant.

## **CRIMINAL TRESPASS - DECRIMINALIZING POVERTY & HOMELESSNESS**

The Dallas County jail is the second-largest mental health facility in the State of Texas, second only to the jail in Harris County (Houston). As many as 50% of individuals in the jail have a history of mental illness. Most often those charged with misdemeanor criminal trespass are mentally ill and homeless—their only crime is not having a place to go. Around 90% of homeless individuals charged with trespass spend an average of 33 days in jail. These prosecutions are an ineffective and inhumane approach to dealing with homelessness or mental illness, and yet, since 2015, Dallas County has spent nearly \$11 million just to incarcerate those

charged with trespass, not including the costs and resources required to arrest and prosecute their cases.

District Attorney Cruzot instructed intake prosecutors to dismiss all misdemeanor criminal trespass cases that do not involve a residence or physical intrusion into property. DA Cruzot continues to urge Dallas County and its municipalities to use the savings from filing criminal trespass cases to provide affordable housing and mental health services to this vulnerable population.

## **BAIL**

DA Cruzot is committed to the principle that the bail system should ensure physical safety in the community and fairness to those accused of criminal offenses, and that there should never be a situation in which people are sitting in jail—not because they pose an identifiable danger to the community, but because they cannot pay their fee to go home. When low-income people are held in jail simply because they cannot afford a few hundred dollars, they lose their jobs, housing, stability, and cannot take care of their children. This makes our communities less safe.

Monetary conditions should never be requested by a prosecutor unless an ability to pay has first been reviewed, then the amount requested should be based on what a person can afford. High bonds should not be used as a form of preventive detention. Instead, people should only

### **FILING OF CRIMINAL TRESPASS CASES IN THE DALLAS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020*</b>
Criminal Trespass Filings	2,118	2,388	2,339	1,668
Criminal Trespass Rejections	26	21	284	691
Percent of Cases Rejected	1%	1%	12%	41%

\*COVID-19 affected the filing of charges from all Law Enforcement Agencies

# Criminal Justice Reforms **Continued**



be preventively detained if they meet the statutory guidelines for preventive detention, and there is reason to believe the person poses a specific danger to the community.

That is why DA Cruzot initiated a new approach that makes public safety, not wealth, the determining factor in his prosecutors requests, if any, to the judges and magistrates who make bail decisions. This new policy is designed so that those people accused of criminal offenses, who pose no safety risk, will be able return to their communities, while those who do are either kept in jail or released with very specific bond conditions.

Placing safety, not wealth, at the centerpiece of policy is both sensible and fair. Our system of justice cannot depend on whether individuals can afford to buy their freedom. A pre-trial risk assessment is used to determine specific conditions that will aid return and protect community safety. Prosecutors review each Pre-Trial Risk Assessment following these guidelines:

- **Misdemeanors:** There shall be a presumption of release without pre-trial conditions subject to the below exceptions.

- **State Jail Felonies:** There shall be a presumption of release without pre-trial conditions for all people charged with a state jail felony who have no criminal convictions within the last five years.
- **Exceptions to misdemeanor and state jail felony presumption:** If a prosecutor believes by clear and convincing evidence that the accused will fail to appear and/or is a danger to the community or victim.
- **All other cases:** The prosecutor's recommendation is based on an assessment of risk. The prosecutor's presumption should be that, unless individuals pose a credible safety or flight risk, release remains appropriate, but with the least restrictive conditions imposed to ensure public safety and return to court.

## **EXPUNCTION EXPO**

An arrest record can be a significant impediment to a good quality of life. Often, individuals with arrest records find it hard to obtain jobs, housing, or financial aid for college.

Under certain specific circumstances, individuals may be able to clear arrests

# Criminal Justice Reforms Continued

from their records through a process called an expunction. If eligible, an expunction generally results in the destruction of records related to an arrest and authorizes the person to deny that the arrest ever occurred. **However, for many Dallas County residents, access to the expunction process remains out of reach due to an inability to pay or uncertainty of how to begin the process.**

The Annual Dallas County Expunction Expo is a community outreach project sponsored by the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office and the Dallas County District Clerk’s Office.

The Expo’s purpose is to provide qualified individuals with an opportunity to clear their criminal records so that they may obtain housing, employment, and education. Without the impediment of the expunged offense on their record, they are placed in an optimal position to positively contribute to society, support their family and community, and, most importantly, avoid future incarceration.

The Expunction Expo consists of a Pre-Qualification Clinic, where individuals identified as being potentially eligible for expunction are paired with attorneys who volunteer their time to help these individuals prepare and file the documents needed to receive an expunction. There is no legal fee associated with the expo

for participants and the district clerk filing fee is waived for almost all participants.

Expunction Expo partners include the Dallas County District Clerk, Dallas County Public Defender’s Office; the University of North Texas (UNT) Dallas School of Law and the Southern Methodist University (SMU) Dedman College of Law; the Texas Offender Reentry Initiative (T.O.R.I.) and Unlocking Doors; the City of Dallas City Attorney’s Office and the City of Dallas along with area attorneys, and local and national law firms and corporations such as American Airlines and Toyota.

*“While this Expo is an excellent initiative in furthering our goal of criminal justice reform, its effects on those we are able to help every year is the ultimate reward for my administration.” –*

– John Creuzot

**In 2020 almost 100% of those attending the Expunction Expo were granted expunctions.**

EXPUNCTION EXPO STATISTICS				
	2017	2018	2019	2020*
Participant Applications	700	732	1281	572
Invited	N/A	363	579	334
Attended	1,000**	258	423	235
Granted	129	250	329	234

\*COVID-19 affected the filing of charges from all Law Enforcement Agencies  
\*\*Before pre-screening instituted



# Criminal Justice Reforms Continued

## PROBATION

While probation was originally intended to be an alternative to incarceration, it is all too often a lengthy and burdensome process that can actually increase recidivism as well as needlessly waste taxpayer dollars. When people are kept on probation much longer than they should be, the system is overtaxed with supervision, and true rehabilitation becomes almost impossible. Our community is not made safer by long probation periods: Research shows that probation terms should be only as long as needed to achieve its goal.

Accordingly, all prosecutors are now instructed to presumptively ask for the following recommendations in cases where appropriate:

- **Misdemeanor:** Six months presumptive term
- **State jail felonies:** Two years presumptive term
- **Second- and Third-Degree Felonies:** Two years presumptive term
- **First-Degree Felonies:** Five years presumptive term

Prosecutors have also been instructed not to ask for jail, state jail, or prison time for “technical” violations such as failing to pay fines or fees and other acts that do not threaten public safety.

## THEFT OF NECESSARY ITEMS

Multiple studies show people who are arrested, jailed, and convicted for non-violent crimes committed out of necessity are prevented from gaining the stability necessary to lead a law-abiding life. Criminalizing poverty is counter-productive for our community’s health and safety. In April 2019, the Office declined to prosecute theft of personal items less than \$750 unless the evidence showed that the alleged theft was for economic gain.

### CLASS B THEFT CHARGES FILED WITH THE DALLAS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S OFFICE

	2017	2018	2019	2020*
Class B Theft Filings	2,428	2,085	2,246	1,728
Percent of Cases Accepted by the Office	98%	98%	98%	98%

*Texas Code of Criminal Procedure 3.1. Theft is a class B misdemeanor if the value of the stolen property or services is \$100 or more but less than \$750*

\*COVID-19 affected the filing of charges from all Law Enforcement Agencies

The background of the image features a large, faint, circular seal of the Dallas County District Attorney. The seal is composed of a rope-like border, an outer ring with the text "Dallas County District Attorney", and an inner circle containing a five-pointed star and a wreath of oak leaves. The text of the quote is centered over the seal.

*“The policies that I have embarked upon are a first and important step toward shifting priorities, treating people with fairness and dignity, all while keeping our community safe”*

– John Creuzot

# Restorative Justice

**D**allas County Criminal District Attorney Creuzot believes that to create a safer community it is important to help individuals become productive members of society. Convicted offenders face a host of so-called “collateral” consequences: restrictions on voting, employment, housing, and public assistance, as well as informal consequences such as stigma, family tensions, and financial insecurity.

The Dallas County District Attorney’s Office strives to create policies that promote racial justice, end the criminalization of poverty; and combat mass incarceration by relying on incarceration as a last—and not first—resort.

Diversion programs offer alternatives such as special courts and pre-trial interventions, which can lead to dismissal and eventual expunction of charges. Sometimes, this means a chance to address problem behavior without a permanent criminal record.

## **SPECIALTY COURTS**

Dallas County has over 20 specialty courts – four of them are pre-adjudication courts with eligibility determined by the District Attorney’s Office. The courts are based on the National Model for Drug Courts involving screening and assessment of risks, needs, and responsiveness, judicial interaction, monitoring (e.g., drug testing), and supervision. Instead of putting addicted people behind bars, these courts invite treatment providers into the courtroom bringing a public health approach to criminal justice. Treatment providers develop evidence-based treatment plans, and the judges, law enforcement, probation, defense, and prosecution work as a team to provide the support and strict accountability necessary for the treatment plans to be successful.

The success of drug courts has spawned a generation of programs now focused on treatment rather than incarceration. The DA-driven treatment courts serve not only drug offenders but also offenders with mental health issues, young offenders ages 17-24, women involved in prostitution, and veterans struggling with the lingering effects of trauma.

## **AIM COURT – A PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION PROGRAM FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS (AGES 17-24)**

The Dallas County District Attorney’s Office established the AIM Program in February of 2016 to reduce recidivism rates and costs to Dallas County residents by providing an alternative means of justice for offenders aged 17–24. Following the national model for drug courts, AIM programming includes judicial intervention, supervision, rehabilitative services, individualized treatment plans, referral of housing, education and employment resources, and additional therapeutic support for nine to 18 months. Offenders are given the opportunity to become productive and contributing members of society, rather than repeat offenders, making Dallas County a smarter, safer community.

The AIM Court Team, presided by Judge Brandon Birmingham leads a court team comprised of the Judge, Assistant District Attorneys, Public Defenders, DA and PD Investigators, Community Corrections Case Managers, a Treatment Counselor from Integrated Psychotherapeutic Services (IPS) and an AIM Clinician. This collaboration is the key to AIM’s success.

The five tenets for all AIM participants



**74% Reduction in  
Recidivism among  
AIM Participants  
vs. Probationers**

*Meadows Mental Health  
Policy Institute*

**There is a cost savings  
of \$7.87 per participant  
assigned to the AIM  
Court compared to  
traditional probation  
over a two-year period.**

*Meadows Mental Health  
Policy Institute*

# Restorative Justice **Continued**

are Honesty, Good Faith Effort, Show Up, Be Sober in All Things, and Leadership. After advancing through three phases, participants graduate from the program and case(s) are dismissed and eligible for immediate expungement.

The Meadows Mental Policy Health Initiative (MMPHI) found that AIM participants were 74% less likely to be arrested for a new offense in the two years after beginning AIM compared to offenders on probation.

In addition, MMPHI found the AIM program had a net benefit ratio of 7.87:1, translating to a cost savings of \$7.87 per participant assigned to the AIM Court compared to traditional probation over a two-year period. The net benefits attributable to AIM are conservative estimates based on a two-year post-treatment period to mirror the recidivism analysis.

## **MENTAL HEALTH DIVISION**

Dallas County was one of the first prosecutor offices to adopt a mental health criminal justice program. The prosecutors seek all forms of available treatment, services, or diversionary court programs for defendants whose cases are accepted into the division. The division includes competency and insanity attorneys who handle matters including, but not limited to, monitoring all out-patient competency restoration and monitoring out-patient insanity releases from State Hospitals into the community.

*"As soon as they are in the system, they are getting opportunities that stop recidivism's revolving door. The goal is to turn a potentially high-risk individual into low risk or even no risk."*

– John Creuzot

The District Attorney's office has several Mental Health Diversion Courts and Pre-Trial programs targeting high-risk, high needs offenders with co-occurring disorders. The goal is to reduce recidivism among offenders with co-occurring disorders by providing structured substance use disorder treatment, along with intensive case management and supervision, combined with judicial monitoring that assists the participants in maintaining abstinence from drugs and/or alcohol, while they work toward mental health maintenance and stability.

## **MENTAL HEALTH DIVERSION COURTS**

The Mental Health Diversion Courts work with participants to address their primary disorders. This includes substance use disorder issues if present and mental health issues. Intensive case management assists to address core problem areas such as ongoing or chronic homelessness, lack of recovery support, lack of access to resources or basic needs, and assistance with managing mental health symptoms. Without intervention, many of these individuals will continue to be high utilizers of public systems (jail, emergency rooms, and psychiatric inpatient facilities).

There are two pre-trial diversion courts: MHJD (Mental Health Jail Diversion) the misdemeanor court, and SET (Stabilization, Engagement, Transition) for felony offenders. The goals and methods of the Mental Health Diversion Courts are the same but the impact is exponential when applied to felonies.

Once the Mental Health Diversion Courts assess individuals with criminal charges and a qualifying mental health diagnosis is identified, then the department can direct them to receive the support needed to lead meaningful and satisfying lives.

**According to a 2010 comprehensive, 18-month study Dallas was found to have the most successful mental health program in Texas. Defendants from the mental health caseload in Dallas exhibited the lowest risk of recidivism of the counties studied.**

*Texas A&M in conjunction with the Texas Task Force on Indigent Defense*

**SET accepted 31 new participants and graduated 18. MHJD accepted 24 new participants and graduated 12.**



# Restorative Justice **Continued**

With both courts being prosecutor-led, mental health diversion programs can be made available to Dallas County residents diagnosed with at least one of the following mental health diagnoses: schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, major depressive disorder, or bipolar disorder.

## **MENTAL HEALTH CASE WORKERS**

To enhance the service of the division, DA Creuzot worked with local mental health providers to bring specially trained care coordinators to assist the prosecutors and develop case plans to address the issues that contributed to the criminal behavior in the first place.

Care coordinators reduced the time offenders spend in jail because they may help work out medication concerns or communicate with family members willing to assist after offenders are released from jail. For those not in jail, help often involves classes, housing, transportation, and employment.

The caseworkers' evaluations and assessments go back to the DA's mental health division and defense attorneys so that everyone agrees with each "whole-person" plan, which is designed to address the issues that contributed to the criminal behavior in the first place.

## **DALLAS DEFLECTS – MENTAL ILLNESS ARREST ALTERNATIVE**

When he took office, DA Creuzot brought together community partners to develop an alternative to jail for persons suffering from mental illness.

Modeled after the Ed Emmett Center in Houston, Dallas Deflects is an alternative to arresting individuals suffering from mental illness who have committed certain low-level, non-violent

misdemeanor offenses. The goals are to: keep individuals charged with certain low-level, non-violent misdemeanor offenses from entering the criminal justice system; reduce costs associated with repeatedly jailing individuals suffering from mental illness; and reduce the number of psychiatric emergency visits.

*"When we take these individuals, these low-level offenders, and treat them and don't drag them through the justice system, we reduce recidivism."*

– John Creuzot

Dallas Deflects is a collaboration between the District Attorney's Office, the Dallas Police Department, Parkland Hospital, North Texas Behavioral Health Authority, and Homeward Bound, Inc.

Among the services provided:

- 24-48-hour observation and short-term crisis respite beds
- Integrated care and individual treatment plans to assist with stabilization
- Comprehensive Discharge Plan with Case Management

## **PROSTITUTION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

In August 2020, the District Attorney's office launched a new intervention for women charged with prostitution in order to provide a road map to a better life. All misdemeanor prostitution charges will be offered a Pre-Trial agreement that allows any individuals arrested on a misdemeanor or felony prostitution charge to be eligible for their case to be dismissed and expunged from their record – even those with prior convictions.

The Mental Health Division reviews about 100 cases each month for eligibility.

# Restorative Justice **Continued**

The new initiative ensures that all prostitution charges from police departments across Dallas County go to a single person in the intake division with a background in these cases. Once intake decides whether to accept a case, if taken, it goes to a prosecutor who makes the offer for the pre-trial intervention agreement.

The DA's office has an advocate who serves as the case manager for those who were arrested on misdemeanor charges and connects them with New Friends, New Life, the Dallas nonprofit that provides rehabilitation services to victims of sex trafficking and the DA's key partner in the new initiative.

The first phase of the New Friends New Life program takes between 90

days and nine months. That phase is intended to establish stability and safety; it focuses on counseling, case management, and economic lessons.

Felony prostitution cases result if the individual has been convicted three or more times of the offense. These pre-trial intervention agreements will be handled through the existing STAR Diversion Court, overseen by Judge Nancy Kennedy of Dallas County Criminal Court No. 2. Individuals facing felony charges receive more intensive assessment and services related to mental health and substance use disorder.





Protecting the Public



and Holding Criminals  
Accountable



# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office *Division Reports*



**W**hile District Attorney Creuzot has focused public attention on ending mass incarceration and implementing commonsense criminal justice reforms, he and his staff have also focused their attention on holding criminals accountable and removing dangerous and violent criminals from our streets. The following pages highlight facts, figures, and results of individual divisions within the District Attorney's Office.

The prosecution of violent crime increased under the Creuzot Administration 2018-2019

- 19% increase in felony jury trials
- 21% increase in conviction of Capital Murder, Murder and Other Homicide
- 50% increase in murder convictions alone
- 30% reduction in acquittals for all felonies
- 62% increase in trafficking and compelling prostitution
- 23% increase in conviction for Indecency/Sex Assault Child
- 7% increase in Aggravated Assault convictions

In 2020, over 8,000 individuals were convicted of felony offenses. Twenty-one percent (1,666) of convictions resulted in prison.

Note: There were no jury trials held after March 13, 2020 through the end of 2020 because of the pandemic.

## **APPELLATE DIVISION**

The Appellate Division's mission is to see that justice is done for citizens of Dallas County by verifying all convictions obtained

by the District Attorney's Office are lawful and supported by sufficient evidence.

The Appellate Division consists of 16 full-time prosecutors, four part-time prosecutors, three legal secretaries, and a clerk. It prosecutes direct appeals, capital and non-capital post-conviction writs of habeas corpus, and DNA appeals. The division also incorporates an Expunction Team to help qualifying citizens remove criminal history from their record, and help citizens clear their record of the misuse of their identity, which could result in bad credit or incorrect criminal history. Requests for information under the Texas Public Information Act as well as requests from the Federal Bureau of Investigation for information related to criminal background checks for gun purchases are also handled by this division.

In May of 2020, Judge Creuzot instituted a new discovery policy for post-conviction writs of habeas corpus. After a case has gone through the appellate process, a defendant may challenge his conviction in an application for a writ of habeas corpus, where he can allege that he is being held illegally for certain reasons not cognizable

# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office

## *Division Reports* Continued

on appeal. There is no statutory right to discovery in post-conviction writ matter, but fairness and common sense demand that the defense have access to the DA file in these cases. The new discovery policy's intended result is that these applications be resolved by a full examination of the legal process surrounding the defendant's case as soon as possible.

### **CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN DIVISION**

The mission of the Dallas County District Attorney's Crimes Against Children Unit is to seek justice for victims of all crimes against children, while utilizing a trauma-informed, offender-focused approach and employing nationally recognized best practices while holding offenders accountable.

The Crimes Against Children (CAC) Unit consists of 17 prosecutors, 11 investigators, five victim advocates and one support staff. The unit prosecutes trafficking of children ages 17 and under, sexual abuse of children ages 16 and under, physical abuse and homicide of children ages 10 and under, and all internet crimes against children. The unit receives well over 1,000 case filings per year.

The Crimes Against Children Unit is dedicated to following nationally recommended best practices in prosecution. It employs a trauma-informed, victim-inclusive, and offender-focused approach. CAC is a vertical

prosecution unit which is different than most other courts and units within the DA's office. Vertical prosecution means that a prosecutor, specially trained in issues unique to crimes against children, works a case throughout its life – including presentation to a grand jury and working hand in hand with prosecutors who handle the case post-grand jury. The CAC prosecutor is housed within the Dallas Children's Advocacy Center along with other members of the multi-disciplinary team including forensic interviewers, therapists, law enforcement, and child protective services.

Shortly after a case is indicted, a victim advocate assigned to the case will contact the family of victims to provide resources and to establish a point of contact for that family with our office. The victim advocate then will remain in contact with that family throughout the pendency of the case, making an effort to reach out at least once each quarter in order to keep that family updated on the case. Victim advocates will meet with the family as the case is being prepared for trial and will sit with the family or child during testimony or while waiting to testify as needed. The courthouse and criminal justice process can be an incredibly intimidating system for these families to navigate and knowing there is a friendly and familiar face standing beside them throughout makes that scary process easier.

### **TRIALS**

	<b>JURY TRIALS</b>	<b>BENCH TRIALS</b>	<b>CONVICTIONS</b>
2019	77	23	84
2020	23	10	23
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>107</b>

# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office *Division Reports* Continued

There is extensive, well-documented research that confirms a strong correlation between violence to animals and violence to people, which is why it is so important to have a unit that specializes in the prosecution of these offenses.

## **COMMUNITY PROSECUTION UNIT – ANIMAL CRUELTY / SATELLITE OFFICES / NONDISCLOSURE UNITS**

The mission of the Community Prosecution Unit is to create partnerships between the prosecutor's office and law enforcement agencies, public and private organizations, and citizens to work together to improve public safety and enhance the quality of life in the Dallas County community. It consists of three units; Nondisclosure Unit, Animal Cruelty Unit, and Satellite Offices Unit.

### **NONDISCLOSURE UNIT**

The Nondisclosure Unit was created in August 2020 to enhance the DA's nondisclosure process.

An Order of Nondisclosure prohibits agencies from providing access to criminal histories in their possession. Also known as "sealing your record", an Order for Nondisclosure prevents most private employers and others from learning about previous convictions or adjudications. For example, if an employer asks for a criminal background check of an employee, the agency cannot disclose information about that employee's criminal history if there is an Order of Nondisclosure in place. However, certain agencies such as law enforcement and child protective services are excluded and can see the information. Persons who are not eligible for an expunction may be eligible for a non-disclosure of their criminal record.

Like an expungement, some offenses are not eligible for nondisclosure. Among those not eligible are any offense requiring Sex Offender registration, Murder, Capital Murder, Aggravated Kidnapping, Trafficking of Persons, Continuous Trafficking of Persons, Injury to Child, Elderly Individual or Disabled Individual, Repeated Violation of Certain Court Order, or

Conditions of Bond in Family Violence.

By funneling all Petitions for Nondisclosure into one unit which are handled by two prosecutors, requests are processed more accurately and efficiently. This process provides individuals an opportunity to apply for jobs or housing quicker without fear of having their past prevent them from landing their dream job or home.

In a little over a year, the Nondisclosure Unit has responded to more than 575 petitions and conducted several hearings.

### **ANIMAL CRUELTY UNIT**

The Animal Cruelty Unit is a specialized division of the District Attorney's Office dedicated to protecting animals from neglect and mistreatment. The unit's mission is fourfold; 1) educate the community on how they can identify an animal cruelty offense, 2) prosecute those individuals who commit these heinous offenses, 3) prevent animal cruelty from taking place by educating the community, specifically school-aged children about animal cruelty, and 4) punishing those individuals convicted of these offenses to the fullest extent of the law. This unit is dedicated to being the voice for the voiceless and ensuring that justice is done while keeping the citizens of Dallas County safe.

City animal control facilities and law enforcement agencies reported 5,750 animal abuse calls in 2014. Through collaboration with the community and targeted prosecution, the Animal Cruelty Unit aims to reduce the number of offenders that neglect, torture, or kill animals.

# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office

## *Division Reports* Continued

### **SATELLITE OFFICES**

By partnering with City of Dallas government departments, like the City Attorney's Community Prosecution Unit and the Dallas Police Department, as well as community organizations like Genesis Women's Shelter, our Satellite offices provide critical resources and guidance to Dallas County community members who need assistance navigating the sometimes intimidating and confusing criminal justice system. These community offices are also intended to reduce any transportation or time-constraint issues that may arise when others must travel to one, centralized location, like our main office at the Frank Crowley Courts Building. (See locations on inside back cover.)

### **COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM**

The Community Response Team (CRT) is a focused, adaptive prosecution unit that can target offenders who pose the biggest threats or concerns to law enforcement and the community.

The CRT looks at trends in crimes and prosecutes cases that help the community or group affected by these crimes. It collaborates with law enforcement agencies and community stakeholders in designated areas where the team seeks to reduce or eliminate the revolving door of offenders who exhaust the limited resources of the jail and criminal justice systems. The CRT has three prosecutors and an investigator and works hand-in-hand with the Gang Unit because many CRT offenders are documented gang members.

CRT's collaborative efforts include:

- Working with Downtown Dallas, Inc. to combat a severe K2 (synthetic drug) crisis in the downtown area by joining with the Central Business District Crime Task Force.

- After several attacks of transgender individuals, some resulting in the death of the victim, the CRT was deployed to vigorously prosecute these perpetrators. The CRT collaborated with stakeholders in the LGBTQ+ community and the Dallas County DA's LGBT Task Force to ensure justice for these victims.
- Working closely with the FBI Violent Crimes Task force. This collaboration has resulted in the successful prosecution of a home-invasion ring, as well as helped secure the indictment of 28 individuals for Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity that encompassed 74 crimes, including ATM Theft, Aggravated Robbery, and Burglary of a Building.

### **CONVICTION INTEGRITY UNIT**

The Conviction Integrity Unit (CIU) is primarily dedicated to reviewing cases involving allegations of innocence, but it also reviews cases involving instances of wrongful conviction when related to an innocence claim as well as a result of systematic errors. The CIU has been responsible for exonerations in Dallas County since its establishment.

*"It is our job as prosecutors to turn all evidence of innocence over to the defense counsel. And it remains our job to correct our past wrongs."*

– John Creuzot

The CIU also serves as the District Attorney's Office's liaison with the Texas Forensic Science Commission and serves in an advisory role in policy-making decisions within the office. The Unit often advises prosecutors in current cases and



# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office

## Division Reports **Continued**

There have been 41 exonerations for the Dallas County District Attorney's Office since 2001.

regularly provides training to prosecutors, attorneys, and law enforcement – in Dallas County and across the State and nation. The CIU is also responsible for sending out mass notifications where systematic errors affected or potentially affected the judicial process. Furthermore, the Unit is also in charge of evidence retention issues. When an exoneration leads to the actual perpetrators of the crime and the law allows for their prosecution, the CIU prosecutes the actual perpetrators to the fullest extent of the law.

The unit is comprised of four Assistant District Attorneys, two administrative legal assistants, and two dedicated investigators. While the CIU closely collaborates with innocence projects and local law enforcement agencies when reviewing and re-investigating cases, the Unit is part of the District Attorney's Office and is, therefore, under the District Attorney's direction.

Reported offenses of Family Violence have steadily increased, from 21,390 in 2018 to 23,894 in 2020.

Roughly 9,000 people per year seek assistance over the phone or in-person at the Family Violence Unit.

*"The Conviction Integrity Unit is something that I believe in, and it's something I believe every major district attorney's office should have. You're not being effective in ensuring justice if you're not willing to look at credible claims of innocence or unfairness."*

– John Creuzot

### CASE HIGHLIGHTS:

In May 2019, the Conviction Integrity Unit moved to dismiss the cases of Stanley Mozee and Dennis Allen on the basis of actual innocence. The two men's murder convictions were formerly reversed by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

An official ruling of "Actual Innocence" by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals

was made final in November 2019 for 39-year-old Quintin Lee Alonzo. Alonzo was declared innocent of murder and aggravated assault charges by the trial court and set free on bond upon the agreement of the Conviction Integrity Unit of the Criminal District Attorney's Office. The ruling by the State's highest criminal court will allow him to begin taking steps to clear his name and receive compensation for his wrongful conviction.

*"I am extremely proud of the work the CIU is doing, and when another individual is exonerated, it means we are doing the right thing in pursuing justice for everyone, including rectifying wrongful convictions."*

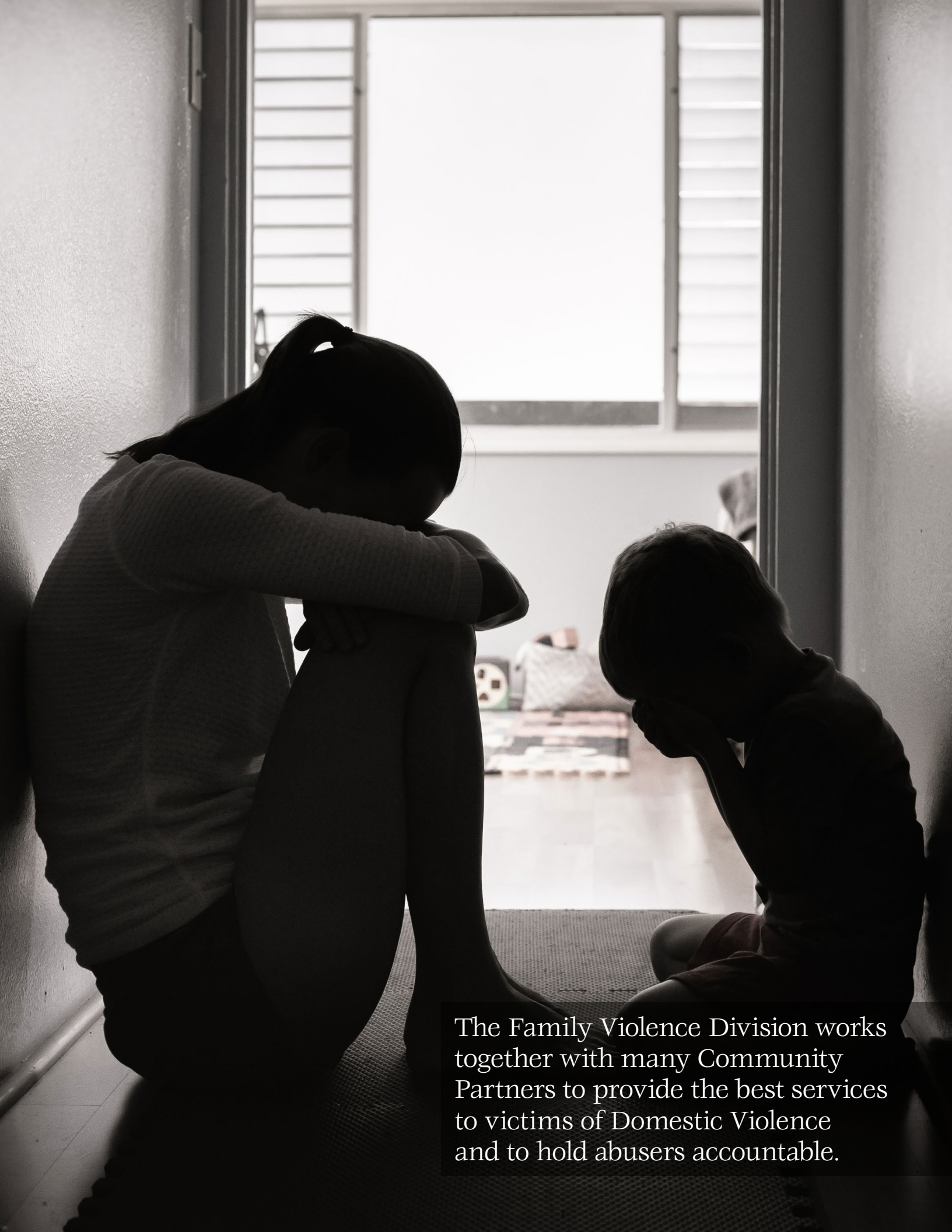
– John Creuzot.

### FAMILY VIOLENCE DIVISION

The Family Violence Division focuses on intimate partner violence. Offenses range from Assaults, Stalking, and Robberies, to Aggravated Assaults, Aggravated Robbery, Murder, and Capital Murder.

The Family Violence Division is a team of prosecutors, investigators, advocates, legal secretaries, and support staff dedicated to the prosecution of Family Violence cases. The Division has 18 prosecutors, eight Investigators, 19 Victims' Advocates, three Legal Secretaries, six Support Staff Members, and one CPS Liaison.

The Family Violence Division works together with many Community Partners through several Coordinated Community Response teams (CCRs) or interagency teams to provide the best services to victims of Domestic Violence and to hold abusers accountable. Members of the Family Violence Division participate in these CCRs in a variety of ways.



The Family Violence Division works together with many Community Partners to provide the best services to victims of Domestic Violence and to hold abusers accountable.

# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office *Division Reports* Continued

Regular probationers were twice as likely to commit new offenses during their time on probation versus those under supervision by the Domestic Violence Court Program (8.5% vs. 4.6%) — 50% reduction in new offenses.

## **DALLAS COUNTY INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW TEAM (IPVFRT)**

The IPVFRT conducts confidential, system-wide reviews of adjudicated (resolved) cases resulting from adult intimate partner violence (IPV) homicides and murder-suicides of adults over the age of 17. The purpose of these reviews is to improve prevention and intervention services that will lead to a decrease in the incidence of IPV deaths in Dallas County.

## **Felony Domestic Violence Court Program (FDVC)**

was established to increase the safety of the most vulnerable adult victims of IPV through close monitoring and accountability of offenders who have been placed on community supervision.

**The Domestic Violence High Risk Offender Team (DVHROT)** was formed to identify and address the most high-risk cases of intimate partner violence in Dallas County. Once identified, the team develops an individualized intervention plan to interrupt the cycle of escalating violence and close the systemic gaps that may exist between agencies. The goal of DVHROT is to reduce ongoing harm to victims, reduce recidivism with perpetrators, increase offender accountability, and ultimately prevent homicides. The team monitors high-risk cases, identifies and closes systemic gaps in response, provides community-based services to victims at high risk for lethal or severe violence, and measures case outcomes through data collection and analysis.

## **CASE HIGHLIGHTS**

### **State of Texas vs. Brandon Sampson**

Brandon Sampson was convicted of Murder of his girlfriend who was found wrapped in a blanket in his garage. She had suffered blunt force trauma to her head and two gunshot wounds. At his Murder trial, Sampson's ex-wife and multiple girlfriends testified to a pattern of abuse and threats, often with knives and guns. Sampson was found guilty of murder and sentenced to Life in prison.

### **State of Texas v. Matthew Gerth**

Matthew Gerth was convicted of Aggravated Assault after setting his girlfriend on fire and leaving her to die. The victim survived the attack and was later able to testify against Gerth at his trial. Gerth was sentenced to Life in prison, a sentence the Court said he "earned every day of."

### **State of Texas v. Quantara Melton**

Quantara Melton was charged with Murder in the death of her boyfriend. The two had been in a dating relationship when Melton intentionally pushed the victim into oncoming traffic, where he was struck by a car. Melton was convicted and the jury sentenced her to 52 years in prison.

### **State of Texas v. Emmanuel Limberg**

Emmanuel Limberg threw a pan of hot bacon grease onto the face of his girlfriend; she suffered burns to her face, chest, neck and upper body. Limberg was convicted of Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon and sentenced to 10 years in prison.



# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office

## Division Reports **Continued**

### PROTECTIVE ORDER UNIT

The Protective Order Unit serves victims who need legal advocacy and Protective Orders (PO), which are done on a “first come, first serve” basis so victims in crisis can walk in without an appointment and receive assistance free of charge. The Protective Order prosecutors provide free civil legal representation as well as assistance in the PO application process. Effective civil legal representation for a Protective Order enables victims to permanently leave and keep themselves and their children safe and heal from the emotional and physical trauma.

The PO prosecutors and staff provide legal advocacy, safety planning, resources and referrals, crisis intervention, facilitation in obtaining Magistrate’s Orders of Emergency Protection, and assistance with the filing process. The unit strives to provide citizens with information on Protective Orders, the criminal justice system, community resources, and safety planning.

The PO Unit expanded to the George Allen Civil Courts building to provide services to victims of family violence who have open family cases and need protection from their abuser. A victim seeking services at George Allen must have an open divorce or Suit Affecting the Parent Child Relationship.

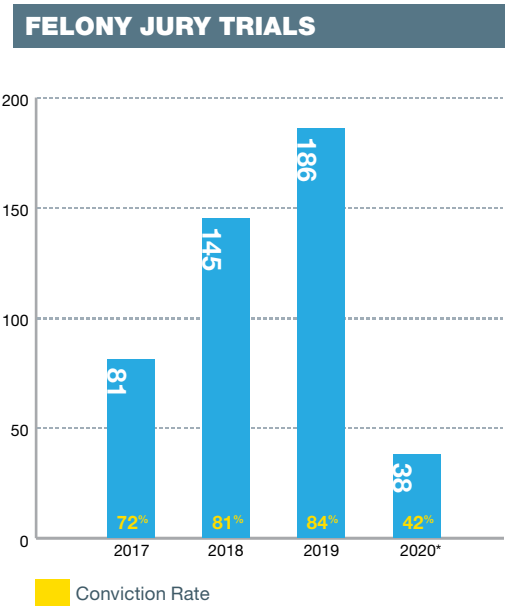
The Protective Order Unit was hit especially hard during the pandemic; there was an increase in the number of victims inquiring about Protective Orders because many victims were forced to shelter in place with their abuser and were not able to proceed with the Protective Order process. As the courts began to hold remote hearings, victim’s participation increased; victims did have to find transportation, childcare assistance, or financial means to come

to court in order to safely escape their abuser. The entire Protective Order unit has come together to ensure the process runs smoothly while working remotely so victims are able to continue to get services in order to leave abuse and trauma.

### FEDERAL

The Federal Division of the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office provides specialized legal advice and highly skilled legal representation to the elected officials and employees of Dallas County in connection with federal civil suits and administrative claims brought against them arising from the performance of their governmental duties.

The Unit is responsible for defending all federal civil suits brought against Dallas County and any of its 36 departments, including the Dallas County Commissioners Court, Sheriff’s Department, Constable Offices, District Clerk, County Clerk, Medical Examiner, Elections Department, and Tax Assessor-Collector.



### Family Violence Unit Dispositions

2019	1,798
2020	1,567

### Total number of citizens screened for protective orders:

2019	3,057
2020	4,115

\*There were no jury trials after March 2020 through the end of the year.

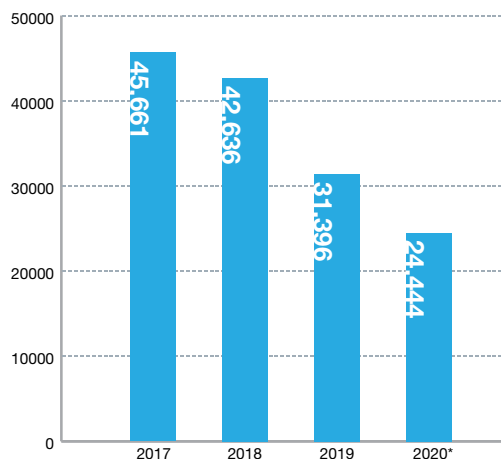
# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office

## Division Reports **Continued**

The Federal Division handles all federal civil suits brought in the United States District Courts, United States Courts of Appeal, and the United States Supreme Court. These federal civil suits include, but are not limited to, claims for civil rights violations, police misconduct, employment discrimination, personal injury, and habeas corpus relief.

The goal of the Unit is to provide high-quality legal representation to Dallas County and its officials in the federal courts and protect the public interest of fiscally responsible government.

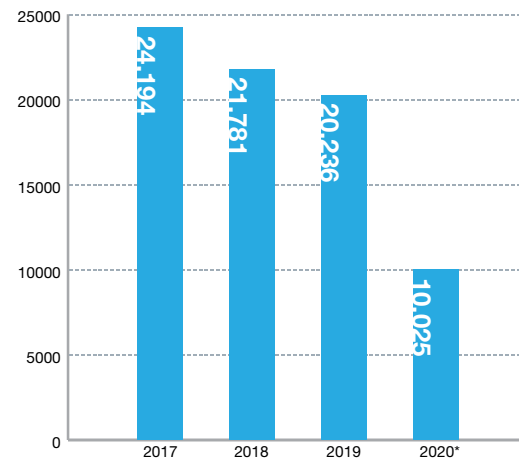
### MISDEMEANOR DISPOSITIONS



### BUREAU A – FELONY COURT DIVISIONS 1 & 2 PLUS MISDEMEANOR COURTS

Bureau A consists of two felony divisions, one misdemeanor division, and an investigator division. It is the largest prosecuting division with 56 felony prosecutors and 36 misdemeanor prosecutors, 84 investigators and 14 legal assistants. Bureau A is responsible for the professional development of all attorneys

### FELONY DISPOSITIONS



and investigators in the office and is the backbone of the prosecutor's office.

The Felony Trial Divisions prosecute all felonies committed in Dallas County that are not assigned to a special section. The felonies include cases ranging from state jail offenses to capital murder.

Dallas County has 17 District Courts that focus exclusively on criminal matters. In each court, three prosecutors and one investigator represent the State of Texas. This team reviews cases, conducts additional investigation, interviews witnesses and victims, makes plea agreement or dismissal decisions, and tries assigned cases to a judge or jury.

The Misdemeanor Division of the Dallas County District Attorney's Office handles all Class A and B Misdemeanor offenses that occur in the County. There are 13 courts that handle over 40,000 cases per year.

The Misdemeanor Division consists of 36 prosecutors and three supervisors — a Chief and two deputies. The supervisors train all new prosecutors, conduct office wide training, and facilitate the intern program. Each court has a legal assistant,



# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office

## Division Reports **Continued**

and the division has two investigators.

Two of the misdemeanor courts specialize in violence between intimate partners. These cases are assigned to those courts to both a prosecutor and a victim advocate. The victim advocates assist victims in navigating the criminal justice system, providing information regarding resources, and doing safety planning.

### GANG UNIT

The Gang Unit is tasked with prosecuting offenses involving Criminal Street Gangs. Texas Law defines a Criminal Street Gang as a group of three or more persons having a common identifying sign or symbol or an identifiable leadership who continuously or regularly associate in the commission of criminal activities.

The Gang Unit consists of three prosecutors, two investigators, and an interpreter. It works with local, state, and federal law enforcement to identify and address geographical hot spots and trends in Criminal Street Gang activity. They prosecute gang members charged with Capital Murder, Murder, Aggravated Robbery, Aggravated Assaults, and Engaging in Criminal Activity. The District Attorney's Office was able to expand its Gang Unit thanks to a new \$1.2 million grant awarded in April 2019 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) program, through the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

The popularity of Criminal Street Gangs is driven largely by popular culture. Children are joining and aligning themselves with Criminal Street Gangs at an earlier age due to the advent of social media. In an alarming trend, innocent citizens are increasingly being caught in the crossfire as battling Criminal Street Gangs settle

their petty differences on buses and trains and in malls and schools.

As part of the District Attorney's Office goals to reduce gang activity, we have partnered with DOJ and programs like Project Safe Neighborhoods which was launched in 2001.

Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide initiative that brings together federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and community leaders to identify the most pressing violent crime problems in a community and develop comprehensive solutions to address them. The project utilizes law enforcement and community intelligence, along with cutting-edge technology, to identify and target the most violent offenders for enforcement action. The strategy is to marry enforcement efforts with support of prevention and reentry strategies to truly combat violent crime in a lasting way.

As part of our approach, the District Attorney's Office will continue to focus on keeping kids out of gangs through partnerships with the community and the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD). Our mission includes education about gang awareness, intervention, and one-on-one visits to schools by our Assistant District Attorneys as part of our DAs in Schools program.

GANG UNIT HOMICIDE DISPOSTIONS RESULTING IN PRISON SENTENCE	
Total Years	242
Cases Sentenced	9
Average Sentence	26.89 years

In recognition for their work on the Dallas Safe Neighborhood Task Force, the Gang Unit and members of the Task Force were awarded The Attorney General's Award for Excellence in Law Enforcement in 2019.

The additional \$1.2 million grant through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Program will greatly assist in the prosecution of violent transnational gang members affiliated with groups like MS 13 and 18th Street gangs.





As part of the District Attorney's Office goals to reduce gang activity, we have partnered with DOJ and programs like Project Safe Neighborhoods.



# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office

## *Division Reports* Continued

### GANG UNIT

	2019	2020	TOTAL
Number of Cases Reviewed	313	1,660	1,973
Intel Meetings	34	159	193
Community Engagements	7	45	52
Trainings	6	101	107

### CASE HIGHLIGHTS

#### State of Texas vs. Gerald Munoz-Montano

Gerald Munoz-Montano, a member of the 18th Street Gang, a violent transnational gang from El Salvador, was convicted of the brutal execution of one of their members. The defendant was tried for the offense of Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity. The members of 18th Street took the victim to a remote area of unincorporated Dallas County under the false pretense of meeting up with girls. Once off the main road and out of the car, the defendants executed the victim for covering up one of his 18th Street tattoos. A Dallas County jury found the defendant guilty and sentenced him to 65 years in prison.

#### State of Texas vs. Clifton Owens

Clifton Owens, a member of 357 Crips, was convicted of Aggravated Robbery. The defendant staked out an area where members of the community cashed their checks. He then followed one such victim, created a minor car accident, and on the pretense of exchanging information, robbed the victim at gunpoint taking money from him. During the punishment phase, the State proved his gang membership through his tattoos as well as his social media usage. The jury sentenced the defendant to 25 years in prison.

### GRAND JURY/INTAKE

Law enforcement agencies file cases with the Intake/Grand Jury Division, which handles all Dallas County adult criminal offenses, from class B misdemeanors to first degree felonies and capital murder. The Intake/Grand Jury staff processes approximately 60,000 cases annually. Attorneys in the division examine each misdemeanor and felony case for both legal and factual sufficiency. The division includes 18 attorneys, 16 support staff, one investigator, and one court reporter.

Because it is the duty of all prosecutors to see that justice is done, not to convict, cases are examined to determine if the facts merit being filed in the district or county criminal courts. Once misdemeanor cases are accepted, intake attorneys draft pleadings, and the cases are then filed with the County Clerk's Office. Once felony cases are accepted by the DA's Office, cases are presented to one of four grand juries, empaneled by Dallas County district judges. District judges select the specific grand jurors to serve for a term of three months. These grand jurors are notified about the opportunity to serve by the Dallas County Central Jury Services Division and the Sheriff's Office.

If a grand jury determines (by a vote of nine members or more) that there is probable cause to indict a person, then a case is true-billed. The Grand Jury Foreman signs the indictments, which are then filed with

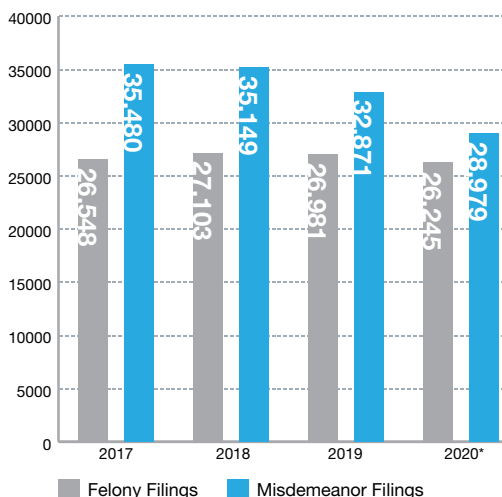
# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office

## *Division Reports* Continued

the District Clerk. If a grand jury determines that there is not probable cause to indict (eight or less grand jurors vote to true-bill the case), then the case will be no-billed.

When it is in the best interest of both the defendant and the community, the Intake/Grand Jury Division also works with the DA's Office's diversion programs, moving defendants' cases out of the state criminal justice system into alternative programs whose focus is on rehabilitation and treatment.

### CASES FILED BY LEAD ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES



### INVESTIGATORS

The Investigator Division follows the mission of the DA's office to enhance public safety and community well-being by supporting victims, holding people who commit crimes accountable, and engaging the community to prevent harm. The office maintains an environment that supports and encourages teamwork, employee growth, initiative, and outstanding performance.

The Investigator Division consists of

84 Investigators. It consists of a Chief Investigator, a Deputy Chief Investigator, four Lieutenants, 75 Sr. Sergeant Investigators and three Sergeant Investigators – all of whom are assigned to 18 different units within the District Attorney's Office. These units include: 17 Felony Courts, two misdemeanor courts, Crimes Against Children, Family Violence, Public Integrity, Conviction Integrity, Specialized Crime, Sexual Assault, Gang Unit, Organized Crime, Check Division, Grand Jury, Civil division, Restorative Justice, Juvenile Division, Animal Cruelty, and the Community Response Unit.

Investigators independently assist the assigned Assistant District Attorneys in gathering pertinent data, identifying significant factors, and recognizing solutions for cases. The investigators locate, collect, and prepare evidence for trial or plea negotiations; review various reports and other related documentation or evidence in reference to offenses; and aid in planning and organizing to prepare cases for disposition.

Investigators assist in reconstructing events, sequences, and time elements in preparation of criminal cases. They interview and notify witnesses of trial dates by serving subpoenas, summons, writs and/or making arrests. Investigators coordinate transportation and lodging of trial witnesses and conduct background checks of witnesses that may be used during trial. They also assist with the jury selection process and trial presentations.

### JUVENILE DIVISION

The Juvenile Division prosecutes crimes committed by youth at least 10 but less than 17 years old at the time of the commission of the offense. It has 29

# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office

## *Division Reports* Continued

prosecutors plus investigators and support staff. Approximately half of the employees work on cases involving matters of juvenile delinquency, and the other half work on cases involving Texas Department of Family Protective Services (TDFPS).

The Division seeks to serve the citizens of Dallas County by rehabilitating youth who may have had a youthful indiscretion and protecting youth from dangerous living situations that may be abusive or neglectful.

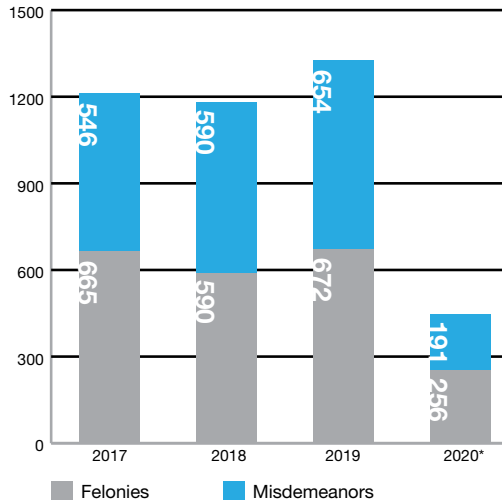
The types of offenses prosecuted by the Juvenile Division range from Class B misdemeanors like shoplifting all the way to capital murder. Although this division seeks to protect the public by rehabilitating juvenile offenders through various programs provided by the Dallas County Juvenile Department, it does not hesitate to seek confinement in the Texas Juvenile Justice Department or even certification as an adult (when warranted) for the more serious offenders.

Fortunately, violent crime represents only a fraction of the offenses we see. Therefore, we are able to utilize specialty courts and other diversion programs for many youth who wind up with a referral to the juvenile system, so that the rehabilitative needs of the youth can be met without a formal court process. In addition to other diversion programs, we utilize the following specialty courts: ESTEEM Court for girls, Diversionary Male Court for boys, Mental Health Court and Drug Court, to name a few. This division is committed to a balanced approach of seeking justice. We do not hesitate to use all legal tools to make Dallas County safer with the understanding that a youth who does not recidivate in the future will have an opportunity to be a productive member of our society.

The Juvenile Division also represents

Child Protective Services (CPS is a part of TDFPS) in cases that affect the parent-child relationship. In most of our CPS cases a child has been removed from his/her home by CPS after they determine that the child is in danger. Unfortunately, these cases sometimes result in the termination of the legal parent – child relationship. However, it often occurs that custody of the child is granted to a relative who can provide a safe environment for the child. And of course, there is always hope that the child is returned to the parent once the parent establishes that he/she can provide a safe environment for the child.

### JUVENILE CASE ADJUDICATIONS



\*There were no jury trials after March 2020 through the end of the year.



# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office *Division Reports* Continued

## **ORGANIZED CRIME**

The mission of the Organized Crime Division is to enhance public safety through just and vigorous prosecution of high-level drug trafficking offenses, gun offenses, and repeat violent offenders as well as to address the spectrum of defendants' needs, including drug addiction and criminogenic thinking, in order to help stop the cycle of recidivism and mass incarceration. The Organized Crime Division is charged with prosecuting crimes involving drug trafficking, trafficking that causes death, repeat gun possession offenders, and high level prolific violent offenders.

The division employs six prosecutors and three investigators and works closely with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to prevent and prosecute these crimes and to advocate for victims. The high volume of cases the division prosecutes necessitates the use of "specialty courts". These courts focus on litigating crimes prosecuted by our division. As a result, the attorneys assigned to this division carry a high case load and maintain an intense trial schedule.

The members of the division are also involved with the community through different organizations that focus on high crime areas in an attempt to reduce crime as well as recidivism through rehabilitation. The division participates in Project Safe Neighborhood to identify the most pressing violent crime problems in a community and develop comprehensive solutions to address those issues.

## **CASE HIGHLIGHTS:**

### **The State of Texas v. Terry Dickerson**

A jury returned a sentence of 99 years in prison for career drug dealer, Terry Dickerson who was arrested by the Dallas Police Department for operating 3 separate

drug houses. Dickerson had prior felony convictions in Oklahoma for Manslaughter and Drug Trafficking. He was convicted by the jury of possessing cocaine with intent to deliver, possession of marijuana, and unlawful possession of a firearm by a felon.

## **PUBLIC INTEGRITY DIVISION**

The Public Integrity Division (PID) handles cases involving individuals and organizations that violate the law while operating within the public's trust. Cases prosecuted by the PID entail individuals who hold certain licenses, certifications, or offices including, but not limited to, police officers, jailers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, and public officials that commit criminal offenses during the performance of their job duties.

The division consists of six Assistant District Attorneys, four Investigators and one support staff member.

The PID investigates all officer involved shooting, including security officers, and death in custody of law enforcement incidents that occur within Dallas County. These investigations consist of deploying a response team of at least one prosecutor and one investigator to every incident scene, collaborating with the primary investigating agency during the pendency of its investigation, independently investigating all facets of the incident, presenting each incident to a Grand Jury, and prosecuting any individuals that are subsequently indicted by a Grand Jury.

This division's work was highlighted by the case involving former Dallas Police Officer Amber Guyger. On September 6, 2018, former Officer Guyger entered Botham Jean's apartment, mistaking it for her own, and shot and killed him. Guyger was subsequently indicted by a Grand Jury for Murder. The case garnered worldwide

# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office

## *Division Reports* Continued

attention at the time of arrest and trial. After a two-week trial, Guyger was convicted of Murder and sentenced to ten years in prison. As a result of their exemplary work on the case, each member of the prosecution team was awarded Prosecutor of the Year honors by The Criminal Justice Section of the State Bar of Texas for 2020.

*"As your Dallas County Criminal District Attorney, I made a promise to present officer involved shooting cases to a grand jury as quickly as possible. The intent was to prevent these cases from lingering in the system for six months or longer. We want to either clear officers so they can get back to work; or when a grand jury determines probable cause, proceed with a trial before a jury."*

– John Creuzot

The Public Integrity Division expanded in January 2020 by creating a Disclosure Compliance Prosecutor position. This critical position has allowed the Dallas County District Attorney's Office to maintain timely and effective communication with law enforcement agencies and forensic laboratories regarding ongoing disclosure obligations under Brady v. Maryland, Giglio v. United States, the Michael Morton Act, and Rule 3.09(d) of the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct.

In addition to maintaining the accuracy of the District Attorney's Office's disclosure lists, the Disclosure Compliance Prosecutor serves on the Disclosure Compliance Review Committee and is responsible for conducting investigations into whether information received from police agencies and forensic laboratories necessitates disclosure.

### **SEXUAL ASSAULT UNIT**

The mission of the Dallas County District Attorney's Sexual Assault Unit is to seek justice for survivors of sexual violence and human trafficking, using a victim-centered approach and employing nationally recognized best practices while holding offenders accountable.

The unit consists of five prosecutors, five investigators, and four victim advocates. The Sexual Assault Unit is comprised of three separate but interconnected teams.

One team is comprised of two prosecutors, two investigators and a victim advocate who handled all sexual assault related and human trafficking (labor and sex) cases involving victims 17 years of age or up. In 2020, DA Creuzot expanded the unit to add an additional prosecutor position to help combat the increased filings of trafficking related offenses.

Another team comprised of 2 prosecutors, 2 investigators and 2 victim advocates investigate and prosecute cases under a Bureau of Justice federal grant received in 2015. This project, referred to as the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative, is dedicated to clearing the backlog of previously untested assault kits in Dallas County, and moving forward with the subsequent investigation and prosecution of those cases where new leads emerge due to forensic testing. This initiative is also responsible for working with the Dallas Police Department's cold case homicide unit to identify unsolved murders where sexual assault kit evidence exists that needs testing in order to generate new investigative leads.

The third team handles our human trafficking component, and it is comprised of one victim advocate/care coordinator and one investigator. The victim advocate and investigator team work together to screen all persons arrested on charges

# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office *Division Reports* Continued

of prostitution for human trafficking; to refer those persons to necessary services such as mental health, drug, job and education; and to investigate any leads of human trafficking generated by those screens. The victim advocate serves as the case manager for persons enrolled in our office's felony and misdemeanor prostitution diversion programs. Our victim advocate works closely with our domestic violence, protective orders, and intake/grand jury divisions, as well as the public defenders' office, to identify and screen potential victims of trafficking that may come to our office seeking to file charges or request a protective order against their trafficker, or who may be charged with the commission of another crime.

The Sexual Assault Unit is dedicated to following nationally recommended best practices in prosecution. They employ a trauma-informed, victim-inclusive, offender-focused approach. The Unit utilizes vertical prosecution, which is different than most prosecution units. Vertical prosecution means the prosecutors who will be handling the case post-grand jury begin working on the case to prepare it for grand jury. Only prosecutors within the Sexual Assault Unit present these cases to the grand jury.

## **SPECIALIZED CRIME DIVISION**

The Specialized Crime Division's mission is to prosecute those who perpetuate financial loss through fraud and deception on individuals and businesses throughout our community.

The Specialized Crime Division investigates and prosecutes financial crimes. The division consists of the Fraud Unit, Elder Abuse Unit, Check Unit, and the White Collar Crime Unit.

The Fraud Unit currently has eight attorneys,

five investigators and one financial analyst. Crimes of fraud involve many different schemes and types of victims. Examples of fraud cases prosecuted by the unit include employee theft, forgery, securities fraud, swindles and scams, organized retail theft, tampering with governmental records, and credit card abuse. The unit also specializes in handling mortgage fraud, insurance fraud, environmental crimes, trademark and copyright violations, and benefits fraud at Parkland Hospital.

The Elder Abuse Unit consists of two attorneys and one investigator and handles financial crimes involving an elderly victim (65 years or older). Crimes of this nature can include abuse of a power of attorney or other legal documents, theft from a victim with diminished capacity, fiduciary theft, scams and swindles, and exploitation of an elderly victim. The Unit has been a leader in Elder Abuse prosecution and has provided training to thousands of law enforcement personnel, professionals, and citizens on the topic of elder abuse.

The Check Unit is responsible for investigating and prosecuting the offenses of theft by check, forgery of financial documents, theft, and welfare fraud. The Unit currently has two felony attorneys and two attorneys who handle Class C misdemeanors in the Justice of the Peace Courts.

The White Collar Crime Unit investigates and prosecutes financial crimes. The unit consists of eight prosecutors, four investigators, and a forensic financial analyst. They prosecute many different methods and schemes of fraud and theft, such as employee theft, securities fraud, deed fraud, welfare fraud, forgeries, credit card abuse, and false statement to obtain property or credit. It also specializes in handling environmental crimes, cybersecurity crimes, and

# The Dallas County District Attorney's Office

## *Division Reports* Continued

trademark and copyright violations.

### **CASE HIGHLIGHTS: ELDER ABUSE**

#### **State of Texas v. William Neil "Doc" Gallagher**

The Dallas County District Attorney's Office conducted a joint investigation with the Texas Department of Insurance, The Texas State Securities Board, and the Hurst Police Department in the fraudulent activities of the popular Christian Radio Show Host, William Neil Gallagher, who referred to himself as the "Money Doctor."

The defendant engaged in a fraudulent investment scheme known as a Ponzi scheme through his company Gallagher Financial Group, Inc. and raised over \$20 million from investors. He targeted elderly investors and those attracted to his representation of Christian ideals and lifestyle. The 79-year-old defendant entered a plea of guilty to all charges in exchange for 25 years in prison. The court ordered the defendant to pay \$10,386,816.68, which represents the amount of loss from each of the victims named in the indictments.

# Contact Us



## Join Our Team:

Interested in joining a highly qualified and experienced team of dedicated prosecutors in the Dallas County District Attorney's Office? Send your vitae/resume to Valerie Obregon at [Valerie.Obregon@dallascounty.org](mailto:Valerie.Obregon@dallascounty.org) or send by mail to the address below.

Please note that our minimum qualifications for ALL attorney positions include:

- Juris Doctorate degree from an accredited school of law; AND
- Licensed to practice law in the State of Texas
- Please note that additional requirements may exist depending on the position to be filled



## Frank Crowley Courts Building

133 N. Riverfront Blvd.

LB 19

Dallas, TX 75207

Phone: 214.653.3600





## COMMUNITY SATELLITE OFFICES

(Pre-Screening available for Protective Orders and Elder Abuse Complaints)

### **Northeast Division, Dallas Police Department**

9915 E. Northwest Highway  
Dallas, TX 75238  
Tues/Thurs: 2-5pm

### **Cedar Hill Police Department**

285 Upton Blvd.  
Cedar Hill, TX 75104  
Thurs: 2-5pm

### **Southwest Division, Dallas Police Department**

4320 West Illinois Ave.  
Dallas, TX  
Tues: 2-5pm

### **Grand Prairie Police Department**

1525 Arkansas Ln.  
Grand Prairie, TX 75052  
Tues/Thurs: 2-5pm

### **South Central Division, Dallas Police Department**

1999 East Camp Wisdom Rd.  
Dallas, TX 75241  
Thurs: 2-5pm

### **Irving Police Family Advocacy Center**

600 W. Pioneer Dr.  
Irving, TX 75061  
Tues/Thurs: 2-5pm

### **Road & Bridge Office, District 1**

715 Rowlett Rd.  
Garland, TX 75043  
Wed. 2-5pm

### **Richardson Counseling Center**

Address provided with appt.  
469-283-0242

## COMMUNITY COURTS

(Pre-Screening available for Protective Orders Only)

### **South Oak Cliff Community Court 2111**

South Corinth Street Rd.  
Dallas, TX 75203  
Mon: 9am-5pm

### **Northeast Dallas Community Court 9451**

LBJ Freeway, Suite 125  
Dallas, TX 75243  
Mon: 9am-5pm

### **South Dallas Community Court 2922**

Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Dallas, TX 75215  
Thurs: 9am-5pm

### **West Dallas Community Court 2828**

Fishtrap Rd.  
Dallas, TX 75212  
Tues: 9am-5pm

