



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

14th Circuit Solicitor's Office

SOLICITOR DUFFIE STONE

www.scsolicitor14.org

[f @FourteenthCircuitSolicitorsOffice](https://www.facebook.com/FourteenthCircuitSolicitorsOffice)
[YouTube 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)



Michelle Fraser

14th Circuit Victims
Services Center director

Heather Dollar, RN

14th Circuit Solicitor's
Office SANE coordinator

a First in Forensics

How the Solicitor's Office is reducing trauma for child victims of sexual assault with a first-of-its kind new exam room.

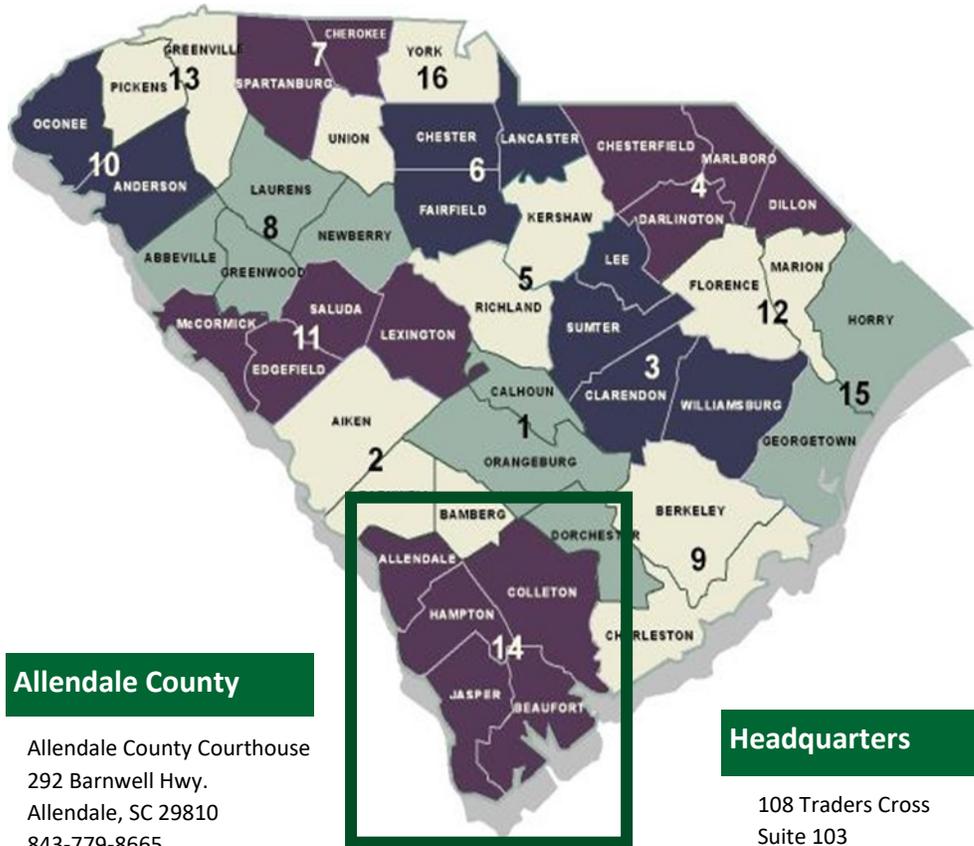
PAGE 15

Solicitor's Office overview

The 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office is the chief prosecuting agency for Allendale, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties. The only five-county circuit in South Carolina, the 14th Circuit encompasses 3,256 square miles — more than one-tenth of the entire state — in the renowned Lowcountry. The circuit is home to more than 283,600 people, according to 2018 U.S. Census estimates.

The primary role of the Solicitor's Office is to prosecute all cases in General Sessions Court and all criminal cases in Family Court. Additionally, the office operates several prevention and diversionary programs, including pre-trial intervention, worthless check recovery, alcohol education, traffic education, treatment-based courts and juvenile arbitration.

Solicitor Duffie Stone leads the office. He was appointed by the governor in 2006 and re-elected in 2008, 2012 and 2016.



Allendale County

Allendale County Courthouse
292 Barnwell Hwy.
Allendale, SC 29810
843-779-8665
803-914-2176 (fax)

Headquarters

108 Traders Cross
Suite 103
Bluffton, SC 29909
843-779-8477
843-705-7479 (fax)
info@scsolicitor14.org

Beaufort County

Beaufort County Courthouse
102 Ribaut Road
Beaufort, SC 29902
843-779-8477
843-705-7479 (fax)

Hampton County

Hampton County Courthouse
80 Elm St. West
Hampton, SC 29924
843-779-8689
803-914-2176 (fax)

Mailing address

Post Office Box 1880
Bluffton, SC 29910

Colleton County

Colleton County Courthouse
101 Hampton St.
Walterboro, SC 29488
843-779-8716
843-549-6327 (fax)

Jasper County

Jasper County Courthouse
265 Russell St.
Ridgeland, SC 29936
843-779-8729
843-705-7479 (fax)

Web & social media

Website:
www.scsolicitor14.org



Facebook:
@FourteenthCircuitSolicitorsOffice



YouTube channel:
14th Circuit Solicitor's Office



Twitter:
@14thSolicitor

What's inside

A message from Solicitor Duffie Stone

Just one year ago, I used this space to tell you about the inroads the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office and its partners are making to help victims of rape, domestic violence and other crimes against the vulnerable. Momentous as the 2018 opening of the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center was, that was a launch point, not an endpoint.

In fact, I am pleased to tell you that 2019 saw the addition of critical, new components of the Victims Services Center. A medical exam room and a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program will greatly improve our response to the most vulnerable of victims across the 14th Circuit – children.

This community report will tell you more about the exam room. It also contains a profile of Heather Dollar. Our new full-time sexual assault nurse examiner oversees the exam facility, as well as training programs for law enforcement and aspiring sexual assault nurse examiners. As with most of the operations at the 14th Circuit Victims Center, these improvements come at no additional expense to taxpayers. The Solicitor's Office was able to hire Dollar with a Victims of Crime Act grant. The center and exam room have also been outfitted largely through grant money and support from local philanthropic organizations, such as the Zonta Club of Hilton Head Island and the Kiwanis Club of Bluffton.

This center has been a vision for me and my staff for several years. There are a handful of victims assistance centers in South Carolina, in which a multi-disciplinary team of service providers assemble under one roof. However, none have earned the "Family Justice Center" designation from the Alliance for Hope. That requires, among other criteria, the presence of a specialized prosecutorial unit, which we already provide. It is my intent to build upon what we have started and bring the state's first Family Justice Center to South Carolina.

We have other success stories to share with you, as well. Our Career Criminal Unit – the team of experienced attorneys who prosecute the circuit's most violent and habitual offenders – secured life sentences in three cases and convictions against 30 of the 31 defendants it prosecuted in 2019. Our Special Victims Unit, in its second full year of operation, prosecuted more than 200 cases of criminal sexual assault, domestic violence and crimes against vulnerable people. Our intelligence unit played a pivotal role in several important cases. Our diversionary programs helped hundreds of offenders get their lives straight without going to prison.

I owe many thanks to the legion who have supported the 14th Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office – from our colleagues in law enforcement, to our partners in the Victims Services Center, to the civic groups who contribute time and money to our projects. I am grateful to all who have helped us achieve more professional, efficient and effective prosecution. I hope you find this report informative. Please contact me if I can be of service.



Yours sincerely,

DUFFIE STONE
14th CIRCUIT SOLICITOR



Contents

- By the numbers..... 3-4**
- Stone leads NDAA 5**
- Career Criminal Unit..... 6-14**
- Assistant Solicitor Tameaka Legette's long history of community service recognized by U.S. Attorney's Office 6-7
- Federal prosecution.....12-13*
- Victims Services15-21**
- Solicitor's Office meets critical need for pediatric sexual assault nurse examiner with hiring of Heather Dollar.....15-16
- Victims Center partners ..17-18*
- Special Victims Unit.....19-21*
- Intelligence Unit.....22-24**
- How intelligence-gathering transforms modern prosecution
- Diversionary programs ..25-26**
- Communications 27**



The Solicitor's Office by the numbers ...

2019 convictions

Fourteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office prosecutors secured convictions on nearly 2,000 charges in 2019, either by guilty pleas or jury verdicts. Here's a partial breakdown of the convictions, by offense:

Drugs 406

Includes possession, possession with intent to distribute

Domestic violence 196

Includes all levels of domestic violence charges, child neglect, etc.

Fraud and forgery 129

Includes fraud, forgery, identity theft and related crimes

Firearms offenses 125

Includes illegal carry and possession, use during violent crime

Assault and battery 110

Includes all levels, from simple assault to high and aggravated

Failure to stop for blue light 86

Includes illegal carry and possession, use during violent crime

Burglary 62

Includes all levels

DUI 37

Includes felony-level offenses, including DUI resulting in death

Sex crimes 29

Includes criminal sexual conduct, exploitation of minors

Armed robbery 23

Includes all levels

Homicides 16

Includes murder, manslaughter

41

Number of cellphone extractions performed by our intelligence and investigations team for circuit law-enforcement agencies in 2019. We can gain valuable information from cellphones, but extractions and analysis take many hours, special training and special equipment. This is one of several services our investigators provide for law-enforcement agencies, many of which have small forces and budgets. We also assist in crime-scene processing and internet intelligence-gathering. For more on our Intelligence Unit, see **Page 22**.



The 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office collected and disbursed \$168,870 through its worthless check program in 2019. The Worthless Check Unit helps businesses and individuals recoup financial losses resulting from bad checks. It is offered free of charge to victims of bad checks. Additional fees collected from offenders fund the program. As might be expected from the circuit's most-populous county, Beaufort County led the way with \$69,309 collected, followed closely by Jasper with \$61,870 recovered for victims of bad checks.



Through the end of 2019, Hunter Swanson, the leader of the Solicitor's Office Special Victims Unit, had earned guilty verdicts in all nine jury trials involving SVU charges. (During that time, she also earned two additional convictions at trial from cases assigned to her before the SVU was formed in late 2017.) For more on the Solicitor's Office SVU, see **Page 19**.

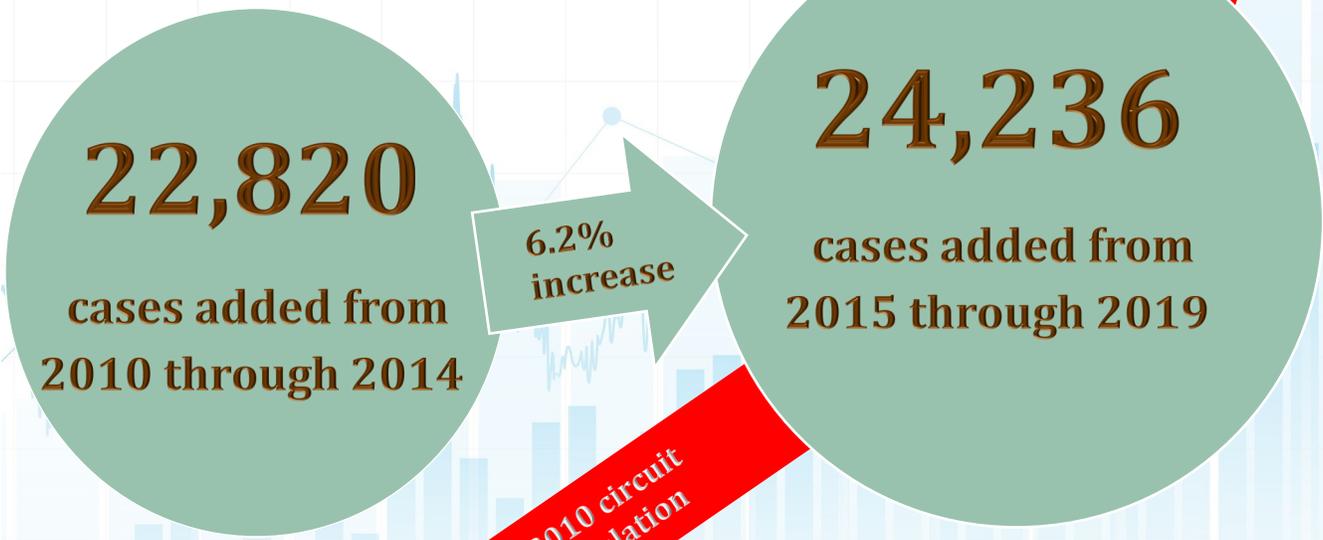
How to keep population growth from becoming a crime explosion

The 2010s brought an increase in the number of cases sent to the 14th Circuit Solicitor’s Office for prosecution. In fact, it was assigned 6.2 percent more cases during the second half of the decade than in the first half. However, this rise is relatively small compared to the 10.1-percent increase in the population of the 14th Circuit from 2010 to 2019. Many factors, including more effective law-enforcement and economic prosperity, likely help explain a more law-abiding populace. The Solicitor’s Office almost certainly played an important role, as well. The Career Criminal Unit is designed to secure maximum penalties for the circuit’s most habitual and violent offenders – the 20 percent of criminals who are re-

sponsible for 80 percent of the offenses. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the Solicitor’s Office greatly expanded its diversionary programs, which seek to rehabilitate offenders before they become career criminals.

283,600: 2019 circuit population

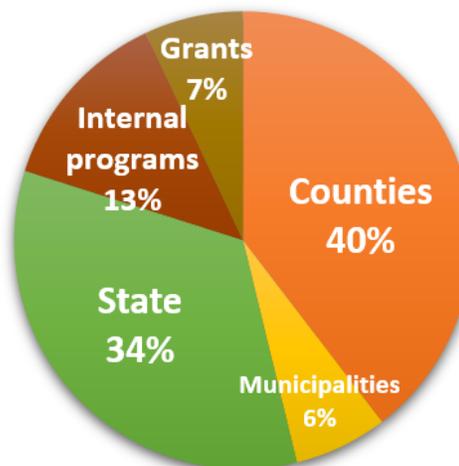
257,557: 2010 circuit population



22

The number of sexual assault exams performed by Heather Dollar in the first three months of the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center nurse-examiner program. Adult victims were examined at area hospitals, but six children were examined in the Victims Services Center exam room, which opened in October. Formerly, child victims of sexual assault had to travel to the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston for an exam. The Solicitor’s Office facility greatly reduces the travel burden and brings families into the proximity of other services they might need. For more on Dollar and the exam room, see Page 15.

Where our funding comes from



The Solicitor’s Office receives funding from several sources. About 45 percent comes from a combination of five county and four municipal governments that benefit most directly from our programs. However, more than half of the office’s funding comes from other sources — the General Assembly, grants and revenue generated by the office’s internal programs, such as Pretrial Intervention.

Stone uses NDAA platform to fight against child exploitation, for career prosecutors

Before he was even formally sworn in as the 68th president of the National District Attorneys Association, 14th Circuit Solicitor Duffie Stone had already testified before the U.S. Senate concerning internet child exploitation and met with members of Congress about helping local prosecutors pay off their student debts.

Stone said diving right in was essential to making the most of his one-year presidency, which began in July 2019.

“I have derived tremendous benefit from my involvement in the NDAA, and so have people in South Carolina’s 14th Judicial Circuit,” Stone said. “Many of the innovations and success stories you’ll read about in this report can be traced to ideas hatched during NDAA programs or discussions with other NDAA members. “I’m honored to have been selected as this organization’s president. That’s why I tried to set an ambitious agenda for my tenure, so that the NDAA continues to be the vital, idea-driven organization that has been so inspiring to me.”

Formed in 1950, the NDAA has more than 5,100 members across the nation representing state and local prosecutors’ offices from both urban and rural districts, as well as large and small jurisdictions. The organization works with Congress on law-



Fourteenth Circuit Solicitor Duffie Stone testifies before a Senate committee concerning the exploitation of children on the internet in July 2019. He was sworn in as president of the National District Attorneys Association later in the month.

enforcement and prosecution issues and trains prosecutors across the United States.

Stone’s inaugural address was a spirited reminder to prosecutors that they have, for decades, been at the fore of criminal-justice reform, driving such innovations as drug-treatment courts and child-advocacy centers. He said it is important to combat the false narrative that prosecutors seek only to lock up criminals and throw away the key.

Stone’s agenda also includes working with Congress to fund the John R. Justice student-loan forgiveness program.

“There are people throughout

the country who want to be career prosecutors and public defenders but cannot afford to do so due to crippling student loan debt,” Stone said. “If we are to tackle some of today’s most pressing criminal justice issues like the opioid crisis, we need both experienced prosecutors and public defenders. The John R. Justice program is one of those ways we can provide a career path for these public servants.”

Stone also wants to create regional training facilities throughout the country.

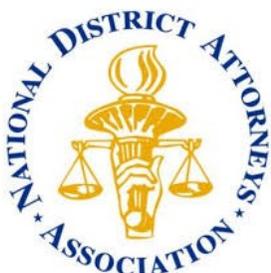
“The NDAA has trained thousands of prosecutors over the years with the only limitation

being the offices’ ability to send their prosecutors to the classes,” Stone said.

Stone added that he wants NDAA training to be available to all prosecution offices, regardless of size or budget, and aims to establish local training facilities.

“This helps the prosecutors and the communities they serve – communities like mine – by bringing in top-notch national training,” he said.

Stone is only the second South Carolinian to serve as NDAA president. The first was the late Sixth Circuit Solicitor John R. Justice, for whom the student-loan forgiveness program was named.



“Many of the innovations and success stories you’ll read about in this annual report can be traced to ideas hatched during NDAA programs or discussions with other NDAA members.”

◆ **Solicitor Duffie Stone**

Career Criminal Unit

“Tameaka, you can be anything you want to be. Just don’t be one of those lying, cheating lawyers.”

◆ **Assistant Solicitor Tameaka Legette, on her father’s career advice to her**



U.S. Attorney’s Office recognizes assistant solicitor with John R. Justice Community Leadership Award

When Tameaka Legette was a little girl, she often followed behind her father as he walked the family’s property in rural South Carolina. Talking as they went, one day their discussion turned to her future, and that’s when Legette’s father issued the commandment that determined what she would be when she grew up:

“Tameaka, you can be anything you want to be. Just don’t be one of those lying, cheating lawyers.”

If her father intended to dissuade Legette from law school, it had the opposite effect. She decided on the spot to become a lawyer – just not the kind that lies or cheats.

Legette has been a prosecutor for the 14th Circuit Solicitor’s Office since 2002, the year she graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law. After stints as a community prosecutor for Allendale and Hampton counties, she was promoted to the Career Criminal Unit, handling cases that involve the most violent and habitual offenders in Colleton and Hampton counties.

The Solicitor’s Office is a natural home for an attorney with a longing for justice and a

strong moral compass, she says.

“A friend reminded me just the other day that when we were growing up, I was always the conscience of the group,” Legette recalled. “I was raised in the church, so I always had a keen sense of things in society that are right and things in society that are wrong.

“... Being a prosecutor was a logical step for me. I could fulfill what my daddy said – not be a lying, cheating lawyer – and at the same time do what is in my core as a human being.”

Also part of that core is Legette’s sense of community.

Though Legette didn’t grow up in Allendale or Hampton, the people there and their pace of life reminded her of her rural hometown. So she put down roots. Legette helped start a special court in Hampton for criminal domestic violence cases and once was a marshal in the county’s Martin Luther King Day parade.

Legette’s efforts were recognized when she received the 2019 John R. Justice Community Leadership Award. That recognition is bestowed by the U.S. Attorney’s Office upon an assistant solicitor from the state of South Carolina who has exhibited exemplary community service or implemented innovative

solutions to advance public safety. The award is named for longtime Sixth Circuit Solicitor John R. Justice, who held office more than three decades and has the second-longest tenure of any South Carolina solicitor.

“This award reflects Assistant Solicitor Legette’s dedication and commitment to making her community a safer place,” said 14th Circuit Solicitor Duffie Stone. “To her, her work as a prosecutor is a calling.”

Answering the call has not come without sacrifice, however.

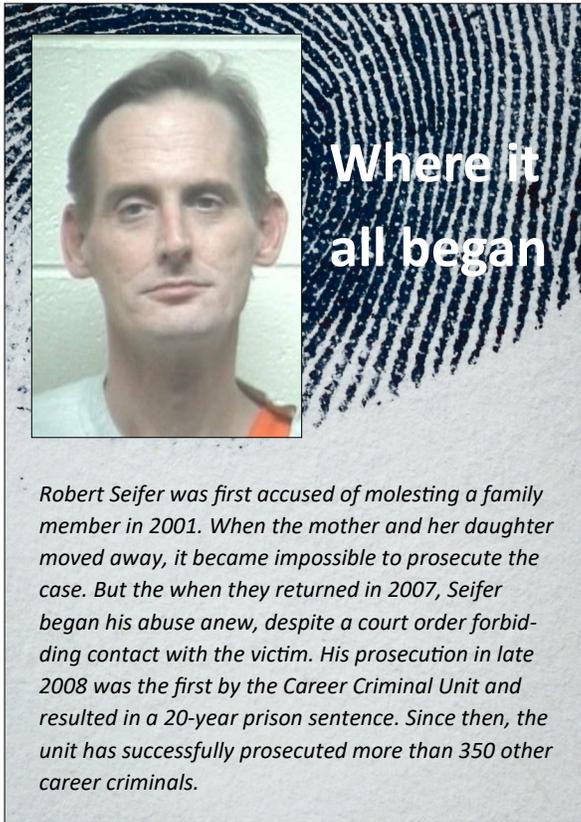
One of Legette’s law-school classmates has traveled the world and owns several houses. Another was recently made a partner in a prestigious law firm. Legette said she is happy for their success, but “In my heart, I need to be able to lie down and sleep at night. And when I meet my maker, if I have to give my life tonight, I want to be able to hear, ‘Well done.’ That’s more important to me.”

So far, so good: Through 2019, Legette had secured convictions against 64 of the 67 career criminals she has tried since 2011, the year she joined the elite unit of Solicitor’s Office attorneys.

Please see LEGETTE on Page 7

Career Criminal Unit

Career Criminal Unit continues success prosecuting worst of circuit's offenders



Robert Seifer was first accused of molesting a family member in 2001. When the mother and her daughter moved away, it became impossible to prosecute the case. But when they returned in 2007, Seifer began his abuse anew, despite a court order forbidding contact with the victim. His prosecution in late 2008 was the first by the Career Criminal Unit and resulted in a 20-year prison sentence. Since then, the unit has successfully prosecuted more than 350 other career criminals.

The Career Criminal Unit is one of the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office overwhelming success stories because it is predicated upon two unassailable truths. First, a large percentage of crimes are committed by a disproportionately small number of criminals. Second, these criminals do not typically specialize in any particular crime, nor do they confine their activity to any particular political or geographical jurisdiction.

As Solicitor Duffie Stone often notes, "what many describe as a 'crime' problem is actually a criminal problem."

To solve it, the Solicitor's Office uses intelligence-gathering and objective measures to identify career criminals. Cases involving these criminals are then assigned to one of the prosecutors in our Career Criminal Unit. This team of five of the office's most accomplished assistant solicitors, plus Stone and Deputy Solicitor Sean Thornton, is devoted exclusively to the prosecution of the circuit's most serious and habitual offenders. Their

focus is to secure convictions that bring stiff penalties, thereby reducing the region's crime rate and making our communities safer.

From the team's inception in late 2008 through the end of 2019, the Career Criminal Unit earned convictions against 357 of the 371 defendants it prosecuted – a conviction rate of 96 percent.

In 2019, the Career Criminal Unit

2019 Career Criminal Unit performance

COUNTY	Convictions	Defendants	Percentage
Allendale	1	1	100%
Beaufort	16	17	94.1%
Colleton	5	5	100%
Hampton	4	4	100%
Jasper	4	4	100%
TOTAL	30	31	96.8%

enjoyed another successful year, with convictions against 30 of the 31 offenders it prosecuted. Defendants received more than 475 years in prison sentences, a figure that does not include five life sentences. Offenses included murder (eight counts), manslaughter (four counts), attempted murder (three counts), criminal sexual assault of a minor (three counts) and driving under the influence resulting in fatality (one count).

LEGETTE

Continued from Page 6

Legette's younger brother urged her to keep a scrapbook of news articles chronicling her career. One describes how she earned the first murder conviction in Allendale County in at least 30 years. Another recounts one of that county's first convictions on a felony drug charge, a victory that earned her a proclamation from the man who hired her, former Solicitor Randolph Murdaugh III.

But Legette also keeps clippings about cases she did not win.

"Actually, I've learned more from the cases where the defendant has been found not guilty than I have through the convictions,"

Legette said. "It forces you to wonder, 'How could I have done this better, or this better, or this better?'"

"And I think it also serves to keep you humble. Pride is of the devil."

One case in particular – an Allendale home-invasion and rape case – still gnaws at Legette years after the verdict. She had a credible, cooperative victim; DNA evidence; and no doubt about the defendant's guilt. The jury acquitted, anyway.

"That's the last time I ever walked into a courtroom thinking I knew exactly what a jury will do," Legette said.

She still keeps an eye out for the defendant's name when she reads newspaper crime reports and listens for it while watching television news. Legette believes the de-

fendant will offend again and that there will be another crack at justice – if not with her prosecuting the case, then with someone else.

"I believe it because ours was the righteous cause," she says wistfully.

Cases like that are just one of a thousand ways the job can wrench a prosecutor's heart, Legette says. That's true regardless of the verdict.

Convictions might bring justice and a sense of a job well done. However, many crimes leave a trail of unhealed victims. What's more, the guilty often have innocent friends and families who will share in the pain of their loved one's imprisonment.

Please see AWARD on Page 8

Career Criminal Unit

Career Criminal prosecutors



Sean Thornton
Deputy Solicitor,
team leader



Mary Jones
Beaufort County



Carra Henderson
Federal prosecutor



Tameaka Legette
Allendale, Colleton,
Hampton counties



Kimberly Smith
Beaufort County



Hunter Swanson
SVU leader



Dustin Whetsel
Jasper County

Career Criminal investigators



Dylan Hightower



JoJo Woodward



Donald Hipp

CCU CASE FILE: Allendale County



Traivon Young is interviewed by Fairfax police after he murdered 24-year-old Nigel Mandela Walker in 2017.

Defendant: Traivon Young
Prosecutor: Reed Evans
Charge: Murder, possession of a weapon during commission of a violent crime.

Crime: In April 2017, Young and 24-year-old Nigel Mendela Walker had gathered at a third friend's home in Fairfax. A witness said they exited their home after hearing a shot, then found Walker shot once and Young holding a gun. Young walked toward Walker and fired his gun five more times, striking Walker's legs, back and arms. Young then got into his truck and slowly drove away.

Walker was airlifted to an Augusta hospital, where he later died of his injuries. Young was found guilty of murder and possession of a weapon during the commission of a violent crime.

"The defendant took his close friend's life in view of three mutual friends and showed no regret or remorse," Evans said. "I hope that Mr. Walker's family finds comfort in the jury's decision."

Sentence: 38 years for murder; five years for possession of a weapon during commission of a violent crime, to be served concurrently.

AWARD

Continued from Page 7

"I can take some satisfaction that justice is served, but celebrate a win? No," Legette says, shaking her head. "No."

Nonetheless, Legette says she finds satisfaction in work as a career-criminal prosecution, which allows her to become immersed in more complex cases.

She also has been part of the Solicitor's Office partnership with U.S. Justice Department to prosecute firearms and gang crimes and helped secure convictions in each of the 16 federal cases pursued as part of the project.

Among her most gratifying victories on the

Career Criminal Unit was a murder case that took her back to Allendale County. Though convinced of the defendant's guilt, she was not as confident she would sway the jury: She had only three pieces of compelling evidence when court week began, and the judge deemed one of them inadmissible.

Nonetheless, an Allendale jury returned a guilty verdict.

The presiding judge, the Honorable William H. Seals Jr., was so impressed with Legette's work that he wrote a letter to her parents. In it, Seals, called their daughter "perfectly prepared, professional, well-mannered, respectful and an excellent attorney." He also called her closing argument one of the best he had ever seen.

"My mother called and read it to me verba-

tim over the phone," Legette recalled. "I could feel my mother smiling as she read the letter to me."

Her father, equally pleased when he came home from work later that day and read the letter, had long since warmed to the idea of his daughter becoming a lawyer. In fact, when Legette was wracked by writer's block in law school and considered dropping out, her father scolded her back into class.

"My parents taught me to stand by your word, go to work on time, pay your bills," Legette said. "They have really instilled morals in me and set high expectations. ...

"And it's our fathers who really call forth our identities. Unbeknownst to my daddy, that's exactly what he did for me the day he said those things about lawyers."

Career Criminal Unit

CCU CASE FILE: Beaufort County



Solicitor Duffie Stone, left, called defendant John Ira Duncan III down from the stand to cross-examine him during his 2019 murder trial. Town of Hilton Head Island surveillance video, shown on the television screen, and Solicitor’s Office Investigator Dylan Hightower’s cellphone analysis helped secure a guilty verdict. The jury needed just 11 minutes of deliberation.

Intel Unit cinches conviction in Hilton Head murder

Defendant: John Ira Duncan III
Prosecutor: Solicitor Duffie Stone. Deputy Solicitor Sean Thornton and Assistant Solicitor Julie Butner assisted.

Charge: Murder, possession of a weapon during commission of a violent crime.

Crime: The dispute began when one Hilton Head high school student took marijuana from another high school student, but sped away without paying for it. It ended two days later when Duncan tracked down Dominique Williams on a busy pedestrian path near the island’s Coligny Circle and shot him in the face.

The shooting was captured from a distance by a town surveillance camera.

“It didn’t bother Duncan to shoot and kill Dominique Williams in front of a crowd of people,” Solicitor Stone said. “In fact, I’m convinced he wanted a crowd because in his mind, doing something so brazen in full public view earned him the respect he so badly craved.”

“It didn’t bother (Duncan) to shoot and kill Dominique Williams in front of a crowd of people. ... In his mind, doing something so brazen in full public view earned him the respect he so badly craved.”

◆ Solicitor Duffie Stone

Ironically, Duncan’s very public act — committed in broad daylight, no less — produced only a few eyewitnesses who could positively identify him as the shooter. Most of those people were friends of Williams, whose accounts of the shooting and the events leading to it were challenged by the defense.

In fact, Duncan took the stand and tried to convince jurors he had been threatened by Williams.

It would not be Duncan’s word against the witnesses’ however. Stone and Investigator Dylan Hightower, the leader of the So-

licitor’s Office intelligence unit, gathered evidence from social media and cellphone records to demonstrate Duncan was the hunter, not the hunted.

In text messages and social-media posts, Duncan not only boasted that he would kill Williams; he indicated, first, that he was looking for a gun, then that he had found one.

Hightower also matched cell tower records with town and private surveillance-camera footage to trace Duncan’s path on the day of the murder, from a family gathering in Hardeeville earlier

that day to Coligny Circle, where Williams was rumored to be.

As friends exchanged texts and phone calls with Duncan, they began to suspect he was serious about his stated intent to kill Williams. One witness told jurors that, during a phone conversation with Duncan, he tried to talk him out of any rash action.

Though the witness’ pleas went unheeded, his testimony was corroborated by phone records that proved the conversations he described took place when he said they did and lasted as long as he said they did.

Hightower was the final of 16 witnesses Stone called during the two-day trial. The jury needed just 11 minutes to find Duncan guilty.

“Dylan did such a good job of using evidence to summarize the events that led to Williams’ murder that it was almost like having two closing arguments,” Stone said. “He really painted a complete picture for the jury.”

Sentence: 37 years.

CCU CASE FILE:  Colleton County

Conspiracy uncovered in drug deal gone bad

**Corey Sanders****Dana Castillo-Martinez****Harold Hatchell**

Defendants: Corey Niko Sanders, Dana Castillo-Martinez, Harold Hatchell.

Prosecutor: Tameaka Legette

Charge: Voluntary manslaughter (Sanders); attempted armed robbery (Martinez); accessory before the fact of a felony (Hatchell.)

Crime: On the day he died, 29-year-old Joey Leeman of Colleton County acquired a batch of crystal methamphetamine and arranged for Martinez, one of his regular customers, to make a purchase. The exchange was to take place that night in the backyard of a home on Nunuville Road, where one of Leeman's friends lived.

As the drug deal was being negotiated, Sanders emerged from the darkness with a handgun, pulled Leeman's girlfriend from the vehicle in which she and Leeman sat, and threatened to shoot her unless Leeman handed over his drugs and money. Leeman refused and pulled his own gun. Sanders then shot and killed Leeman before speeding away with Martinez in the vehicle she drove to the buy.

Colleton County Sheriff's Office



Colleton County Sheriff's deputies search the scene where Joey Leeman was killed by Corey Sanders.

investigators discovered that, just before the murder, Martinez let Sanders out of the car so he could approach on foot with the gun, part of a plan to rob Leeman. The vehicle belonged to Hatchell, who also was let out with Sanders but did not approach the scene of the drug deal. Castillo-Martinez also told investigators a fourth man, Dale Hickman, hatched the plan to rob Leeman and provided the gun Sanders used to shoot him. Hickman also hid the firearm after Leeman's death.

Martinez pleaded guilty in October 2018 and cooperated with prosecutors. Her sentencing was delayed until the case against the other defendants was concluded. Sanders and Hatchell also pled guilty to the charges against them. Hickman was shot to death before he could stand trial. At that crime scene, authorities rolled over Hickman's body to discover the gun that had been used to kill Leeman.

Sentence: 25 years (Sanders); 10 years (Martinez); 3 years (Hatchell).

CCU CASE FILE:  Jasper County

Farcical alibi doesn't help man evade murder rap

Defendant: David Hugue

Prosecutor: Dustin Whetsel

Charge: Murder, possession of a weapon during commission of a violent crime.

Crime: Hugue, a Ridgeland man, shot an acquaintance after their argument turned violent, then concocted an elaborate alibi in an attempt to cover it up. Lamar Heyward, 34, also of Ridgeland, died of a single gunshot wound on his way to the hospital.

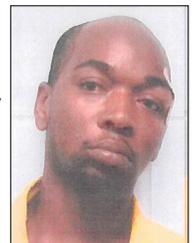
"David Hugue tried to settle a dispute with a gun," said Whetsel, who called 18 witnesses during the three-day trial in October 2019. "This was a blatant act of violence that he tried to deny with a story full of blatant lies. He's behind bars now because of dogged detective work by multiple agencies."

Hugue and Heyward were among five people in a mobile home on Westberry Street, in the

Old House area near Ridgeland. The two began arguing, then stepped outside, ostensibly to fight. However, almost as soon as they were through the front door, Hugue shot Heyward, then ran away. None of the other men saw Hugue fire the shot, but one went outside upon hearing the gunfire and saw Hugue running away.

Hugue was questioned later that night at a home about a half

mile away, where he lived with a relative. He told Jasper County Sheriff's deputies that he had been with his girlfriend in Beaufort all night. However, Solicitor's Office investigators

**David Hugue**

Please see HUGUE on Page 11

Career Criminal Unit

CCU CASE FILE: Hampton County

Man murdered underage girlfriend, unborn son

Defendant: Johnny Lee McKnight
Prosecutor: Hunter Swanson
Charge: Murder (x2), attempted murder (x3), discharging a firearm into a dwelling, possession of a firearm during commission of a violent crime.
Crime: Alydia Ling – 16 years old and just three weeks away from her unborn son’s expected delivery date – was walking on the sidewalk outside her Estill home one evening in August 2017 when Johnny Lee McKnight drove up in his blue 1992 Honda Accord and ordered her to get in.



Johnny Lee McKnight

neck. She died on the scene, and efforts to save her unborn son were unsuccessful. McKnight was apprehended the next day in Bamberg

County. Although the rifle he used was never recovered, gunshot residue tests on the Honda indicated that a firearm was discharged inside the car. Also recovered were photos from McKnight’s cellphone of an assault-style rifle and magazines with 30-round capacity. Clothes recovered from the truck contained gunshot residue and McKnight’s DNA

The DNA test also confirmed that McKnight was the father of Alydia’s unborn son.

McKnight was found guilty of all charges by a Hampton County General Sessions Court jury on Feb. 7, 2019.

Sentence: Two life sentences, plus 30 years for each of the attempted murders, 10 years for discharging a firearm into a dwelling and five years for possession of a weapon during commission of a violent crime.

McKnight, 37 at the time, had lured Ling into a sexual relationship, and her family deeply distrusted him. Alydia’s brother, Shamond, was on the home’s porch and saw McKnight drive up. He told his sister to get in the house. Shamond Ling and McKnight argued, then McKnight sped away. However, when McKnight reached the end of the block, he turned around and drove back to the house. He began shouting from his car, then pointed a rifle out the driver’s side window and sprayed gunfire. Alydia, standing in the home’s doorway, was in the



The charred bed where the remains of Teresa Siegler were discovered. Siegler was murdered by Brian Walls, Courtney Brock and John Priestler. About a day later, Priestler set her mobile home afire with her body in it to destroy evidence of the killing.

CCU CASE FILE: Beaufort County

Trio killed their disabled neighbor for her drugs

Defendants: Brian Walls, Courtney Brock, John Priestler
Prosecutor: Hunter Swanson
Charge: Murder (Walls and Brock); murder and arson (Priester)

Crime: Firefighters battling flames inside the home of 56-year-old Teresa Seigler in December 2016 entered the master bedroom and saw what they believed to be the outline of a human body beneath blankets on the bed. Moving quickly to remove the person from the

conflagration, they discovered the blankets had been bound in duct tape, and once outside, found Seigler’s wrists also had been bound. The scene of the fire had just become a murder scene, as well.

Seigler was known as a kindly woman, who would help down-on-their-luck neighbors – like the people who had recently huddled into a house two lots down. Brian Walls lived there with

Please see PLOT on Page 12

HUGUE

Continued from Page 10

analyzed cellphone records and discovered Hugue’s phone was connected to a cell tower near the murder scene at about the

time of the incident. Sheriff’s Office and Solicitor’s Office investigators found several other discrepancies in Hugue’s story.

He named the girl he was with that night, describing her, the vehicle she drove and even what

the grandchildren called her grandfather. However, authorities could find no such person. Hugue also told authorities he and his girlfriend ate at the Checkers Restaurant in Beaufort. However, that establishment closed 10 years earlier and had

long since been demolished when Hugue shot Heyward to death in 2017.

Sentence: 30 years for murder; 5 years for possession of a weapon during commission of a violent crime, to be served concurrently.

Career Criminal Unit

PLOT

Continued from Page 11

several relatives, as well as Courtney Brock and John Priester. Seigler was mostly confined to a wheelchair, received a monthly check and used it to fill prescriptions for various pain medications. Shortly after receiving her most recent check and filling her prescriptions, Walls, Brock and Priester entered her home, beat her to death, then stole



Brian Walls



Courtney Brock



John Priester

her pain medication and debit card. A day or so later, Priester returned with a can of gasoline, doused the interior of Seigler's home and set it ablaze in an attempt to cover their tracks.

It didn't work.

An eye witness saw Priester carrying the gas can moments before the fire erupted. Investigators also found fingerprints and DNA belonging to the perpetrators on the duct tape used to constrain Seigler. Walls and Brock were apprehended near the North Carolina border with Seigler's debit card and prescription pill bottles in their possession, along with a roll of duct tape.

In separate proceedings, from summer 2019 to early 2020, each of the three defendants was convicted of murder, and Priester also

pled guilty to arson.

"Beyond her prescription drugs and a monthly check, about the only other thing Teresa had to her name was a generous heart," said Assistant Solicitor Hunter Swanson, who prosecuted the case. "Even though she had her own troubles and was of modest means, she was known for helping out neighbors who were struggling to pay bills or buy groceries.

"These three were among the people Seigler befriended, and they took ultimate advantage of the situation."

Sentence: 40 years for murder (Walls); 30 years for murder (Brock); 30 years for murder, 20 for arson, to be served concurrently (Priester).



Joey Barfield once directed criminal enterprises in Bamberg and Allendale counties. Now, he's in federal prison, thanks to innovative work by the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office Career Criminal Unit.

CCU makes federal case out of gun, drug offenses

In July 2016, Earl T. Frazier returned home following an 11-year stint with the South Carolina Department of Corrections for armed robbery.

Two weeks later, police officers in the small town of Allendale were summoned to a domestic dispute. A woman said she was being assaulted by her boyfriend and he had a gun. When officers arrived, they found Frazier fire a .45-caliber handgun into the air. At the sight of officers, Frazier dropped the gun and was arrested without incident.

That gun had been a disturbing welcome-home gift from fellow street-gang

member Joey Barfield. The Gangsta Disciples homecomings entailed a felon rearming other felons.

By most accounts, Barfield is a career criminal. In April 2003, he was convicted of killing a dog. Seven months later, he was convicted of burglary. For these charges, Barfield received two years' probation. In November 2004, he committed another burglary and then a month later, three more. For those offenses, Barfield received a 10-year sentence.

Please see BARFIELD on Page 13

Barfield

Continued from Page 12

Barfield’s common-law wife described the street gang as being “involved in a few shootings here and there and are also active in the drug trade.”

When state and local officials raided Barfield’s house, they found a .45-caliber pistol loaded with eight rounds, one round in the chamber and the hammer cocked back. They found a .223-caliber A-15 rifle. It was loaded with 30 rounds. A black backpack contained a .40-caliber Glock pistol with 10 rounds. The assault rifle and backpack were found within 3 feet of a 3-year-old’s bed. Agents found two 12-gauge shotguns, a stun gun, one knife and a small amount of cocaine.

Yet, Barfield, a repeat offender, hadn’t violated the state law, which he was essentially thumbing his nose at. This was a problem. The 14th Circuit Solicitor’s Office found a solution.

Advantage of federal prosecution

Federal law prohibits any felon from possessing a firearm. State code expressly prohibits only some violent felons from doing so. Further, omissions from the list of crimes considered “violent” might strike the layman as odd. For example, daytime burglaries and some domestic-violence offenses are not included. That’s right. A crime with “violence” in its name is not necessarily considered a violent crime.

As a result, state-level prosecutors can have difficulty securing stiff sentences against habitual offenders, assuming they can bring a case against them at all.

CCU CASE FILE: Federal Court

Jasper kingpin gets federal sentence

Prosecutor: Carra Henderson

Charge: Conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine

Crime: For years, Demetrius Swinton used manipulation, violence and fear to maintain control over a drug-trafficking organization that started in Ridgeland and spread through the county and into neighboring communities.

“We had been after Swinton for years,” said Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Carra Henderson of the 14th Circuit Solicitor’s Office. “He was the No. 1 target for as long as I can remember, and we just couldn’t get him in state court.”

The closest state authorities came to snaring him was in 2010, after he was stopped on Interstate 95 and found carrying 35 pounds of marijuana he had picked up in Columbia. He continued to deal drugs while out on bond, and although he pled guilty to the 2010 charge, he was given a 10-year sentence, which would be suspended after one year of service in a state prison.

And in fact, he didn’t even serve that full year.

Two days after his conviction, the S.C. Supreme Court suppressed a traffic stop based on the use of a tracking device without first obtaining a warrant. Based on that decision, Swinton’s lawyers successfully argued to have his conviction thrown out altogether.

He immediately began rebuilding his drug operation, using violence and threats of violence against rivals to shore up his status.

However, by now Swinton was on the radar of federal authorities, who tied him to a supplier in Atlanta. In fact, during the investigation, agents seized more than 47 kilograms of cocaine, 782 grams of crack cocaine, 6 kilograms of marijuana, 97 grams of heroin, 10 firearms, five vehicles, more than \$50,000 worth of jewelry and more than \$68,000 cash.

Getting Swinton into federal court would make all the difference. On July 2, 2019, he pleaded guilty to conspiring to possess with intent to distribute cocaine. He was sentenced to 22 years in prison. He will serve every day of it. There is no parole in the federal system.



Demetrius Swinton

The case was prosecuted with the assistance of Henderson, a 14th Circuit Solicitor’s Office prosecutor who is embedded with the U.S. Attorney’s Office. A member of the Career Criminal Unit, she pursues federal cases against offenders across the 14th Circuit.

“Swinton is not the drug mule who was caught driving a load down the interstate,” Henderson noted during Swinton’s sentencing. “He is not the drug addict who got caught up working for a large drug dealer simply to support his habit. He is not someone who fell for the charm of a large-scale drug dealer before becoming involved. The evidence shows that Swinton himself is a large-scale drug trafficker, a master manipulator and a man who would stop at nothing to keep his cocaine trafficking operation going.”

In addition to Swinton, three of his co-defendants were also sentenced:

- **Travis Wiggins**, aka “Trap”, 28, of Ridgeland, was sentenced to 15 years in federal prison, to be followed by 5 years of supervised release, after pleading guilty to conspiring to possess with intent to distribute and to distribute cocaine and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime;
- **Ernest Fields**, aka “Fly”, 39, of Hilton Head Island, was sentenced to six years in federal prison, to be followed by four years of supervised release, after pleading guilty to conspiring to possess with intent to distribute and to distribute cocaine;
- **Boston Brown**, 32, of Bluffton, was sentenced to five years in federal prison, to be followed by four years of supervised release, after pleading guilty to conspiring to possess with intent to distribute and to distribute cocaine.

Sentence: 22 years, plus 5 years of supervised release. Swinton will also forfeit \$500,000, two vehicles, and several pieces of jewelry.

Please see FEDERAL on Page 14

Federal

Continued from Page 13

Barfield and his welcome-home gifts exposed this gap between state and federal law, and the problem was not merely academic. Many Gangsta Disciples used these weapons to commit new crimes. And although Barnwell is in South Carolina's 2nd Judicial Circuit, Gangsta Disciples activity frequently spilled into the neighboring 14th Circuit, particularly Allendale County.

To rid his circuit of these criminal enterprises, 14th Circuit Solicitor Duffie Stone struck upon an inventive solution: Arrange access to federal courts for one of his most experienced prosecutors, Carra Henderson.

In 2015, Henderson became the first state-level prosecutor in South Carolina to fully embed with the U.S. Attorney's Office. That put at her disposal more robust laws, penalties and investigative tools, such as the federal grand jury. Henderson uses these resources to prosecute career criminals across the 14th Circuit. She remains employed by the Solicitor's Office but argues her cases in U.S. District Court in Columbia and Charleston, rather than in the 14th Circuit's county General Sessions Courts.

Successful partnership

The partnership has worked so well that the U.S. Department of Justice has encouraged other Solicitor's Offices in South Carolina to follow suit. (To date though, Henderson remains one of only two state prosecutors focused solely on federal prosecution.) Henderson has earned convictions against 27 federal defendants since the collaboration began, including one against Barfield in 2017. His conviction was followed by seven in 2018 and nine more in 2019.



Carra Henderson, center, addressed media during a 2016 news conference to announce the partnership between the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office and the U.S. Attorneys Office. Henderson remains one of only two South Carolina assistant solicitors embedded with federal prosecutors. She is flanked on the left by U.S. Attorney Bill Nettles and on the right by Solicitor Duffie Stone. (Photo courtesy Bluffton Today.)

The relationship between the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office and federal prosecutors also led to an ad hoc collaboration that dealt a major blow to street gangs operating in several Lowcountry counties, including Colleton County. Career Criminal prosecutor Tameaka Legette worked shoulder-to-shoulder with a Washington, D.C.-based assistant U.S. Attorney who specializes in gang prosecutions. Along with state and local law-enforcement agencies, and the 9th Circuit Solicitor's Office, they earned convictions against 17 members of the Wildboys and Cowboys gangs in 2017.

Those gang members were prosecuted under the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, or "RICO." This law treats street gangs for what they are – organized, on-going criminal enterprises.

"What the federal RICO act allows you to do is to take out

"There's no question the 14th Circuit is safer as a result of this collaboration."

◆ Solicitor Duffie Stone

many of the gang members all at once. That is the only way to dismantle a gang," Stone said. "If you take a piecemeal approach and go after one at a time, they are replaced by the time they get into bond court."

The RICO statute is one of the powerful tools afforded the Solicitor's Office through its federal partnership. There are other advantages, not available under South Carolina law, including:

- The ability to prosecute several members of a criminal enterprise in a single trial, rather than separately.
- Language that makes it a crime in itself to lie to a federal investigator. The possibility of

prosecution for that offense often prompts witnesses and suspects to provide useful information.

● An investigative grand jury that allows law enforcement and prosecutors to keep witness testimony under seal longer, making possible round-up arrests, before suspects have a chance to go underground or harm witnesses.

"For prosecutors in a state that can deploy an investigative grand jury only under very specific circumstances, this type of partnership is invaluable," Stone said. "There's no question the 14th Circuit is safer as a result of this collaboration."

14th Circuit Victims Services Center

Bringing comfort to the vulnerable

Medical exam room not just innovative; it reduces travel, trauma for children

Heather Dollar isn't afraid of a challenge. The former emergency room and pediatric intensive care nurse, mother of three young children and part-time student can juggle multiple tasks and solve problems quickly.

Those skills came in handy when she started in January 2019 with the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office as the judicial circuit's first Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner coordinator.

"I was told, here's your office, here's your examination room. I thought, that's a storage room! That's a closet! I had a hard time seeing it, but the good thing is I was working with a blank slate," Dollar said. "We could only move forward."

And, she did.

Dollar worked with Victims Services Center Director Michelle Fraser to transform an unoccupied and nondescript area of the Solicitor's Office headquarters into something totally unique in South Carolina – a child-friendly examination room to treat acute sexual assault victims.

Innovation brings relief

Child victims of sexual assault in the 14th Circuit once had no choice but to travel to the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston for an exam. The new exam room, part of the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center, reduces drive time and puts children and their families in a more comfortable environment.

"Until recently, there were no healthcare providers available to perform acute forensic medical



Director Michelle Fraser, left, and sexual assault nurse examiner coordinator Heather Dollar, right, pose in the medical exam room in the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center. Housed in the Solicitor's Office headquarters in Okatie, the exam room will be used primarily for forensic exams of children who are believed to have been sexually assaulted. South Carolina has a dearth of pediatric sexual assault nurse examiners a problem the Victims Center is addressing.

exams on a child in the 14th Circuit," Solicitor Duffie Stone said. "Now, we can not only provide that service, but other social services victims need under one roof."

Dollar's office and exam room are situated between the 14th Circuit Children's Center and the Victims Services Center, where Solicitor's Office partners such as Hopeful Horizons, CAPA and Low-

country Legal Volunteers are on the spot to offers an array of services to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Please see DOLLAR on Page 16

14th Circuit Victims Services Center

Dollar

Continued from Page 15

“The idea is to bring much-needed services to victims, not the other way around,” Fraser said. “In the past, victims would have to travel long distances and to many locales, specifically children who had been sexually assaulted, to receive help. Our goal is to empower and assist children and their families by providing resources located here. I like to think that we help people move from being a victim, to a survivor, and eventually a victor.”

Laying A Foundation

Treating children is Dollar’s passion. Those who share it are in short supply among those trained to examine and treat sexual assault victims.

With fewer than 76 SANEs in the state, Dollar faces daunting statistics. Fewer than 19 percent of children in need of an acute medical exams are seen by a medical provider.

“Our goal is to close that service gap, while providing specialized care to the victim and collect the evidence needed to aid in the prosecution of offenders,” she said. “Kids need to know that they are safe as they grow up and need to be reassured that they and their bodies are going to be OK. They need to know that what happened to them isn’t OK, but they will be.”

In the first 48 hours of launching the 14th Circuit Sexual Assault Forensic Exam Program, Dollar responded three times to area hospitals. In each instance, a person showed up at a local emergency room reporting a sexual assault.

The following three months,



An aquarium and play area in the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center put at ease children facing traumatic experiences — for example, sexual assault victims there for a forensic exam or interview. Costs for the center were defrayed with donations and manpower from the Kiwanis club of Bluffton and the Zonta Club of Hilton Head Island, among others.



Dollar provided care to 22 people, including six children.

But before she was able to provide direct care, she and Fra-

ser had to build the program from scratch.

“This program doesn’t necessarily walk and talk like other

forensic nurse examiner programs, and certainly not here in South Carolina,” Dollar said. “There are no two programs the same and there weren’t any programs that fell under the umbrella of a prosecutor’s office.”

Dollar spent the first 10 months researching, writing, re-writing and consulting with other medical professionals, advocates, service providers and the International Forensic Association of Nursing on needed policies, procedures, protocols and agreements. That’s precisely the type of activity Stone envisioned when he conceived the Justice Institute, a project he modeled after some of the country’s best teaching hospitals.

In late 2017, Stone relocated the Solicitor’s Office headquarters from rented space into a business park in Okatie that was more accessible to other areas of the circuit. The initial focus was opening of the Victims Services Center for the benefit of victims, but Justice Institute programs will eventually include a substantial teaching and research element. Stone seeks to create a place, where experts in many fields come together to collaborate and learn.

Already, Dollar and Fraser have arranged training for other SANEs, and in the future, Dollar wants to bring services even closer to Colleton, Hampton and Allendale counties.

“The goal is to increase access to this type of care and treatment,” she said. “The tide and culture surrounding sexual assault and abuse has finally started to change. People have begun to talk more freely. The ability for people to come forward is continuing to grow and that’s a really good thing.”

14th Circuit Victims Services Center



**Where survivors go
to find a way out**

iStock photo by lolostock

Solicitor’s Office, partners assemble combination of services that exist nowhere else in South Carolina under single roof

For many years, children in South Carolina’s 14th Judicial Circuit who were victims of sexual assault had to travel all the way to Charleston for a forensic examination. And many have had to repeat the story of their ordeal once they arrived.

Now, the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center is equipped to ease the travel burden and spare many child victims the trauma of repeatedly recounting their experience. The center is the only one of its kind in South Carolina that brings several components under a single roof:

- A Solicitor’s Office Special Victims Unit that prosecutes domestic violence, sexu-

“I’ve always thought it would be so much better if, instead of handing (victims) business cards, we could just walk them down the hall to get help right away, face to face.”

◆ Solicitor Duffie Stone

al assault, child abuse and other crimes against vulnerable people;

- Nonprofit partners who can provide social, legal and counseling services to victims;
- A children’s center, where forensic interviews can be conducted and recorded;

- A sexual assault exam room.

The SVU, Victims Services Center and Children’s Center have been operational and housed together since late 2018. The 14th

Please see CENTER on Page 18

Call for assistance: 1-800-868-2632 or 843-790-6220

14th Circuit Victims Services Center

Center

Continued from Page 17

Circuit Solicitor's Office and its partners held a grand opening for the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center in October 2019, to mark the completion of the exam room.

Bringing all the components under a single roof greatly reduces the burden on victims and makes cooperation among service-providers easier.

"We have always been in support and recognize the benefit of a coordinated response," said CEO Kristin Durbrowski of Hopeful Horizons, a children's advocacy, domestic violence and rape-crisis agency.

"When a client has to travel, and if they can go to one location and have access to multiple services, they can take care of many of their needs in a few hours."

The 14th Circuit Victims Center's primary objective is to provide timely services, a factor that is often critical for victims, according to Durbrowski.

Consider that a battered victim is harmed seven times, on average, before deciding to flee the abuser for good. Most contemplate leaving much sooner, but escape requires planning – and often, assistance with legal, financial and childcare matters. Inability to secure that help quickly is not merely an inconvenience; it is a threat to victims' safety.

Fortunately, many nonprofit groups and government agencies in the 14th Judicial Circuit have provided the type of assistance victims need.

"The problem," 14th Circuit Solicitor Duffie Stone said, "is that those service-providers were spread out. "My prosecutors and victim advocates interact with many victims during the course of criminal prosecutions. Before we opened the center, we would meet with them, hand them a stack of brochures and business cards, then hope they had the wherewithal to follow through.

"I've always thought it would be so much better if, instead of handing them business cards, we could just walk them down the hall to get help right away, face to face."

That convenience makes victims' support system more efficient, S.C. Attorney General



S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson delivers keynote remarks during the grand opening for the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center in October 2019.

More to come ...

The 14th Circuit Victims Services Center operates under the auspices of the Justice Institute, a 501(c) 3 organization formed by the Solicitor's Office. The center is the first of the institute's major initiatives, which will eventually include research and educational programs for criminal justice and related fields. The institute is based upon the teaching-hospital concept, in which partners convene to train in a practical, real-world environment.

Alan Wilson said during his keynote address at the center's grand opening.

"(It's) now a more centralized system that allows you to collaborate and work across the region, the municipalities, the counties ... in the largest judicial circuit in the state," Wilson said. "It is very different from Hilton Head to Hampton. To be able to work together and collaborate and bring all these organizations together to better serve the men and women, and especially the children, of this community is amazing."

Partners in the Victims Services Center are provided rent-free office space inside the Solicitor's Office headquarters in Okatie.

In addition to the medical exam room, the grand opening highlighted other unique features. A new camera system in a children's

interview room can be viewed via closed circuit by other professionals in an adjacent room. This reduces the number of times children have to recount their stories, a process that can re-traumatize victims. The room is also available to law enforcement officers who want to interview child witnesses in an environment less intimidating than a police station.

The exam room is staffed by Heather Dollar, a sexual assault nurse examiner, the first to be employed by a South Carolina solicitor's office. Funding for the position and the center were secured through a Victims of Crime Act grant and support from local philanthropic organizations like the Zonta Club of Hilton Head Island and the Kiwanis Club of Bluffton.

When the exam room became operational in October 2019, there were only 76 sexual assault nurse examiners in the entire state.

"Recent data shows that only 19 percent of children in need of an acute medical exams are seen," Dollar said. "Our goal is to close that service gap while providing specialized care to victims and collecting evidence needed to aid in the prosecution of offenders."

However, center services are open to anyone who needs them; clients need not be the victim in a criminal case.

"We certainly hope that, over time, the center makes victims less reluctant to pursue charges and less fearful of what might happen if they do," Stone said. "But the immediate objective is just to get help to people who need it so desperately."

14th Circuit Victims Services Center

Center partners

- **The 14th Circuit Sexual Assault Forensic Exam**



(SAFE) Program provides medical examinations to those who have been sexually assaulted by utilizing a fulltime SANE nurse trained to treat pediatric, adolescent and adult victims.

- **Bikers Against Child Abuse** exists with the intent to create a safer environment for abused children. These bikers empower children to not feel afraid of the world in which they live. They lend support and work in conjunction with local and state officials who are already in place to protect children.



- **The Child Abuse Prevention Association** provides prevention and intervention programs that targets breaking the cycle of child abuse and neglect through school-based safety and character development education programs for children, teen pregnancy prevention programs, and a variety of parent education and support programs. Since opening in 1985, the Open Arms Children's Home has been home to more than 2,100 children.



neglect through school-based safety and character development education programs for children, teen pregnancy prevention programs, and a variety of parent education and support programs. Since opening in 1985, the Open Arms Children's Home has been home to more than 2,100 children.

- **Hopeful Horizons** is a children's advocacy, domestic violence and rape crisis center serving the 14th Circuit. Hopeful Horizons offers a 24-hour crisis line and emergency shelter for victims of intimate partner violence and their children, court accompaniment, adult and children's counseling and case management. They offer legal assistance and victim advocacy in Family Court to include the filing of Orders of Protection and restraining orders.



adult and children's counseling and case management. They offer legal assistance and victim advocacy in Family Court to include the filing of Orders of Protection and restraining orders.

- **The Lowcountry Alliance for Healthy Youth** is a community prevention coalition in Southern Beaufort County that brings together all sectors of the community to identify and implement strategies that promote positive youth development by addressing substance use/abuse and related risk behaviors. LCAHY is a recipient of a Drug-Free Communities Support Program Grant.



positive youth development by addressing substance use/abuse and related risk behaviors. LCAHY is a recipient of a Drug-Free Communities Support Program Grant.

- **Lowcountry Legal Volunteers** provides free, critical legal services and education through community volunteers and retired lawyers to low income and families in Beaufort, Hampton, and Jasper counties. LCLV handles civil cases in the following areas: adoption, child custody, visitation, and child support, divorce, names changes, simple consumer matters, eviction actions, lease termination, simple wills and probate.



adoption, child custody, visitation, and child support, divorce, names changes, simple consumer matters, eviction actions, lease termination, simple wills and probate.



Assistant Solicitor Hunter Swanson is the leader of the Special Victims Unit and a Career Criminal prosecutor. Entering 2020, she had not lost a jury trial involving an SVU case.

Prosecuting predators gritty, difficult work; SVU proves up to the challenge

Emotionally charged circumstances. Witnesses reluctant – possibly even terrified – to testify in court. Juries that expect copious amounts of forensic evidence that might not exist.

Sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse cases can quickly drain even the best of prosecutors. However, Hunter Swanson and the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office Special Victims Unit thrive on the challenge.

"I think I've felt an even greater sense of personal fulfillment in this work than I thought I would," said Swanson, a member of the Solicitor's Office Career Criminal Unit and the SVU team's leader. "I made this move because the cases I've always felt most passionate about are the special-victims cases. I enjoy prosecuting predators. They're the scariest to me – scarier than a drug deal gone bad or a gang shooting after a years-long beef on the street.

"I never run out of things to say about these cases, and I never run out of

"I never run out of things to say about these cases, and I never run out of energy for them."

◆ **SVU leader Hunter Swanson**

energy for them."

The SVU was formed in late 2017 to prosecute criminal sexual assault cases across the circuit and domestic violence cases in Beaufort, Jasper and Colleton counties. The team also tackles child abuse and other crimes against vulnerable people, such as financial fraud in which senior citizens are the target.

Through the beginning of 2020, the SVU had disposed of nearly 415 cases and

Please see SVU on Page 20

14th Circuit Victims Services Center

SVU

Continued from Page 19

secured convictions in 75 percent of the charges it prosecuted in jury trials. By comparison, the conviction rate for all jury trials in South Carolina was 68 percent, falling to 40 percent in trials involving domestic-violence or sexual-assault charges, according to S.C. Court Administration statistics.

Through early 2020, Swanson had secured guilty verdicts in all 14 of her jury trials involving SVU cases. Her cases alone account for more than 360 years' worth of prison time for offenders, plus four life sentences.

The stats are impressive, but they don't adequately illustrate the benefit of a team devoted to prosecuting rapists, batterers and abusers, 14th Circuit Solicitor Duffie Stone says.

A different type of victim

No one has ever handed over his wallet during a stick-up, only to be accused by a defense attorney of consenting to his own mugging. The burglarized homeowner does not typically share an intimate relationship with the burglar.

However, victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and similar crimes introduce a different dynamic. Set aside her wrenching physical trauma; the woman who testifies against her rapist invites scrutiny of her sexual history – potentially in twisted, lurid detail, before a gallery of neighbors. And the woman who wants desperately to escape an abusive husband might stay nonetheless because he controls her finances or tells her she'll never see the children again if she leaves.

Little wonder, then, that prosecutors and law-enforcement officers so often encounter reluctant or uncooperative victims. And it's little wonder that, as a result, the conviction rates for such offenses are comparatively low.

However, helping victims will accomplish more than blaming them, Stone believes. That philosophy guides the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center. The Solicitor's Office launched it in 2018, shortly after the SVU was formed and the Solicitor's Office headquarters were relocated to a more spacious building in Okatie, in part to accommodate the center.

In 2019, more than 500 people sought help at the center. Even victims not involved in a criminal case can use its services, which are provided by partnering agencies that are given rent-free space there.

"However, there's a reason we put our Special Victims Unit just down the hallway from the victims center," Stone noted. "We intend to work closely with our partners. Cooperation means insight into our criminal cases.

"When everyone communicates, everyone is more attuned to victims' needs. Restoring their peace of mind and their

The SVU team



Hunter Swanson, SVU leader: Swanson has been with the Solicitor's Office since 2007. She also is a member of the Career Criminal Unit, which prosecutes the most violent and habitual offenders in the 14th Circuit. Swanson previously served as the administrative solicitor for Beaufort County General Sessions Court, organizing and managing the court's trial docket.



Rebekah Luttrell, assistant solicitor: Attorney Rebekah Luttrell prosecutes domestic violence cases in Beaufort and Jasper counties and criminal sexual assaults across the circuit. She came to the Solicitor's Office in late 2017 after a four-year stint in Sarasota, Fla. There, her work for the 12th Judicial Circuit included prosecution of sex-related crimes committed by juveniles.



Julia Butner, assistant solicitor: Attorney Julia Butner prosecutes domestic violence cases in Beaufort and Jasper counties. She came to the Solicitor's Office in late 2017. She worked previously at the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, and at the Children's Law Center of Massachusetts.



Samantha Molina, assistant solicitor: Attorney Samantha Molina prosecutes domestic violence cases and is the newest member of the SVU, having graduated from the Charleston School of Law graduate in May 2019. She worked as a law clerk with the Kulp Law Firm in Charleston where she received hands-on experience organizing voluminous discovery materials and researching and preparing legal documents.



Francine Norz, assistant solicitor: Attorney Francine Norz brings 29 years of experience and assists the SVU by prosecuting financial crimes against vulnerable adults. After graduating from the Columbia Law School in New York City, Norz concentrated on commercial and securities litigation. She focused on securities fraud investigations and disciplinary actions against broker-dealers while working for the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. She has been with the Solicitor's Office since 2006.



Katherine Littleton, assistant solicitor: Attorney Katherine Littleton is a part of the Colleton County community team and prosecutes domestic violence and sexual assault cases there. She has worked for the Solicitor's Office since 2015, after graduating from the University of South Carolina School of Law.



Tim Carter, investigator: Tim Carter is a sworn law-enforcement officer. He spent 20 years in the Marine Corps where he worked as an investigator with the Criminal Investigation Division and later as a special agent with NCIS. He helps prepare cases for trial by working closely with more than 20 law-enforcement agencies in our circuit, many of which are small and have limited manpower and training opportunities.



April Winston, victim advocate: April Winston has worked for the Solicitor's Office since 2015. She is the office's liaison to the victims of crimes prosecuted by the SVU. In addition to keeping them apprised of developments in the case and important court dates, she can help victims and their families find other, non-legal services they might need. Winston previously worked for the Beaufort County Clerk of Court Office and has both undergraduate and masters' degrees from Winthrop University.

Please see PREDATORS on Page 21

14th Circuit Victims Services Center

PREDATORS

Continued from Page 20

autonomy is part of seeking justice, as far as I'm concerned."

The SVU preceded the Victims Center. It was formally launched in December 2017 and funded in part by a \$244,000-per-year federal Violence Against Women Act grant provided by the S.C. Attorney General's Office. The team includes five other prosecutors, plus a victim advocate and an investigator devoted exclusively to the unit's work.

And that work is particularly crucial in the Palmetto State.

Each year since 1998, when the Washington, D.C.-based Violence Policy Center first reported on the rate of women murdered by men, South Carolina has ranked among the 10 worst U.S. states. As recently as 2015, the Palmetto State topped this ignominious list – as it did in 2013 ... and 2003 ... and 2000.

Stone has long worked to change this.

In 2015, then-Gov. Nikki Haley appointed him to a statewide task force on domestic violence.

It produced 50 recommendations, many of which have improved prosecution and victim services. Also in 2015, the General Assembly updated the state's domestic violence law. Among the changes was a provision, first piloted by Stone in the 14th Circuit, that allows Solicitor's Offices to prosecute third-degree domestic violence charges in General Sessions Court. Previously, these offenses were tried in magistrate and municipal courts by the arresting law-enforcement officers, pitting them against seasoned defense attorneys. The new state law also created the S.C. Domestic Violence

Advisory Committee, a group of law enforcement officials, legislators and social-service providers. Stone is the committee's chairman.

SVU brings results

Beaufort Police were first called to the motel on Boundary Street where Dale and Veronica King lived and worked in March 2017. A relative visiting the couple called 911 to report a domestic disturbance between them.

When authorities arrived, Dale King denied any dispute between he and his wife. He even invited officers to come inside their room and take a look for themselves. They saw Veronica King sitting on the bed with obvious marks on her face. They took Dale King to jail on a third-degree domestic violence charge. Veronica King asked officers how soon he might be back home and declined to request a no-contact order as a condition of his bond.

When authorities returned to the Kings' room to answer another service call about two months later, Veronica King was dead.

On May 15, 2017, Dale King claimed he awoke to find his wife dead on their couch. He initially denied harming her, but later admitted he struck her. A medical examiner at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston determined Veronica King suffered blunt-force trauma on her head and had been strangled.

"Veronica King's death is both tragic and cautionary," said Swanson, who earned a guilty verdict and 35-year sentence against King in late 2019. "There was a history of alcohol and physical abuse in this relationship, and it turned deadly.

"Dale King killed his wife with his bare hands, and Veronica died nude and afraid, in her most vul-

nerable state."

It was another in a line of emotionally wrenching cases for Swanson. In May 2018, for example, she secured sexual assault and murder convictions against Isaiah Gadson in a 38-year-old Beaufort case. Working with the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office Cold Case Unit, Swanson demonstrated to the court and the jury similarities between the 1980 rape of Susan Weed and an assault against another Beaufort woman for which Gadson was convicted a few years later. One big difference: Before the assault against Weed on a dark country road, he shot and killed her boyfriend, 18-year-old David Krulewicz, through the window of his van.

Gadson was never a suspect in that case, but the Sheriff's Office linked him to it years later after DNA collected from Gadson following his arrest in an unrelated assault matched samples from evidence in the 1980 case. The evidence was compelling, but the case presented hurdles for Swanson. She had to argue that Gadson's 1983 assault victim should be allowed to testify and that evidence that had gone missing during the four decades since Gadson's crime was not grounds to dismiss the charges.

Other instances of the SVU's successful prosecutions abound:

- Seven months after Gadson's conviction, Swanson secured a life sentence against Lance Elam of Tarboro for the home-invasion sexual assault of a Bluffton woman. Swanson earned the conviction even though the victim in that case was too traumatized to testify. Elam had no serious previous record, but as in the Gadson case, when his DNA was collected, he became a suspect in

sexual assaults and burglaries in Texas and North Carolina.

- In July 2018, Assistant Solicitor Rebekah Luttrell secured a conviction and 12-year sentence against Bobby Jones Sr. of Allendale for second-degree criminal sexual conduct with a minor. The jury needed just 35 minutes to find Jones, a well-known church pastor, guilty of using a sex toy on a 14-year-old relative.
- In January 2020, Assistant Solicitor Julie Butner secured a maximum sentence against a Beaufort man who tormented a former girlfriend. Despite moving away to escape his unwanted attentions, Jason Owen sent unwanted mail, hacked into his victim's email and bank accounts, and made harassing calls to her and her family members. He was convicted of harassment and sentenced to five years in prison.
- In 2019, Luttrell earned a conviction against Marrees Fripp, who beat his 10-year-old, wheelchair-bound stepson with an electrical cord. Fripp received a six-year prison sentence.

"Generally, criminals are opportunistic and do not specialize in a particular type of crime. As such, we have not organized our prosecutors into teams that specialize in a certain types of offenses," Stone said. "SVU cases are different, though. Just as these victims face problems that are distinct from those of other crimes, prosecutors in these cases often face unique challenges.

"The SVU has been successful in raising our performance in these cases, and that ultimately helps victims by reassuring them they don't have to live with violence and abuse."

Intelligence Unit

Intel team uses technology, wits to gather evidence, insight into prosecutors' cases

The convenience store clerk was barely out the door with the bank deposit bag when a car came screeching into the parking lot. Bursting from the vehicle were two men with shotguns and another with an assault rifle. Terrified, the clerk handed over the bag of large bills.

Then, as quickly as they arrived, the armed robbers were gone again.

The stolen money was never recovered, but that was not the last that was seen of it by authorities.

Acting on a tip from the U.S. Department of Justice, Solicitor's Office Investigator Dylan Hightower scoured social media. For several hours, he combed public posts and tracked networks of friends. Finally, he found what he was looking for – a photo of a baby blanketed in \$100 and \$20 bills. It included one small but important detail – a blue band that convenience store employees use to bind cash after it's been counted. The photo, seen at right with the band circled in red, was posted by the sister of a robbery suspect. She told investigators her brother gave her the money and ordered her to arrange and post the picture.

This confirmation of his involvement in the robbery helped the Solicitor's Office qualify the defendant and his associates for prosecution under the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act. As with any organized crime syndicate, street gangs often create a front to make their activities appear le-



Above: Fourteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office Investigator Dylan Hightower testifies during the murder trial of John Ira Duncan III in May 2019. Hightower's analysis of cellphone data and cellphone tower records was used to demonstrate the truthfulness of witnesses' testimony and establish a timeline of the events leading to the murder of Dominique Williams. **Below:** A photo posted to Facebook by the sister of an armed robbery suspect helped prove her brother was one of the culprits. The convenience store clerk who was held up said she bound bills with blue rubber bands, like the one shown in the photo.



gitimate and to launder the money made from their illegal activities. In this case, the Solicitor's Office Intel Unit found more than this Facebook post to press its legal case. The robbery suspects

also were connected to a hip-hop group that posted several of its music videos to YouTube. Using his knowledge of suspected gang members, as well as facial-recognition software available

from the S.C. State Law Enforcement Division, Hightower identified several people in the videos involved in gang activity and used the social-media posts to prove their affiliation in federal court.

"The biggest change in the criminal justice system over the past 10 years has been the use of technology and social media by criminals," Solicitor Duffie Stone said. "We have to embrace the same technology to stop them."

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Stone cut his teeth in the 5th Circuit Solicitor's Office in 1989, prosecuting Richland County drug cases.

Please see INTEL on Page 23

Intelligence Unit

Requests for assistance from outside agencies, 2019

The 14th Circuit Solicitor’s Office Intelligence Unit fielded 97 requests from law-enforcement agencies seeking assistance in their investigations in 2019. Requests ranged from help extracting and deciphering cellphone data, to providing information and assisting in surveillance. Twenty-four different agencies asked for help. While most were agencies within the 14th Circuit, we also assisted ATF, the DEA, ICE, the U.S. Marshal and other federal agencies on 22 occasions. These charts provide a breakdown of the types of services our Intel Unit provided in 2019, along with a list of the agencies most often requesting help.

INTEL

Continued from Page 22

“During a drug raid, law enforcement would be pleased when they found drugs or guns, but they were ecstatic if they found a dealer’s daybook,” Stone said, noting such a find often allowed investigators identify a dealer’s clients and trace the movement of drugs and money. “Now, the big prize isn’t the book; it’s their cellphones. That’s where all that information is stored.”

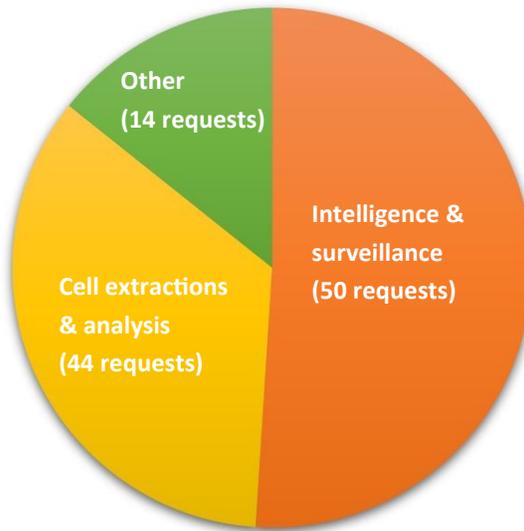
That information is the difference between bringing down a few street-level operators and bringing down an entire operation. And it not only gives law enforcement a broader view of a criminal enterprise; it often becomes crucial evidence in a trial.

In addition to contacts, cell-phones often contain time-stamped texts and call logs that can prove communication between parties. Records from cell-phone carriers includes geolocation information that can place a defendant – or at least his phone – at a specific time and place, such as a crime scene. Phones can also provide a gateway to photos and social-media posts, which can lend further insight into criminal operations and provide compelling visuals for juries.

Phone data can be password-protected or encrypted, though. In some cases, it also requires interpretation from a knowledgeable analyst to understand. Our Solicitor’s Office investigators are trained to both retrieve and understand this data, and those abilities have proven to be essential to our prosecutions.

One example is the conviction of Hilton Head Island’s John Ira

Types of requests



Requesting agencies

Agency..... Requests

Bluffton Police Department	17
Hardeeville Police Department	17
Beaufort County Sheriff’s Office	13
FBI	8
State Law Enforcement Division	7
ATF	7
Jasper County Sheriff’s Office	7
Allendale Police Department	4
Colleton County Sherrif’s Office	3
Hampton County Sheriff’s Office	3

“The biggest change in the criminal justice system over the past 10 years has been the use of technology and social media by criminals.”

◆ Solicitor Duffie Stone

Duncan III on murder charges in 2019, a case described in greater detail elsewhere in this annual report. Through cellphone analysis, our Hightower retraced Duncan’s tracks from a family gathering earlier in the day to the murder scene. The data also corroborated the accounts of key witnesses, who described their phone calls, text messages and

social-media exchanges with Duncan in the days before the murder and the moments immediately following the fatal shooting of Dominique Williams. “Witnesses made several assertions about phone conversations they had or texts they traded with the defendant,” said Hightower, who testified in Duncan’s trial. “Ultimately, I was able to go

into Duncan’s records, match the timestamps to surveillance videos that captured a lot of his movements around the Coligny Circle area and establish a timeline that demonstrated everything the witnesses were telling us was accurate.”

A BEGINNING-TO-END CONTRIBUTION

Hightower’s stable of analysts and duly sworn law-enforcement investigators performs important functions, from the time a new case is received by our office until it is adjudicated in court.

Each morning, analysts arrive early to review the previous day’s arrests across the circuit. They

Please see DIGITAL, Page 24

Intelligence Unit



Above: Prosecutors can use photographs retrieved from Facebook to show things such as a defendant's character, or to suggest a defendant's motive for committing a crime. The photo above was posted by a defendant ultimately convicted of murder. He uploaded a photograph of what appeared to be his young son with a 9-mm handgun tucked into his diaper. The photo went a long way toward securing a 39-year prison sentence for the convicted murderer. **Below:** Investigator Dylan Hightower demonstrates operation of the Solicitor's Office drone. The device is particularly handy for photographing crime scenes and creating maps for use as trial exhibits. Much of the Lowcountry is heavily treed, making drone images better than those derived from tools such as Google Earth in many instances.

DIGITAL

Continued from Page 23

research each new detainee's criminal history, check their identifications against a national gang database and determine if the defendant has other charges pending. Using our case-management system, they generate a report that shows all new arrests and any old booking information. The report is sent to our prosecutors, who can use this information to argue for proper bonds or, when appropriate, bond revocation. The report also goes out to all law enforcement agencies in the circuit, enhancing their investigators' knowledge of criminal activity in neighboring jurisdictions and possibly affording them insight into their own cases.

Our intelligence analysts also assign incoming cases to the appropriate prosecution team and continues to research well after initial intake. Analysts and investigators pore over social media for relevant clues. Employing a team of community volunteers, they monitor defendants' jailhouse phone calls. We



also track, in real time, defendants ordered to wear ankle monitors as a condition of their bond.

As trial dates approach, the intelligence team is still at work. They create maps and print crime-scene photos and other displays that will be shown to the jury. They also edit audio and video evidence from law enforcement.

"In case after case, we've seen the benefit of incorporating intelligence into our prosecution," Stone said. "Right now, it's not something that every prosecutor's office uses, but I'm convinced that 10 years from now, every prosecutor's office will use it."

3 pillars of intelligence

Intelligence-led prosecution is a strategy rooted in the collection of background information about people, places and problems driving crime in specific neighborhoods. The 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office intel unit serves three primary functions:



Analyze new cases as arrests are made. Ascertaining criminal histories, gang

affiliations, etc., helps us assign cases to the appropriate prosecution team, argue for the appropriate bond.



Assisting law enforcement in investigations.

By gathering information from social media, databases such as GangNet and other online resources, and by extracting information from cellphones, we flesh out the story of each crime and help our prosecutors meet their burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.



Trial preparation. Our intel team prepares court exhibits that help prose-

cutors present evidence effectively. That could include drone photos that provide a better vantage point than Google Earth or other map services, adding transcription to video and audio files, or blowing up crime-scene photos to highlight details for jurors.

Preventative and Diversionary programs

Alternative programs offer offenders second chance, at a high rate of success

Multidisciplinary courts, Pretrial Intervention effective substitute for prison for some

Much of our prosecutors' time is spent trying to put hardened criminals in prison. However, prison is not where every law-breaker belongs. Some are non-violent, first-time offenders. Addiction or mental health problems might underlie their offenses. Or the offender might be a military veteran grappling with post-traumatic stress disorder that resulted from their service.

These offenders often benefit more from an intensive treatment program than from jail or prison time. Their communities benefit from alternative programs, too, because graduates again become productive citizens. Additionally, these diversionary programs are far less expensive than incarceration.

Multidisciplinary Court

The 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office began running "multidisciplinary courts" in 2010, when it took over a failing Drug Court in Beaufort County. Since then, we have added programs for other sorts of treatment and for juvenile offenders.

Although these programs offer an alternative to prison and give offenders a chance to wipe their records clean, they are no free pass. Participants are carefully selected and assigned a mentor with whom they meet regularly. They must also:

- Undergo substance-abuse or mental-health abuse treatment. This often includes group therapy.
- Submit to random drug testing and unscheduled home visits.
- Pay restitution and perform community service.
- Report progress and answer questions from a judge at weekly court sessions.

Participants who, in the judge's estimation, have failed to follow the program's protocols can be sent to the county detention center until their next court session. If a participant continues to fail, they are dropped from the program, and a sentence is imposed. Only those who complete the program can have their charges expunged.

Currently, multidisciplinary courts are conducted only in Beaufort County, where there is adequate access to treatment programs. However, defendants from other 14th Circuit counties can be admitted if they have the accommodations necessary to travel to Beaufort County and participate as any other enrollee would.

If the Solicitor's Office is tough on the defendants referred to our treatment courts, we're equally tough on ourselves in assessing these courts' performance. To compute our recidivism rate, we run



Defendants whose offenses are underlain by drug and alcohol dependency, or mental impairments can be eligible for the solicitor's Office Multidisciplinary Court programs. We also offer a track for military veterans afflicted by PTSD. By providing treatment and rigorous supervision, these courts can help offenders become productive citizens again, and at a lower cost to taxpayers than prison. Here, Henry, a 2019 graduate of Multidisciplinary Court, poses with Judge Erin Dean at his graduation ceremony.

national checks each quarter and note if any of our past participants have been re-arrested on any charge within two years of their successful completion. Those rates – a 69% success rate for graduates of our adult programs and 66% for our juvenile programs in 2019 – have not varied more than one or two percentage points since 2010. By way of comparison, many programs – for example, incarceration in the S.C. Department of Corrections – compute recidivism by considering only those who are convicted of a crime and returned to prison.

Pretrial Intervention

Pretrial Intervention is another "diversionary" program available across South Carolina for first-time offenders charged with non-violent offenses (e.g.: various driving offenses, shoplifting, and

Please see **DIVERSIONARY**, Page 26

Preventative and Diversionary programs

2019 success rate, participation and graduates of diversionary programs

County	Adult PTI	Alcohol education	Multidisciplinary Court	Juvenile arbitration	Juvenile MDC	Juvenile PTI	Juvenile contract
Allendale	100%	NP	X	NP	X	NP	NP
Beaufort	90%	92%	69%	61%	66%	89%	NP
Colleton	58%	100%	X	60%	X	100%	65%
Hampton	57%	NP	X	54%	X	NP	NP
Jasper	62%	NP	X	72%	X	NP	0%
14th Circuit	83%	93%	69%	61%	66%	76%	58%
(2019 participants)	233	54	44	145	12	51	47
(2019 graduates)	138	54	21	112	3	38	42

Key:
 NP: No current participants
 X: Not offered

Notes:

- All recidivism rates are calculated by considering arrests (not just convictions or incarceration) and represent results among 2017 graduates.
- Multidisciplinary Court includes tracks for drug treatment, veterans and domestic abuse.
- “Participants” are the total enrollees in a program at any point during the calendar year; “graduates” are those who completed a program within a calendar year.

Participants in the 14th Circuit Solicitor’s Office Pretrial Intervention program hold hands before visiting the Allendale Correctional Institute. A prison trip isn’t required by every PTI program in the state, but 14th Circuit Solicitor Duffie Stone says exposure to the realities of incarceration are key to the effectiveness of the 14th Circuit program.



83%

Success rate for the 14th Circuit’s adult pretrial intervention programs in calendar year 2019. In addition, 138 adult enrollees successfully completed PTI in 2019.

76%

Success rate for the 14th Circuit’s juvenile pretrial intervention programs in calendar year 2019. Additionally, 38 juvenile enrollees successfully completed PTI in 2018.

DIVERSIONARY

Continued from Page 25

possession of marijuana). Participants can take PTI only once in South Carolina and are required to perform community service and other programs specific to the criminal charge, such as alcohol education.

In the program run by the 14th Circuit Solicitor’s Office, participants also must tour

Allendale Correctional Institute. Holding hands for their own protection as they move through the prison yard, they see and speak with inmates who provide sobering accounts of life inside one of the state’s 23 prisons.

“You can’t describe this particular prison tour experience. It’s something that has been seen and heard firsthand,” Solicitor Duffie Stone said. While each of the state’s 16 judicial circuits has a PTI program,

Stone’s added the prison tour component in 2006 and remains one of the few to require it. He says the tour contributes to the low recidivism rate in the 14th Circuit – an 83-percent success rate among adult enrollees and a 76-percent in the juvenile program.

“Our goal is to prevent the next generation of career criminals,” Stone said.

Follow us on social media



Our YouTube channel:
http://bit.ly/SO14_YouTube



http://bit.ly/Veronica_King_murder



http://bit.ly/DUI_Tragedy



http://bit.ly/Social_Media_Intel



http://bit.ly/Joey_Leeman_murder

Facebook:
[@FourteenthCircuitSolicitorsOffice](http://FourteenthCircuitSolicitorsOffice)

Twitter:
[@14thSolicitor](http://14thSolicitor)

Information requests

FOIA
The Freedom Of Information Act

Pursuant to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, the Fourteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office will provide copies of public records in its custody unless the records are exempt from disclosure under S.C. Code of Laws 30-4-40.

FOIA requests can be mailed to the following address:

Fourteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office
ATTN: FOIA Request
P.O. Box 1880
Bluffton, SC 29910

State law requires our office to respond to FOIA requests within 10 business days of receipt of the request. It is our policy to respond to FOIA requests as quickly as possible. In accordance with S.C. Code of Laws 30-4-30(B), FOIA requests are subject to fees for the search, retrieval and redaction of records, as well as fees for providing copies of such documents. Also, other direct costs may be assessed when appropriate. Requesters may be notified of fees in advance of being provided the records. The requester may accept the charges to receive records or may wish to reduce the charges by narrowing the request.

FEES

Black-and-white paper copies: \$.20 each

Color paper copies: \$1.00 each

CD/DVDs: \$1.00 each

Thumb drive: \$10 each

Work performed by members of our communications, administrative or intelligence teams: \$14.00 per hour

Work that must be performed by an assistant solicitor: \$24.00 per hour

Postage: Determined by weight

Communications team

The 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office communications team manages community, media and government relations; maintains the office's website and social-media channels; and fulfills public-records requests. The team also prepares grant applications, and conducts research on a range of criminal-justice issues and key indicators of the office's performance.



JEFF KIDD,
Communications director
jkidd@scsolicitor14.org
843-790-6439



ERINN MCGUIRE
Community outreach
emcguire@scsolicitor14.org
843-790-6453