



### In This Edition

1. A Message From Washoe County District Attorney Chris Hicks
2. Ecourt Date
  - Improving Our Services to Victims and Witnesses Through Innovation
4. Investigations Division Training Team
6. Employee Spotlight
7. Records Division
  - Custodians of Record
8. WCDA Goes Paperless
9. Community Partner
  - Northern Nevada Concerns of Police Survivors
10. Division Spotlight - Juvenile
11. The Civil Division
  - Guardianship Training Program



### A MESSAGE FROM WASHOE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY CHRIS HICKS:

Washoe County continues to experience a time of incredible growth and change. A strong economy is fueling new development and an innovative technology-based economy. Change is inevitable and I believe we have an opportunity to make our community an even better place in which to live, work and raise our families. There will be challenges and ensuring public safety must be at the forefront of our planning. As a longtime Nevadan, I am proud to call Washoe County home and I remain committed to making my office the most efficient and effective it can be. In this issue you will learn about two programs working to improve our services to victims and to giving my employees the tools they need to be successful into the future.

I hope you enjoy learning more about the people and programs that make this office great. As always, thank you for taking the time to learn more about our work.

Christopher J. Hicks,  
District Attorney

## Follow us on Twitter



@WashoeCoDA



## Did You Know?

On November 6, 2018, the State of Nevada passed a comprehensive victims rights bill that added certain protections for crime victims to the Nevada Constitution. The bill, referred to as Marsy's Law, took effect on November 27, 2018 and enacted additional requirements on the criminal justice system to meet the needs of our State's crime victims. The bill, which was highlighted in a previous WCDA Newsletter, included provisions such as the right to be treated with fairness and respect, to have safety considered when a defendant's bail is being addressed and to be given the right to confer with the prosecutor handling the case. A major component of the bill included a victim's right to receive timely notifications of case hearings, trials, sentencings and case dispositions to include post-conviction proceedings such as appeals. When requested,

this notification ensures victims can exercise their right to be heard in court, particularly when the hearings involve the release or sentencing of a defendant.

## Implementation In Our Office

Through the direction of District Attorney Chris Hicks, a Marsy's law implementation team developed new processes to ensure the office was meeting our constitutional obligations to inform victims of their rights and notify them of all public proceedings where the defendant's custody status could be addressed. This was an important and daunting task. In 2018, the District Attorney's Office handled over 9,800 criminal cases and assisted 1,173 victims of crime. In 2019, the number increased to 11,123 criminal cases and 1,183 victims. While important to the overall mission of ensuring justice for victims, this new constitutional requirement to inform all victims of public hearings has put an understandable strain on office resources. In addition, the legislature did not provide funding for agencies tasked with implementing Marsy's Law mandates. As a result, the office sought efficient ways to inform victims of their rights, provide required notifications and track these communications.

The Marsy's Law team was again called upon to develop an efficient system of notification and after a stringent vetting process, purchased an innovative auto-notification program that could alert victims regarding upcoming court hearings via text, phone or email. The program, called eCourt Date, was selected by the team and quickly integrated into the office after a fall 2019 roll out period. In a few short months, the office is already seeing the positive impact eCourt Date is having on our process of victim notification. With the support of management, short training sessions were held in October of 2019 that detailed how the program interfaces with JustWare, the office's records management system. Once completed, all DA's Office staff were then familiar with the messaging capabilities of eCourt Date and what those messages look like to the victims we are communicating with.



# eCourt Date Committee

(Continued)

In addition to the positive feedback we have received from victims, there has also been a decrease in the amount of time staff spend on routine victim related notification tasks. Use of the eCourt Date program has reduced the number of employees who were previously tasked with victim notifications by over half, with a potential savings of over 3,500 clerical work hours per year. More importantly, the system is far more effective than traditional mail notification.

The success of the eCourt Date project is an example of the District Attorney's Office's commitment to service and to seeking opportunities to become more efficient through the use of technology.



Alicia Agrella  
Project Coordinator



Dale Kaduk  
IT Department Support Supervisor



Stephanie Shuman  
Investigations Supervisor



Annie Gunter  
Victim Witness Advocate



Sue Councilman  
Office Support Specialist



Carolyn Heddy  
Office Assistant



Margarita Guttierrez  
Legal Secretary Supervisor (retired) Page 3

# Investigations Division Training Team

The citizens of Washoe County are familiar with the work of criminal prosecutors within their District Attorney's Office. However, working alongside them is a less familiar team of sworn peace officers dedicated to fulfilling the mission of the office and seeking justice for victims. DA Investigators are held to the same strict training standards as all Nevada law enforcement professionals. The Nevada Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) requires all law enforcement officers to complete yearly compliance training in a variety of necessary categories. These include such specialized skills as firearms and less-lethal weapons proficiency, defensive tactics, arrest and control techniques, use of force, de-escalation and many more. All DA Investigators have completed thousands of hours of training throughout their careers and many are instructors. Our team of instructors provide valuable training each year to both sworn and civilian staff and the office is fortunate to have this kind of expertise on hand.



DA Investigator  
Marcus Hodges

Investigator Hodges has been a Firearms Instructor for the past 17 years and is currently the Investigations Division's Range Master. He has completed hundreds of hours of training in firearms instruction and holds numerous certificates from training Federal organizations such as the Law Enforcement Training Center, Safariland and the National Rifle Association. In addition, Investigator Hodges is recognized as a Master Instructor by the International Association of Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors and is also one of the Division's TASER instructors.



DA Investigator  
Emmett Florez

Investigator Florez has been a Firearms Instructor for the past 18 years. He is also a certified Defensive Tactics Instructor and was recently re-certified this past year in Mechanical Advantage Subject Control (MACH) and Verbal De-Escalation. Investigator Florez has also been an ASP (baton) instructor for the past 13 years.



DA Investigator Joel Reynolds

Investigator Reynolds has been an Investigator for the District Attorney's Office for 4 years. In that time, he has become a certified Firearms Instructor, Defensive Tactics Instructor, TASER Instructor and a certified AR-15 Rifle Armorer. In addition, his dedication to training and self-improvement recently earned him his Advanced Nevada Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Certificate.



## Investigations Division Training Team Continued



DA Investigator Pete Grimm

Investigator Grimm has been a certified Defensive Tactics Instructor since 2008, with specialized training in military self-defense and the fighting style of Krav Maga. He recently attended training in Las Vegas where he was also re-certified in Mechanical Advantage Subject Control and Verbal De-Escalation. In addition to his instructor role, Investigator Grimm is also an expert on Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMG) and frequently speaks at OMG seminars and trainings.



Supervising DA Investigator Stephanie Shuman

Investigator Shuman holds Intermediate and Advanced POST Certification, as well as a POST Supervisor Certificate. She earned her Instructor Development Certificate in 2006 and is currently a TASER Instructor for the Division. Investigator Shuman is also in the process of obtaining her Nationally Certified Public Manager Certificate, with an expected graduation date in April of this year.



Supervising DA Investigator John Gurriere

Investigator Gurriere holds Intermediate and Advanced POST Certification and earned his Instructor Development Certificate in 2003. He is a certified Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor and has attended numerous instructor courses during his law enforcement career. Upon his promotion in December 2018, he became the Investigations Division's training coordinator.



# Employee Spotlight

**Matt Lee** *Chief Deputy District Attorney*



## What Drives You?

"I absolutely value and enjoy the satisfaction that comes from working as a team within our office, with our law enforcement partners, and with members of our community to achieve a positive result for victims of crime and for our community."

Chief Deputy District Attorney (CDDA) Matt Lee has been with the Washoe County District Attorney's Office since 2008. During his career he has handled all types of prosecutions and currently specializes in Arson cases, as well as being a part of the Office's DA Murder On-Call team. CDDA Lee was promoted to Chief in January 2019 and leads a team of 6 felony trial prosecutors. He regularly instructs at area law enforcement academies and trainings on a variety of legal topics. A graduate of Case Western Reserve University School of Law in Cleveland, Ohio, CDDA Lee began his service to Washoe County's citizens as a 2nd Judicial District Court Law Clerk to the Honorable Judge David A. Hardy before moving into his prosecutor role. In his off time, CDDA enjoys family time with his wife of 18 years, Adrienne, and their 6 children, ranging in age from 2 to 15. The Lees are active in their church and enjoy spending time in the Nevada outdoors, as well as playing, watching and coaching sports.

**Zach Young** *Chief Deputy District Attorney*



## Proudest Moment as a Prosecutor?

"My first solo murder trial involved Paul Revell, who was accused of abusing and killing his 4-month old son. The jury found the defendant guilty of Murder of the First Degree and sentenced him to life in prison. It was tragic to see a baby killed in such an unthinkable manner, but holding Revell accountable, while also helping the baby's mother move forward in her life knowing the truth, was justice and one of my proudest moments."

Chief Deputy District Attorney (CDDA) Zach Young graduated from the McGeorge School of Law in 2004 and began his legal career with a year clerkship for the Honorable Steven Kosach, Washoe County District Court Judge. Following this, he became a prosecutor for the Carson City District Attorney's Office, where he worked in the criminal division until 2007. In 2007 CDDA Young was recruited for a prosecutor position within the Criminal Division of the Washoe County District Attorney's Office. Since that time, he has prosecuted a wide variety of criminal cases and served in the Offices' Major Violators Unit for 4 years where he handled complex cases involving murder charges, gang offenses and repeat offenders. CDDA Young was promoted to a Team Chief position in 2018 and supervises a team of 6 prosecutors who handle felony level criminal prosecutions. A longtime Nevadan, CDDA Young and his wife Courtney keep busy with their 3 busy children. The family are avid Wolf Pack fans and stay active in the community they love.



**The Records Division** is the starting point for every case submitted to the Washoe County District Attorney's Office, either civil, juvenile or criminal. In addition to accepting and routing a limited number of civil case submissions, most of the WCDA Records Division's workload centers around the handling of thousands of criminal cases involving all felony and gross misdemeanor adult and juvenile arrests within Washoe County, warrants, misdemeanor offenses committed in unincorporated Washoe County and certain traffic citations. Records staff process all initial case submissions and assist the criminal teams with incoming supplemental reports, evidence and legal paperwork for existing cases as needed. The Division is also responsible for the internal tracking of thousands of outstanding warrants active within Washoe County and for coordinating the office's Fraudulent Check Diversion Program.



As Custodian of Record for the office, the Records Division receives cases and paperwork that are time sensitive and must be handled quickly, despite dealing with a high volume of work. In 2019, over 11,000 thousand cases were processed by Records Division staff and the office depends on their efficiency. In the fall of 2019, Records started an Early Case Assignment process in Washoe County District Court to streamline case tracking. During that time, a new paperless process for case entry was also started, which drastically reduced the division's paper needs from a box of paper a week (roughly 5,000 sheets) to a box every other month.

In addition to managing the records of the office, The Records Division also collects certain types of victim restitution ordered by the courts or in connection with the Fraudulent Check Diversion Program. In 2019, Records collected \$239,665.09 in restitution for victims throughout Washoe County.

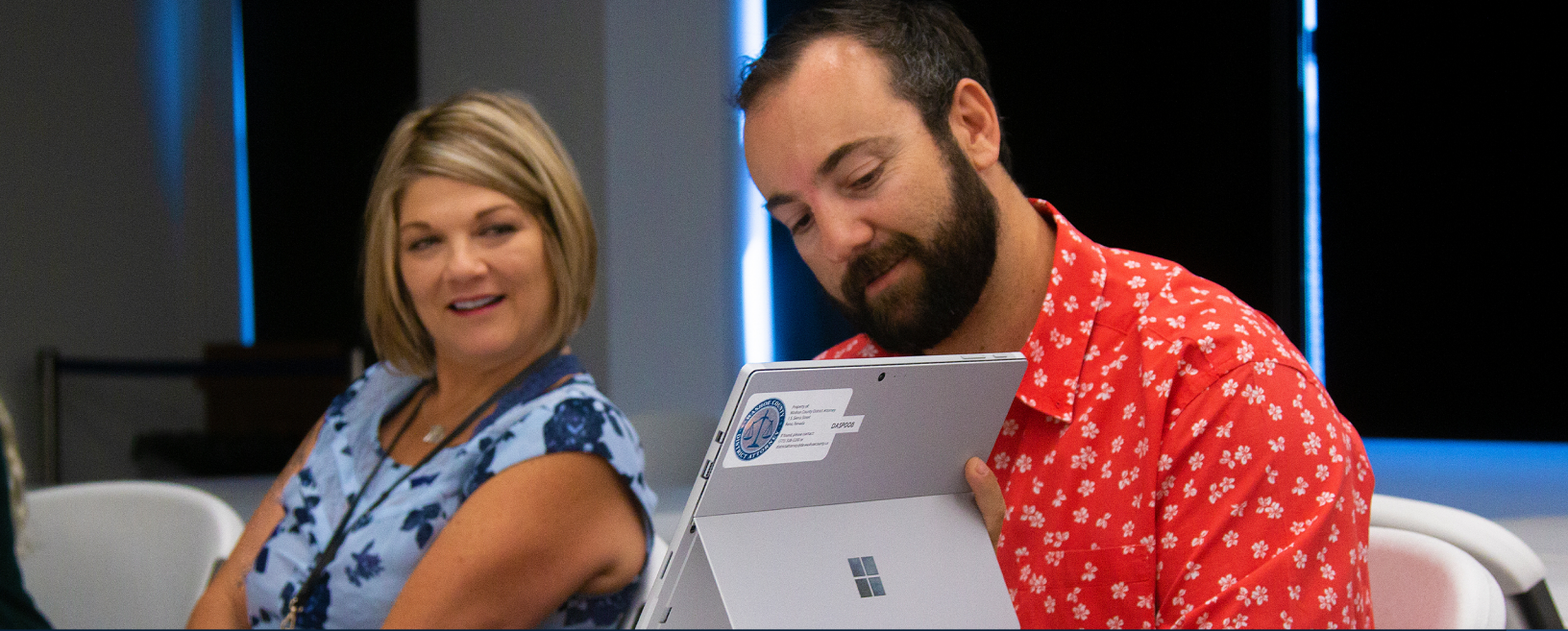
## Records Division Staff

The Records Division is staffed by Legal Secretary Supervisor Brandi Mandeville and a team of Office Support Specialists and Office Assistants who have law or criminal justice agency employment backgrounds. Together, they are constantly striving to improve their service and efficiency.



Pictured left to right - Deborah Mardon (Office Assistant II), Amanda Whitecloud (Office Assistant II), Mayra Deanda-Manriquez (Office Assistant II), Jennifer Mochel (Office Assistant II), Sabrina Reeves (Office Assistant II), Brandi Mandeville (Legal Secretary Supervisor), Wendy Beltran (Office Support Specialist).





Pictured: Lead Legal Secretary Lisa Todd and Deputy District Attorney Adam Cate

# WCDA Goes Paperless



Projected annual cost savings of \$43,336 in office supplies



Increased Productivity



Efficiency Through Innovation

## Washoe County District Attorney's Office Paperless Initiative

Advances in technology have brought opportunity to the Washoe County District Attorney's Office. In 2019, a handful of bright young prosecutors and support staff implemented a new paperless filing system to meet the challenges of increasingly busy court calendars. Called the Washoe County District Attorney Office's Paperless Initiative, this new system is centered on digital file access and tracking for tens of thousands of criminal cases. Whether its one case or forty-five, prosecutors now carry Microsoft Surface Pros to court instead of overflowing paper files. With the availability of wireless internet in the courtroom and a secure Virtual Private Network connection, DA office staff can now connect to the office's case-management system on the go. In addition to ease of access, courtroom downtime can now be used for work that used to require a desk. Support staff are also organizing and processing cases using this more efficient system.

## Paperless Initiative Committee

This transition would not have been possible without the hard work of the Paperless Committee, which was made up of deputy district attorneys, records staff, investigators, secretaries, and administrative staff. Initially, the goal was to determine whether moving to a paperless system would be cost effective and feasible with the technology available. Once that was determined, a transition plan was developed and a start date set. In September of 2019, the switch was flipped, and the Criminal Division went paperless. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and the initial start-up costs of the necessary hardware are being rapidly offset by the cost savings of no longer using reams upon reams of paper. With this success, the office will now be looking to improve and expand the paperless initiative to other divisions within the office.



# Community Partner - Northern Nevada Concerns of Police Survivors

Northern Nevada Concerns of Police Survivors (NNVCOPS) is a local nonprofit all-volunteer organization whose mission is to rebuild the shattered lives of survivors and co-workers affected by a line of duty death. A line of duty death of a police officer is an unexpected and tragic event felt across the community. Spouses, children, parents, siblings and even coworkers are highly affected by the sudden loss; not just during the first year but for many years afterwards.

N.N.V.C.O.P.S. helps line of duty Survivors by lending emotional support, sending them to national retreats tailored to each group, helping them navigate through the local memorials, and accompanying them to Police Week in Washington D.C. the first year after their loss. Northern Nevada Concerns of Police Survivors also seeks to help local law enforcement by conducting trainings such as the upcoming Traumas in Law Enforcement conference in July.

Many of the organization's board members and volunteers are retired from public safety service or have family who served. Several have lost loved ones or co-workers to a line of duty death and know first-hand how important this support can be. N.N.V.C.O.P.S. raises money through fundraising and donations. All funds raised goes to help survivors, as well as to provide education to law enforcement on dealing with stress and trauma.



For more information please contact NNVCOPS at [northernnevadacops@gmail.com](mailto:northernnevadacops@gmail.com), or see the website at [www.northernnvcops.org](http://www.northernnvcops.org) to learn more or to find out how you can help.



Pictured Left to Right, Doug McPartland - NNCOPS Secretary, Jennifer Grant-Blount – NNCOPS President, Danica Rast – NNCOPS Event Coordinator, Virginia “Ginger” Howell – NNCOPS Chaplain



# Division Spotlight



Pictured left to right - Benjamin Newman (Deputy District Attorney), Debra Krail (Legal Secretary), Shelly Scott (Deputy District Attorney), Erica Jackson (Deputy District Attorney), Mia Cholico (Legal Secretary), Jo Lee Wickes (Chief Deputy District Attorney), Lori Delano (Legal Secretary Supervisor), Tillena Hicks (OAI).

## The Team

The attorneys within the Juvenile Division specialize in cases involving juvenile delinquency. They are led by a Chief Deputy District Attorney, who supervises a team of three Deputy District Attorneys (DDA). The division is supported by two Legal Secretaries, a Legal Secretary Supervisor and an Office Assistant.

## Juvenile Division

When a local authority sends a case to the District Attorney's Office involving a juvenile, this team of prosecutors reviews any evidence gathered by law enforcement and determines if charges should be filed in the case and what charges are appropriate given the actions of the juvenile. Charging decisions are based upon whether there is evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that a juvenile violated criminal law. Juvenile prosecutors also consider whether court intervention is merited based on all the circumstances known to them at the time, including the impact on the victim or victims, the effect on the community and its standards, the type of offense, the juvenile's history, and the juvenile's risks and need for accountability, evaluation and/or treatment. The District Attorney's Office also participates in efforts to address juvenile behavior outside the court setting including diversion programs that do not require court action. With a few exceptions, the District Attorney's Office is the only agency authorized to prosecute juveniles in Washoe County who are alleged to have violated state criminal or local laws.

## Did You Know?

Nevada law requires the juvenile delinquency court to balance the interests of the community - including community safety and the impact on victims - with the best interests of any juvenile brought before the court. In keeping with this philosophical foundation, the Juvenile Team of the District Attorney's Office strives to provide accountability to the juvenile, acknowledge and remediate the impact to victims, if possible, and support prevention, evaluation and treatment for each juvenile prosecuted by our office. The juvenile prosecutors work closely with the Washoe County Department of Juvenile Services, known as juvenile probation, and the State of Nevada Youth Parole Bureau.

## Did You Know?

Juvenile prosecutors see a wide variety of cases, including felony or gross misdemeanor offenses. They also review numerous misdemeanor cases and some traffic citations. A typical felony case can include charges of battery with a deadly weapon, burglary, assault with a deadly weapon, possession of drugs, felony level driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs and sex offenses.



## Division Spotlight Continued

Most juvenile cases remain in juvenile court. However, there are instances where these defendants are prosecuted in criminal court as if they were adults. Some crimes committed by older juveniles, such as an alleged murder by a 16-year-old, are filed directly in criminal court. Other serious cases begin in juvenile court with a request by the WCDA juvenile prosecutors to transfer the case to criminal court. This is generally done with older juveniles who have committed serious crimes of violence such as robbery with a deadly weapon or when the juvenile has a lengthy or serious history of previous law violations. Most juvenile court hearings are conducted at the Jan Evans Juvenile Justice Center located on Parr Boulevard and hearings are open to the public under Nevada law.

The goal of the WCDA's Office Juvenile Team is to improve public safety. Through a dedicated and collaborative approach to prosecuting offenses, the team assists victims and holds youthful offenders accountable, while also working to ensure that they are provided with necessary treatment for emotional, mental health and substance abuse issues.

## The Civil Division - Guardianship Training Program

The Washoe County District Attorney's Office has provided legal assistance to the Washoe County Public Guardian's Office on individual guardianship cases since 2008. Guardianship is a legal process, which can be sought when a person can no longer make or communicate safe or sound decisions for themselves or for their property. In these situations, the individual may become susceptible to fraud or negative influence by others. Guardianship actions are carefully considered by the courts.

The Washoe County Public Guardian serves as guardian for vulnerable citizens who have been deemed by the court to be unable to manage their personal and/or financial affairs. Deputy District Attorney (DDA) Dania Reid has been assigned as legal counsel to the County's Guardian Office since August 2008. The provision of legal assistance she provides extends beyond the routine representation involved with establishing an uncontested guardianship to contested matters such as the filing of petitions for placement or to obtain non-routine medical treatment and petitions associated with the administration of estates. DDA Reid also provides the Public Guardian with legal assistance on investigative appointments and when the office is charged with addressing issues of exploitation and/or neglect of protected persons.



Deputy District Attorney Dania Reid



# The Civil Divison Continued

In 2016, the Court solicited the Public Guardian to provide a Guardianship Training Program in video format with the goal of extending guardianship education to a broader audience including prospective guardians, hospitals, residential care facilities, and other interested community stakeholders. In consultation with DDA Dania Reid, the Public Guardian secured production funding and contracted with locally owned SoSu TV to produce the video, which is disseminated free of charge via the Court's Adult Guardianship webpage. Video instructor participants included judicial officers and employees, medical professionals, members of the local guardianship bar, and DDA Dania Reid. Training modules may be viewed independently and offer instruction regarding alternatives to guardianship and community resources, overview and filing, duties and responsibilities pertaining to guardianship of persons and estate, property management, safekeeping documents and fee payment, resignation and termination, and tips and resources for guardians. A Certificate of Completion is available for filing with the Court.

The Guardian Training Program has been well received in Washoe County and was nominated for the 2019 Washoe Impact Award presented by the Washoe County Manager for employee achievement reflective of Washoe County's values as set forth in its Strategic Plan. Along with the Public Guardian and court personnel, DDA Dania Reid received the Integrity Award, honoring uncompromising honesty in dealings with the public and each other in conformance with the Washoe County Code of Conduct.

