



WCDA Newsletter

January - June

2019

WASHOE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

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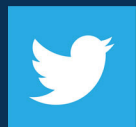
A Message from Washoe County District Attorney Chris Hicks

Thank you for continuing to take an interest in the work of the Washoe County District Attorney's Office. In this edition of our newsletter, you will learn about the important role District Attorneys play at the Nevada legislature and about several of our partner organizations that are also committed to improving the quality of life for all who call Washoe County home. Additionally, we've highlighted a very special tradition that honors the service of our local law enforcement partners. I am pleased to work alongside agencies like the Washoe County Sheriff's Office the police departments of Reno, Sparks and the University of Nevada-Reno, as well as the Nevada Department of Public Safety's many law enforcement divisions and more. With the help of these entities and that of our areas many non-profits, I am confident we can meet the challenges to come.



Christopher J. Hicks,
District Attorney

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James D. Hoff Memorial

A TRADITION OF HONOR FOR OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERS

In May, the names of two Nevada Peace Officers who were lost in the line of duty were added to the James D. Hoff Peace Officer Memorial located in Idlewild Park. District Attorney Chris Hicks was honored with the chance to speak at this year's memorial, which was established in memory of Reno Police Detective James Hoff who was killed in 1979 during an undercover narcotics operation. The memorial itself was the work of several dedicated Washoe County Sheriff's Office members and Reno Police Department staff who envisioned a local tribute to Nevada Peace Officers killed in the line of duty. On October 22, 1988, the memorial became a reality and continues to honor those who have been lost. In addition to adding the names of officers who have been killed, the ceremony also recognizes the bravery of peace officers throughout the state who have faced uncommon dangers and survived deadly situations. Each year, these officers are nominated by their agency and voted on by the Memorial's Board of Directors. Those selected are presented with Survivors Plaques at the moving ceremony that is frequented by the families, friends and fellow officers of those honored on the wall. While the day is somber, it is also a time to reflect on the proud traditions of the law enforcement community. Few professions have the kind of comradery those in policing share with each other and with all those who dedicate themselves to pursuing justice.

To learn more about Nevada's Peace Officers killed in the line of duty visit the following link:
<http://www.hoffmemorial.org/enshrined-officers/>

Additional Links:

Nevada Peace Officer Memorial

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/Police/A/Home/PeaceOfficerMemorial>

National Peace Officer Memorial

<https://nleomf.org/>

District Attorney Chris Hicks' May 3, 2019 James D. Hoff Memorial Speech

I would like to thank the Law Enforcement families here today, especially those who have lost a loved one in the line of duty. Thank you to law enforcement, the Hoff Memorial Board and all those attending this memorial.

When I was asked if I would speak today, my first thought was of the tremendous honor it would be, followed shortly thereafter by a reply of "yes, absolutely I will." I am truly humbled to stand before you today, before proud members of Law Enforcement, your families, and your friends. Your courage is our protection and shield.

I recall President George W. Bush speaking those words a few years ago in Dallas, at a memorial honoring five slain officers in one of the deadliest law enforcement incidents in our nation's history. "Your courage is our protection and shield." On that day in Dallas, and sadly on many other days since, a community mourned the loss of its heroes. They mourned alongside grieving family members who had lost a loved one and fellow officers who had lost a co-worker and a brother or sister officer.

ALLIANCE FOR VICTIM'S RIGHTS

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN VICTIMS OF CRIME, LOCAL RESOURCES AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Alliance for Victims' Rights (AVR) began in 2006 through a collaboration of different local entities and community leaders, including the Washoe County District Attorney's Office. Today, the focus of AVR is to bring awareness to the experiences of victims of crime in our community and the resources available to them. Our office has always played a very active role in supporting the work of AVR through sponsorship and participation in the many events held annually to recognize victims.

Each year during National Crime Victims' Rights Week, AVR organizes the Washoe County Candlelight Vigil and Awards Ceremony to honor local heroes in our community and bring hope to those who have been impacted by crime. The ceremony is held every year in April at the Mills B. Lane Justice Center and this year's theme was **"Honoring our Past, Creating hope for the Future."** The ceremony was moderated by News 4's Shelby Sheehan and featured guest speakers District Attorney Chris Hicks and Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford. Special guest Brianne Thoreson, Principal at Bishop Manogue High School and survivor of the 2017 Route 91 Las Vegas shooting, also gave a truly inspirational speech with her story of survival and hope. Along with honoring survivors at the ceremony, AVR recognizes local people and organizations that go above and beyond in support of victims of crime.



For a list of those honored please visit <https://www.avrnv.org/>

Holly Quick Memorial



To further raise awareness of resources in our community and commemorate those that have been lost to violence, AVR also hosts the Holly Quick Memorial held each June in honor of 16 year old Holly Quick, who was brutally murdered in her home in September of 2006. When possible, AVR covers the costs for memorial plaques placed at the Sparks Marina in Holly's Garden in honor of victims lost to violence. The ceremony is meant to be a peaceful and inspiring event for these victim's family and friends.

WCDA Victim Advocate Gigi Sefchick has chaired AVR since 2016 and will soon be stepping down from that position. With the growth of our community the work of AVR will continue to play an important role in making a difference to those it serves.

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF THE DA VICTIM ADVOCATE

In line with our goal of seeking justice for victims, the Victim Witness Assistance Center (VWAC) continues to expand and offer improved support to victims of crime as they navigate their way through the often complex criminal justice process. To assist them along the way are specially trained DA Victim Advocates, who each carry a caseload of approximately 100 victims at any given time. DA Victim Advocates work directly with victims of crime to provide trauma-informed services and assist with resource location needs, victims of crime compensation funding and act as a liaison for the prosecution team. Each advocate has a diverse background in case management and human service casework, bringing expertise in assisting those in need and a wealth of information to the office. Our victim advocates work closely with our local law enforcement partners to ensure victims are being supported through each portion of the system, from the initial incident, through the court process and beyond. During the prosecution phase, advocates work to ensure each victim's voice is heard and valued. Assistance is not contingent upon a victim's willingness to participate in the prosecution. Advocates provide referrals, resources, and additional support intended to help every victim participate

in a meaningful way and overcome the challenges faced by every survivor of crime victimization.

As the office has evolved to meet the challenges of today, the role of the victim advocate has developed into an integral part of the prosecution team. Each of our six DA Victim Advocates work alongside prosecutors and investigators to assess criminal cases and coordinate the victim's role. With the passing of Nevada's Crime Victims Bill of Rights, or Marsy's Law, our office has taken a proactive approach to ensuring all victims are informed of their rights and understand how our office is able to support them. DA Victim Advocates are instrumental in informing victims of those rights and providing support from initial notification to sentencing and the submission of victim impact statements.

When the emotional toll that is felt by a victim leaves them unable to share their thoughts and the impact the crime has had on them with the court, victim advocates are there to be their voice. Nevada Law grants victim advocates the ability to read a victim's statement to the court on their behalf, ensuring that victims are heard and that the court is well-informed of the impact the crime has had on that victim. Once prosecution has concluded, DA Victim Advocates

continue to ensure victims are given the proper notifications for Nevada Parole and Probation, Nevada Department of Corrections, and State of Nevada Parole Board actions.

The office also recognizes how important it is for victims to understand what happens to criminal cases once prosecution is concluded. Advocates continue to communicate with victims through the long post-conviction procedural phase and are available to answer questions along the way.

A key focus of District Attorney Hicks' administration has been to improve victim services. In October of 2018, the office added two additional advocate positions to the VWAC team and funding has been secured to add two additional positions in late 2019. These new positions were made possible through grant funding from the State of Nevada's Office of Victims of Crime Assistance (VOCA). Once finalized, one of the advocate positions will be dedicated to the Washoe County Child Advocacy Center. This is yet another step in supporting our community's most vulnerable victims and in line with the office motto, "Justice first, People Always."

Meet Our Team

Gigi Sefchick



Gigi Sefchick has worked for the DA's Office since March of 2004. She continues to play an integral role in the training of newly hired victim advocates and updates training materials and court materials to ensure our VWAC program provides accurate information to victims we serve. In addition, Gigi is one of the few Nevada Supreme Court Certified Interpreters in Washoe County. The office is fortunate to be able to offer Spanish speaking victims in our community compassionate and supportive services. She works hand in hand with prosecutors to ensure every victim's voice is heard and respected.

Annie Gunter



Annie Gunter joined us from Awaken, a local non-profit working to combat sex-trafficking in Northern Nevada. She is currently working on her Master's Degree at UNR in Social Work. Annie's position is funded

by the VOCA grant. She has a passion for serving crime victims and strives to maintain positive lines of communication with those she works with.

Alicia Stewart



Alicia Stewart joined the DA's Office in 2015. Alicia jumped right into the role and quickly found a niche working with victims and families involved in driving under

the influence (DUI) cases. Alicia brings a wealth of knowledge about elder services and resource, having spent several years training others in the law enforcement community on the subject. She is well respected among her peers and prosecutors.

Brenda Price



Brenda Price has been with the DA's Office since January of 2007. Brenda is one of the more experienced advocates within the office and a leader within the community. She provides a strong, supportive role to the victims she serves, as well as acting as a mentor to her co-workers. Brenda works passionately with the families of homicide victims and is their voice in the criminal justice process. She is the consummate professional, always has a smile on her face and is a joy to work with.

Amy Brown



Amy Brown has been with the office since June of 2015. Amy holds a Master's in Social Work and worked in the medical field prior to joining the team. She has become an integral part of VWAC and brings a compassionate and calming personality to her interactions with victims. She has established herself as a knowledgeable advocate for those she works with.

Karlie Callahan



Karlie Callahan joined the DA's Office in October of 2018 from the Reno Police Department's Victim Services Unit. Karlie has a welcoming personality

and holds a special interest in working with domestic violence victims who are rebuilding their lives after experiencing violence within their relationships. She brings a wealth of information from her previous role as a victim advocate in a first responder setting.



Did You Know The Month of April Represents Child Abuse Prevention Month?

During April, blue pinwheels can be seen across the community in recognition of National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Throughout that month communities are encouraged to increase awareness and provide education and support to families through resources and strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect. The color blue appears early in April and represents these efforts, along with symbolic blue pinwheels that are ceremoniously planted across the County.

Why Pinwheels?

The pinwheel has become the national symbol of Child Abuse Prevention. By its very nature, the pinwheel connotes whimsy and childlike notions. It has come to serve as a reminder of the safe, stable, and nurturing childhoods we want for all children. In 2019, the Washoe County District Attorney's Office planted pinwheel gardens in two outdoor locations where families and children frequent in an effort to embrace all that is being done in our community to prevent child abuse. One of the pinwheel planting events took place at the Child Advocacy Center, where law enforcement officials came together to show unity and take a stand against child abuse. Pinwheels were also planted in front of the Washoe County District Attorney's Office, as well as a collaborative planting with the Washoe County Human Services Agency. A powerful display was also created inside the Mills B. Lane Justice Center by our WCDA Awareness Committee so that its employees and visitors could see powerful statistics and other awareness information meant to provoke thought and encourage change.



Prosecutor Spotlight

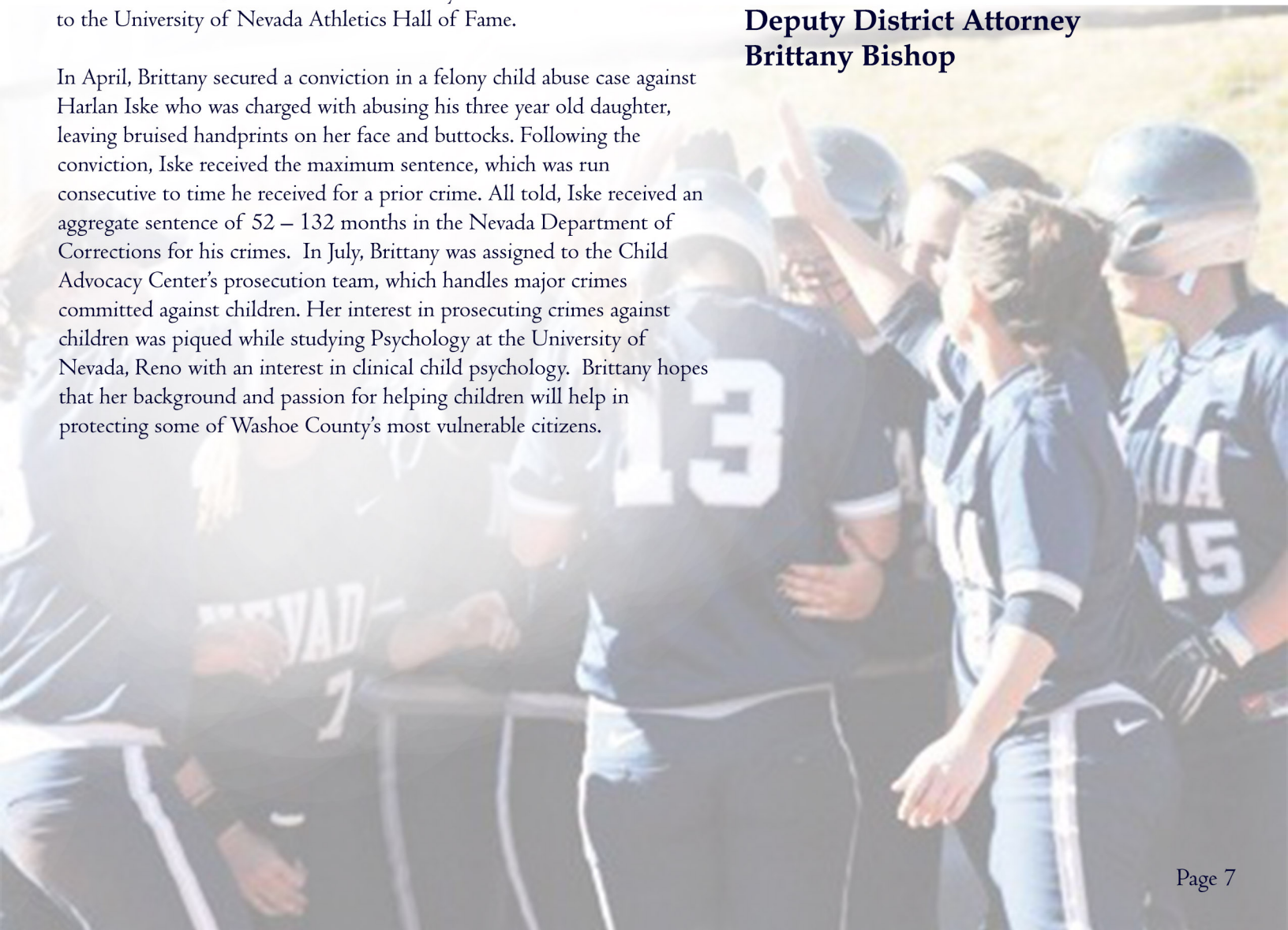
Brittany Bishop has been employed as a prosecutor with the Washoe County District Attorney's office since March 2017. Prior to this, she practiced civil litigation as an associate with a local law firm. Brittany is a third generation Nevada attorney who attended William S. Boyd School of Law in Las Vegas, where she received awards for legal writing and was a member of both the Nevada Law Journal and the Society of Advocates moot court team. She is a published legal writer, whose article on Title IX was included in the Nevada Law Journal. Brittany also studied abroad in The Hague, Netherlands, examining international criminal law primarily in the context of the United Nations' International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Brittany is a graduate of the University of Nevada-Reno, where she received a full-ride athletic softball scholarship. After graduation, Brittany played softball professionally for two seasons in Haarlem, Netherlands. A multi-sport athlete in high school, Brittany was inducted into the Douglas High School Basketball Hall of Fame in 2014. Her college softball career was also outstanding, including numerous Conference Championships, NCAA appearances, individual awards, and single-season and career records. As a result, she will be honored this year as a First-Ballot inductee to the University of Nevada Athletics Hall of Fame.

In April, Brittany secured a conviction in a felony child abuse case against Harlan Iske who was charged with abusing his three year old daughter, leaving bruised handprints on her face and buttocks. Following the conviction, Iske received the maximum sentence, which was run consecutive to time he received for a prior crime. All told, Iske received an aggregate sentence of 52 – 132 months in the Nevada Department of Corrections for his crimes. In July, Brittany was assigned to the Child Advocacy Center's prosecution team, which handles major crimes committed against children. Her interest in prosecuting crimes against children was piqued while studying Psychology at the University of Nevada, Reno with an interest in clinical child psychology. Brittany hopes that her background and passion for helping children will help in protecting some of Washoe County's most vulnerable citizens.



**Deputy District Attorney
Brittany Bishop**





SECRET WITNESS

40 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE CITIZENS OF WASHOE COUNTY

In the 40 years since its debut, Secret Witness has worked tirelessly to create a safer environment for citizens to report crime anonymously without fear of retaliation. The Washoe County District Attorney's Office has worked alongside Secret Witness in this quest and together with local law enforcement and community leaders we continue to focus on improving public safety and ensuring those who commit crimes and victimize others are brought to justice.

Secret Witness was founded by Mr. Don Richter, a local businessman and University of Nevada Alumni who was outraged by the abduction and murder of 6-year-old Lisa Bonham who disappeared from Idlewild Park in Reno in 1977. Her body was discovered in Verdi a year later. The previous year, a 19-year old UNR nursing student was found dead in a garage not too far from Don's Alma Mater. Activated by those two cases and believing community members should be more proactive in the fight against crime, he set out to create Secret Witness.

Thanks to Mr. Richter's vision, Secret Witness is now a thriving non-profit organization composed of concerned local citizens all volunteering for the sole purpose of keeping our community safe. The program has no paid staff and relies on the generosity of businesses and individuals to fund the program. Its commitment to providing valuable assistance to law enforcement agencies throughout northern Nevada and to solving crime has never wavered. Decades later, Secret Witness is still going strong and has been credited with providing information in several high profile cases including the murders of Thelma Davilla, Kathy Powell, Sgt. George Sullivan and more recently, Brianna Dennison and Holly Quick. Secret Witness is also credited with assisting in millions of dollars of street drugs being confiscated, stolen property being returned to its rightful owners and solving numerous stolen credit card fraud and local business theft cases. To date, Secret Witness has helped solve over 3,400 crimes, 40 murders and has paid over \$300,000 in cash rewards to anonymous tipsters. Fast forward to today and Secret Witness has evolved to meet the needs of our growing community by providing multilingual tip line operators, texting and a website tip function. Secret Witness also has a school program for middle and high schools, offering rewards for tips regarding drugs and weapons on campus.

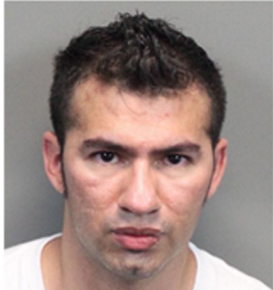
The DA's Office meets regularly with the members of the Secret Witness board and counts it as one of our strongest allies in the fight to bring justice to victims and hold those who commit crimes accountable.



WCDA's Office IN THE NEWS

Man Who Fled During Trial on Sex Offenses Against Children Sentenced to Multiple Life Terms

Selvin Zecerna-Valdez

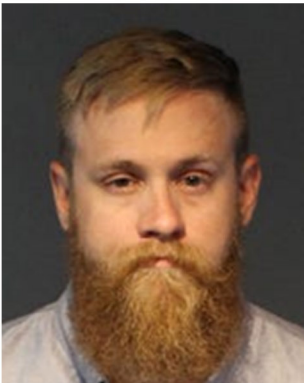


CAPTURED

Selvin Zecerna-Valdez, who fled to Mexico during his District Court trial in 2016 and was later captured and returned to the United States, was sentenced in January to nine life terms in prison on four counts of Sexual Assault on a Child Under the Age of 14 years old, five counts of Lewdness with a Child Under the Age of 14 years old and one count of Attempted Sexual Assault on a Child. Zecerna-Valdez was convicted of having sexually assaulted a young female relative multiple times over the course of several years. The case was prosecuted by Chief Deputy District Attorney Nicole Hicks, who is also the director of the Washoe County Child Advocacy Center. Based on the sentence received, Zecerna-Valdez must serve 198 years in prison before parole eligibility begins.

Felony DUI Causing Death Conviction Results in 20 Year Prison Term

Clinton Joel Godac



Clinton Joel Godac pled guilty in January to one count of Driving Under the Influence Resulting in Death and one count of Battery on a Protected Person and was sentenced to 20 years in prison, with parole eligibility after a minimum of 5 years has been served. The case was handled by Deputy District Attorney Shannon Bryant who is the Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor (TSRP), a grant funded and highly specialized position within the WCDA's Office. Godac was arrested on April 5, 2017, by the Nevada Highway Patrol (NHP) after they responded to a collision on McCarran Blvd. near Pyramid Way, in Reno. Once on scene, NHP troopers determined that Godac was driving in a construction zone when he crossed a double yellow line into oncoming traffic. Godac's vehicle collided with one vehicle and continued to travel forward before striking a second vehicle head-on, finally coming to a stop. The driver of the first vehicle received minor injuries. The driver and passenger of the second vehicle had to be extricated from their vehicle and taken to the hospital. That vehicle's 67 year old female driver sustained multiple blunt force injuries and ultimately passed away. Her son-in-law, who was the passenger, received minor injuries. Godac sustained minor injuries in the crash and also had to be transported to the hospital by ambulance before arrest. As an emergency medical technician was attempting to render assistance to Godac, he assaulted him. Godac was subsequently arrested, and this office filed formal criminal charges against him. Blood alcohol testing conducted approximately one hour after the crash revealed that Godac had a blood alcohol content of 0.16.

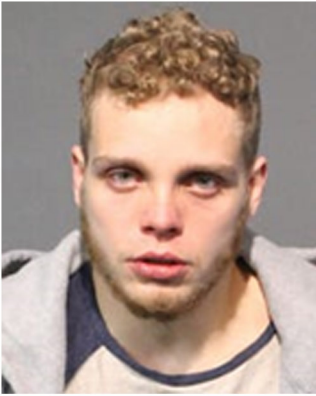
Drug Trafficking Case Results in Habitual Criminal Sentencing

Brice James Daniels



Brice James Daniels was adjudicated a habitual criminal and sentenced on drug trafficking charges. Daniels, who committed his sixth and seventh felony convictions while on probation for earlier felony cases, was sentenced to life in prison with parole-eligibility beginning after a minimum of ten years has been served. He was also sentenced to a consecutive term of 12 to 48 months in prison on a second count of trafficking in the case. The sentences follow an October 2018 trial where a jury found Daniels guilty on two counts of Trafficking a Controlled Substance. Daniels was also sentenced to 12-34 months in prison and 28-72 months in prison on two separate felony probation cases. The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Jeff Hoppe, who is assigned as the offices' High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) prosecutor.

Skyler Gene Mendonca



A felony domestic battery case prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Christopher Day resulted in a five year prison sentence for a Reno man stemming from an October 4, 2018 incident. Skyler Gene Mendonca, from Reno pled guilty in February to one count of Domestic Battery by Strangulation (felony) and one count of Attempting to Suborn Perjury (gross misdemeanor) and was sentenced to the maximum possible term for both charges. Mendonca will serve 364 days in jail on the suborning perjury charge, and an additional five years in prison on the domestic battery by strangulation charge. Mendonca was convicted of strangling his then 19 year-old girlfriend. During the attack, the victim was strangled to the point of unconscious, and received serious injuries to her throat and body. Following the attack, Mendonca repeatedly attempted to influence the victim's cooperation with the investigation and encouraged her to make up a false story about her being attacked by four unknown assailants.

MILESTONES

**Chief Deputy District Attorney
Cheryl Wilson (Retired)**



Chief Deputy District Attorneys Cheryl Wilson (retired) and Kay Lyon

2019 has been a year of tremendous change and growth for the WCDA's Office. An example of this is the recent retirement of Chief Deputy District Attorney Cheryl Wilson. Cheryl was with the office since 1996 and served on felony trial teams throughout her career, handling all types of crimes including homicides and sexual assaults. She was quickly moved to the Major Violators Team handling complex violent and sex abuse offenses. In 2014 Ms. Wilson was promoted to Team Chief of the Misdemeanor Unit and oversaw the training and supervision of six newly hired Deputy District Attorneys, as well as developing programs and practices to facilitate the efficient handling of thousands of misdemeanor submissions. During her time as Chief, Ms. Wilson developed relationships with our local law enforcement agencies, including Washoe County Animal Services, which ensured better communication and more successful prosecutions. Ms. Wilson earned great respect from judges, officers, colleagues, and the citizens of the community she served diligently for 26 years. She is now enjoying a well-earned retirement with her family. We wish her the best.

**Chief Deputy District Attorney
Kay Lyon**



On June 14, 2019 Katherine (Kay) Lyon was promoted to Team Chief to fill the position left by Cheryl Wilson. Kay has been with the office since March, 2000 and has served as a prosecutor on the Misdemeanor Team, Juvenile Team and two Felony Trial Teams. She has served as the liaison for the Project Safe Neighborhoods Gun Task Force since May of 2011 and the newly formed Reno Gun Initiative. Prior to being hired in 2000, Ms. Lyon worked as a Deputy Prosecutor in Bannock County, Idaho. As Team Chief, Kay hopes to provide our new prosecutors with a solid foundation consisting of confidence in their ability to evaluate cases. She also hopes to encourage collaboration and team discussion to help spot and overcome issues.



Nevada Legislature

Update on 80th Session

The Nevada Legislature's 2019 session was particularly focused on criminal justice topics. As it has done for over a decade, the Washoe County District Attorney's Office sent a representative to help educate lawmakers on the potential impact of proposed legislation on victims and public safety.

Following the 2018 retirement of Chief Deputy District Attorney and legislative liaison Kristin Erickson, District Attorney Chris Hicks and the Nevada District Attorneys' Association appointed Washoe County Chief Deputy District Attorney (CDDA) Jennifer Noble to the position.

With hundreds of proposed bills that could affect public safety and victims' rights, the 2019 session was particularly challenging for law enforcement. As many legislators called for criminal justice reform, those representing law enforcement strived to ensure that changes to criminal laws would not create unintended consequences and come at the cost of community safety. Washoe County District Attorney Chris Hicks, along with Douglas County District Attorney Mark Jackson and Carson City District Attorney Jason Woodbury, testified against Assembly Bill 236, a sweeping piece of legislation that proposed to significantly reduce penalties for a wide range of felony and misdemeanor crimes. In his testimony DA Hicks said, **"While I sit here in opposition to this bill, it is important to note that I am a supporter of analyzing our criminal justice system to ensure it is effective in protecting victims, promoting public safety, and seeking to rehabilitate those who are in the system. As such, I am a supporter of logical criminal justice reform and recognize that there are often changes that can be made. However, there has to be balance in that reform that accounts for legitimate concerns about victims and public safety."**

The bill ultimately passed, but with some improvements. Still, prosecutors remain concerned as voiced to lawmakers. "AB 236 reduces prison time for persons possessing substantial quantities of drugs, like heroin and methamphetamine. It also makes it more difficult for probation officers and judges to revoke offenders who violate the terms of their probation, and weakens laws designed to punish repeat felony offenders. While the bill that passed is better than the original version, prosecutors and law enforcement have serious concerns about how this legislation will impact our communities," said Noble. AB 236 becomes effective July 1, 2020.

In contrast, some new laws passed during the 2019 session will benefit victims. Noble and the District Attorneys' Association worked to help pass Assembly Bill 60. Where the abuser knows the victim is pregnant, AB 60 increases the penalty for a first-time domestic battery offense to up to one year in jail. For second-time offenses, it increases the minimum jail sentence from 2 days to 20 days. It also increases the penalty for domestic violence causing substantial bodily harm, and adds home invasion to the list of felony crimes that constitute domestic violence. Additionally, AB 60 makes anti-stalking laws easier to enforce. The bill became effective July 1, 2019.

Jennifer Noble
Chief Deputy District Attorney



Another bill supported by law enforcement, Assembly Bill 19, increases the penalties for violating protective orders. It also provides alternate means of serving the orders where a person is evading service, and increases the time period for an extended protection order from one year to two years. The bill became effective July 1, 2019.

Although the legislature is in recess until February 2021, interim committees will continue to meet. CDDA Noble will attend criminal justice-related committees, such as the Advisory Commission on the Administration of Justice and the Sentencing Commission, to monitor upcoming legislation. “As Nevada seeks ways to improve the current justice system, we will be there to remind lawmakers and stakeholders that victims’ rights and community safety should be their first priority,” she said.

District Attorney Chris Hicks’ James D. Hoff Memorial Speech May 3, 2019

CONTINUED

Like those in Dallas and people at memorials across the Nation, we are here to honor those who have fallen in the line of duty. And, we are here to recognize a tradition of service to our community and a calling that only a brave few answer. Those brave few are the men and women of law enforcement. They deserve our utmost respect and have mine and my family’s deep gratitude.

As a career prosecutor, I consider myself to be a part of the law enforcement community and I believe deeply in what we do. The opportunity to continue the work peace officers have started and bring it to a just conclusion for victims and better the safety of our community is significant.

Because of this, I have always respected the prosecutor’s role in the criminal justice system and deeply value the relationships I’ve developed with law enforcement throughout the state. Our partnerships are critical to the end goal of keeping our communities safe and ensuring justice prevails.

For my law enforcement partners, I recognize the gravity of your work and the risks you face, day in and day out. It takes steadfast courage throughout your careers, from your first days in the academy to your last end of shift before retirement. Yours is not an easy job and these are not easy times. There is a level of unprecedented attention on the work you do and a demand to find the answers to so many of society’s problems.

As District Attorney, I have the pleasure of attending academy graduations and I have never left one without a renewed sense of hope for our future. It takes courage for each of those young cadets to have chosen a path that will lead them to long hours away from family and into the highly scrutinized world of policing we have today. That courage continues throughout your careers as you kiss your families goodbye and head into years of days or nights that can go south at any moment. And it is in those extraordinary moments, when lives are on the line, where your courage is often at its finest.

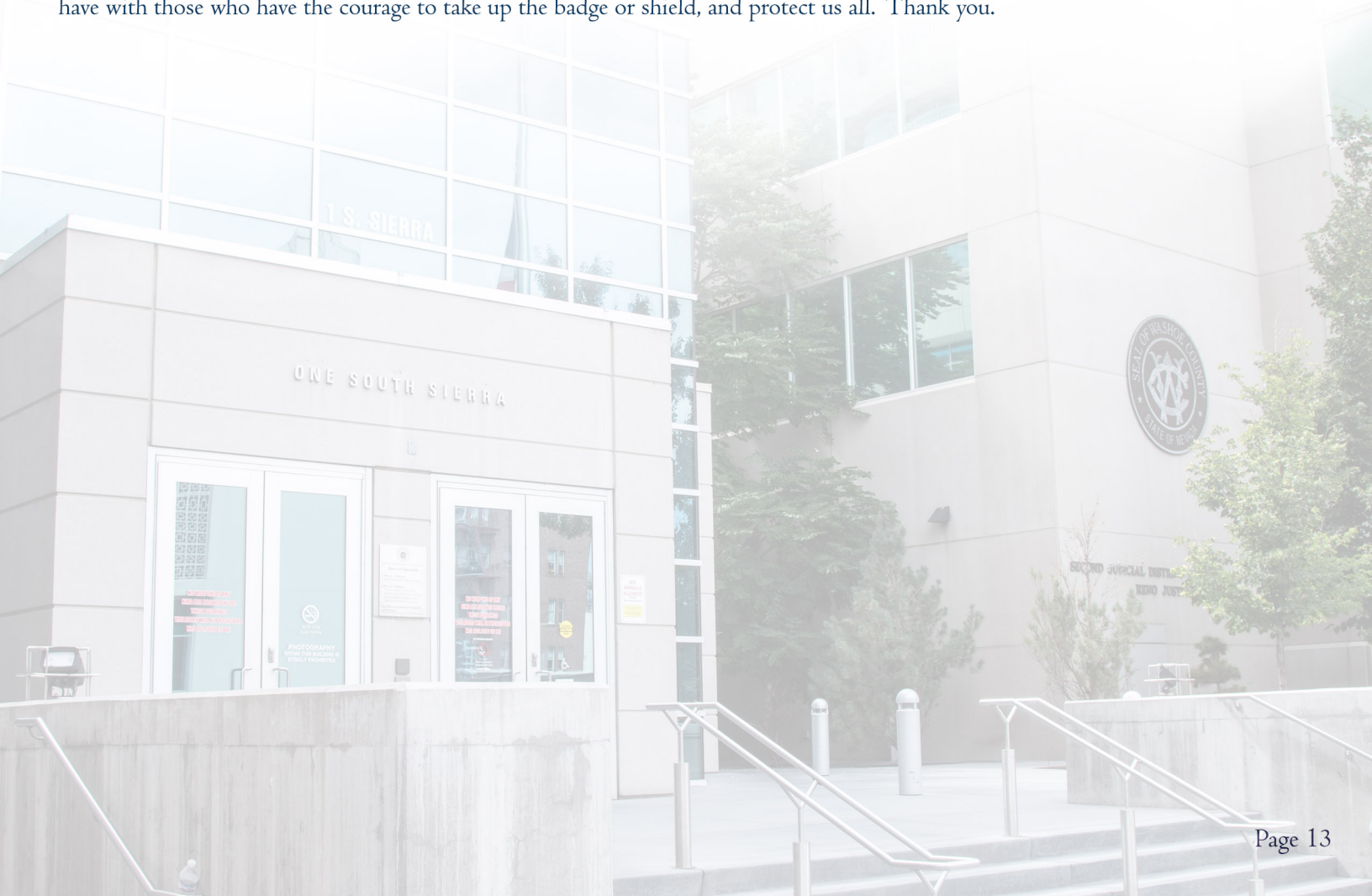
When I was younger, I stood in this very audience when my father, Larry Hicks, spoke at this memorial. He too served as Washoe County District Attorney and his father, my grandfather, served as a police officer. Like many of you, there is a family tradition of public safety that spans generations and I am proud of that history and my connection to it. What I remember best is when he spoke of how the community weeps when an officer is injured or killed in the line of duty. I remember feeling the gravity of that statement. And, I'm reminded of it every time I am at this event.

Years later, when attending my first line of duty law enforcement funeral, that of Deputy Carl Howell of the Carson City Sheriff's Office, the reality of that statement felt so emotionally true. Thousands upon thousands of citizens filled the Reno Events Center. The emotion in the room was tangible, as it should have been. Nevadans cried, fellow law enforcement struggled to find words, hope, or meaning in it all, and the hearts of Deputy Howell's family and friends remained broken. My father's words rang true again. Our community weeps when tragedy strikes our law enforcement families because it forces us all to realize just what your courage and sacrifice means.

Today, I also think of the pride I feel having carried on the tradition my father started and I think of those of you in the audience who are doing the same. You are the next generation of peace officers and I believe your courage will lead the way for others to follow.

The peace officers whose names are on the memorial behind me and those who are to be placed on it today, are truly heroes. Those who will be honored today as survivors are also our heroes and they have earned our respect and genuine appreciation. I am grateful they are with us and hope that their stories are shared and passed down for others to hear.

It deserves saying again; your courage is our protection and shield. My family and I will continue to honor those who have been lost while serving our community and protecting others. And, my office will continue to embrace the important partnership we have with those who have the courage to take up the badge or shield, and protect us all. Thank you.



WCDA's Office IN THE COMMUNITY



2019 SYMPOSIUM
on community and policing

APRIL 25 6-9PM
Washoe County Commission Chambers
1001 E. 9th St., Building A

More info: [Facebook.com/WNPPCC](https://www.facebook.com/WNPPCC)

