2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Fourteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office

Groundbreaking center wins statewide award from S.C. Victims Assistance Network.

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<u>COVID</u> concerns

Pandemic halts jury trials, but Solicitor's Office works with minimal interruption. <u>PAGE 15</u>

The power of intelligence

How Solicitor's Office investigators identify threats, keep them off the streets. <u>PAGE 12</u>

<u>Solicitor Stone's</u> <u>commonsense plan for a</u> <u>better criminal-justice</u> <u>system.</u>

Solicitor's Office overview

he 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office is the chief prosecuting agency for Allendale, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties. The only fivecounty 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 288,109 people, according to 2019 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 Pretrial Intervention, worthless check recovery, alcohol education, traffic education, treatmentbased courts and juvenile arbitration.

Solicitor Duffie Stone leads the office. He was appointed by the governor in 2006 and re-elected in 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2020.

Web & social media

Website: www.scsolicitor14.org

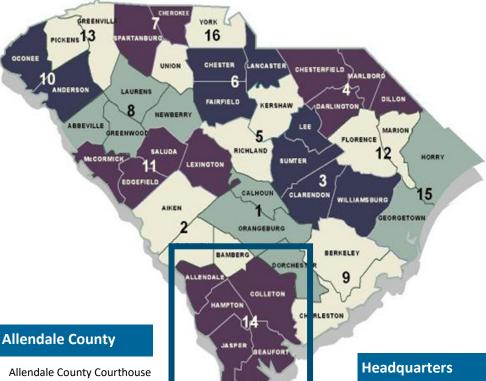


Facebook: @FourteenthCircuitSolicitorsOffice



YouTube channel: 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office





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

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)

What's inside

A message from Solicitor Duffie Stone

pandemic threatened lives and livelihoods across our state and across the globe. Deadly interactions between police and African-Americans sparked protests that sometimes careened into chaos. Election season seemed to strain our capacity for civility.

Like many, I am eager to put 2020 in the past.

Strange as it might sound, however, I greet 2021 with more than mere relief. I see promise, opportunities for growth and perhaps even a chance for a brand of wisdom forged only in the crucible of dire challenges. I hope that as you read this 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office annual report, you come to understand my optimism.

Make no mistake, 2020 will leave a mark.

As you will read, the pandemic brought jury trials to a screeching halt for most of the year, creating a backlog of criminal cases that might take years to eliminate. However, you will also read that much of our work continued unabated during the pandemic. We continued to operate diversion programs such as Pretrial Intervention and our Multidisciplinary Court. We received plaudits for our groundbreaking Victims Services Center. We sharpened our understanding of technology in ways that will benefit us all well into the future.

Our troubles and differences also forced a frank conversation about the very essence of criminal justice. In summer 2020, I put forward a reform plan to South Carolina's General Assembly that is grounded in my three decades of experience as a prosecutor. I outline that plan again here for two reasons: First, this discussion will doubtlessly continue into the new year and beyond. Second, the ideas expressed are a clear window into the philosophy that guides the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office under my watch.

In sum, my office will strive to ensure innocence is safeguarded, offenders face an appropriate reckoning and our attorneys act in good faith as ministers of justice.

As always, I owe many thanks to those who have supported the 14th Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office in these aims – 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



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The Solicitor's Office by the numbers ...

he primary mission of the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office is to prosecute cases in General Sessions Court over five counties in South Carolina's Lowcountry. In fact, over the past five years, we've disposed of an average of more than 5,600 cases annually.

But we do more than that. A lot more, actually.

Here is a look at some of the other programs we run and the number of people served in 2020, as well as other figures relevant to Solicitor's Office operations.

Sexual assault examinations performed by Solicitor's Office employees as part of the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center. Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Heather Dollar is certified to perform exams of pediatric victims in the exam room in our center. The Solicitor's Office also has agreements with

several area hospitals to provide sexual-assault exams of adults who come to their emergency rooms for treatment.

Bond estreatments processed in 2020. Defendants who violate their bond provisions can be made to forfeit the money they put up. However, the process involves many steps and, often, many months to complete.

> General Sessions Court cases pending across the 14th Circuit at the end of 2020, a one-year increase of 64.3%. The ballooning backlog is a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. See **Page 16** for more information.

Expungements processed by our administrative assistants in the past year. Under certain circumstances, some defendants can have criminal charges or arrest records erased. Our office is responsible for ensuring the

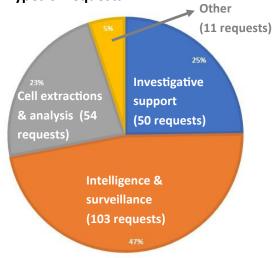
applicant is eligible for expungment and that paperwork is filed correctly.



Requests for assistance from outside agencies, 2020

The 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office Intelligence Unit fielded 218 requests from 29 different law-enforcement agencies seeking assistance in 2020. Requests ranged from help extracting and deciphering cellphone data, to assisting with surveillance and arrests. While most requests came from local agencies, we also helped the ATF, the DEA, Homeland Security, the U.S. Marshal and other federal agencies on 71 occasions. We also helped agencies from other states on three occasions. These charts provide a breakdown of the types of services our Intel Unit provided in 2020, along with a list of the agencies most often requesting help. Turn to **Page 12** to read more about our Intelligence Unit and investigators.

Types of requests



Top requesting agencies

Agency Requests	
Hardeeville PD36	
Bluffton PD30	
Beaufort County Sheriff's Office	
Jasper County Sheriff's Office	
FBI22	
Hampton County Sheriff's Office 16	
ATF16	
DEA 15	
State Law Enforcement Division	
Homeland Security15	

Solicitor's Office caseload entering 2021

County	Population (% of circuit total)	Cases pending at end of 2020 (% of circuit total)
Allendale	8,688 <i>(3%)</i>	166 (2%)
Beaufort	192,122 (66.7%)	3,712 (50%)
Colleton	37,677 (13.1%)	1,924 <i>(26%)</i>
Hampton	19,222 (6.7%)	629 (8%)
Jasper	30,073 (10.4%)	973 <i>(13%)</i>
14th Circuit	287,782	7,404

The percentage of full-time Solicitor's Office 622776 employees who are female, as of December 2020. Of the office's 51 full-time employ-ees, 17.6% are African-American, a peremployees who are female, as of December ees, 17.6% are African-American, a percentage nearly identical to that of Beaufort County, the 14th Circuit's

most populous county. The percentage of African-American residents circuit-wide is 22.9%, according to 2019 census figures.



Participants in our **Traffic Education Pro**gram during 2020. Our office runs a program



that participants can complete in lieu of having points assessed on their driving records. Only those guilty of offenses carrying less than four points qualify, and participants must be referred to the program by the court.

The percentage of the Solicitor's Office fiscalyear 2020 budget that came from the state of South Carolina, grants and fees generated by internal programs. That means the county and municipal governments that benefit most directly from Solicitor's Office services

provide less than half of its budget.

Investigator sworn in as **Jasper Sheriff**

Hipp spent 4 years with **Career Criminal Unit**

nvestigator Donald Hipp left the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office at the beginning of 2021 for the best of reasons - he was sworn in as Jasper County's new sheriff on Jan. 4.

Hipp came to the Solicitor's Office in January 2017 and was a Career Criminal Unit investigator stationed in Colleton County. Previously, he spent 23 years at the Jasper County Sheriff's Office in various capacities, including leader of the force's Criminal Investigations Unit.

"It's always difficult to lose an investigator of Donald's caliber," Solicitor Duffie Stone said, "but the good news is we will still be working closely with him. I'm happy for Donald and proud of the work he did while he was with us."



Hipp defeated incumbent Sheriff Chris Malphrus in the Democratic primary with more than 56% of the vote. He topped petition candidate

Donald Hipp

Gary Morris in the general election with 62% of the total.

He pledged to bolster partnerships between the community and Sheriff's Office, promote transparency and accountability, and improve the department's use of technology to make its work more efficient.

Hipp also said his time at the Solicitor's Office will make him a better sheriff.

"Having assisted with the prosecution of some of the most violent offenders within the 14th Judicial Circuit, I know what evidence and procedures are necessary to get cases prosecuted and will use this knowledge to get justice for victims of crimes," Hipp said on his campaign website.

Hipp was replaced by Kelly Padgett, a special agent for the S.C. State Law Enforcement Division. Padgett also spent 14 years at the Colleton County Sheriff's Office, including five as an investigator.

14th Circuit Victims Services Center

Where surviors 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 a single roof

or 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 often, they had to repeat the story of their ordeal to yet another stranger once they arrived.

Then in 2018, the Solicitor's Office and several community partners launched the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center. Located in the Solicitor's Office headquarters in Okatie, it is designed to ease the travel burden and spare victims the trauma of repeatedly recounting their experience.

The center can also assist adult victims of sexual assault, as well as those who have

been prey to domestic violence, child abuse and other crimes against vulnerable people. It is the only center of its kind in South Carolina, collecting under a single roof:

- A Solicitor's Office Special Victims Unit that prosecutes domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and similar crimes;
 A Solicitor's Office Special Victims Unit that consider that a victim of dom lence is harmed seven times, o
- Nonprofit partners to provide social, legal and counseling services to victims;
- A children's center, where forensic interviews can be conducted and recorded;
- A sexual assault medical exam room.

"The idea is to bring much-needed services to victims, rather than sending victims all over the place to get services," said Victims Service Center Director Michelle Fraser. "I like to think that by doing this, we help people transition from victim to survivor to victor."

Providing a convenient, rapid response is often critical to that transition.

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

Please see CENTER on Page 6

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

CENTER

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"The problem was even though we had many nonprofit groups and government agencies in the 14th Circuit that could help, those service-providers were spread out," 14th Circuit Solicitor Duffie Stone said. "Before we opened the center, my prosecutors could hand a domestic violence victim a stack of brochures and business cards, but we had to hope they had the wherewithal to follow through and get that help.

"Now, instead of handing them business cards, we walk them down the hall for a faceto-face meeting with someone who can assist them right away."

Partners in the Victims Services Center are provided rent-free office space inside the Solicitor's Office headquarters in Okatie. Lowcountry Legal Volunteers, Hopeful Horizons, the Child Abuse Prevention Association and the Lowcountry Alliance for Healthy Youth provide consultations and services there. A local chapter of Bikers Against Child Abuse is available to offer support, as well.

"We have always supported and recognized the benefit of a coordinated response," said Hopeful Horizons CEO Kristin Dubrowski. "When a client has to travel, 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 Solicitor's Office does not seek to duplicate services already provided by its partnering agencies. However, it frequently fills in gaps.

For instance, until Heather Dollar was hired to coordinate the center's sexual assault nursing program, no healthcare provider in the 14th Circuit was specially certified to perform acute forensic sexual assault exams on juveniles — in other words, exams of juvenile patients who have experienced a sexual assault within the past three days.

Now those exams can be performed in the center's medical room.

"Our goal is to close that service gap, while providing specialized care to the victim and collecting the evidence needed to aid in the prosecution of offenders," Dollar said. "Kids need to know that they are safe and need to be reassured that they and their bodies are



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.

going to recover.

"They need to know that what happened to them isn't OK, but that they will be."

The circuit also faced a shortage of nurses specializing in adult forensic exams. Emergency-room nurses can perform them, however, many shy from the task or are nervous about the possibility of testifying at a future trial, according to Dollar, herself a trained ER nurse. Additionally, exams can take a nurse off the ER floor for several hours, creating a potential staffing problem during busy shifts.

The Solicitor's Office is addressing that problem by making available a rotation of nurses, available around the clock, to conduct sexual assault exams at Beaufort Memorial, Hilton Head and Coastal Carolina hospitals.

"The goal is to increase access to this type of care and treatment," Dollar 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."

The Victims Services Center includes other forward-thinking features, including a children's center with its own interview room. There, forensic interviews can be recorded or transmitted via closed circuit to an adjacent room. Allowing several professionals to watch an interview together reduces the need for children to repeat their stories over and over, a cycle that can re-traumatize them.

The interview room is available for other purposes, as well. For instance, it is a good place for law enforcement officers who want to interview child witnesses in an environment less intimidating than a police station.

Funding for Dollar's position and the center facilities were secured without additional cost to local taxpayers. Instead, the Solicitor's Office received Victims of Crime Act and Violence Against Women Act grants, as well as support from local philanthropic organizations such as the Zonta Club of Hilton Head Island and the Kiwanis Club of Bluffton.

Center services are open to anyone who needs them; clients need not be the victim in a Solicitor's Office criminal case.

"We certainly hope that, over time, the center makes victims less reluctant to pursue charges and less fearful of what might happen to them 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

State advocacy group honors Stone for helping crime victims

he S.C. Victim Assistance Network has recognized Solicitor Duffie Stone for his work to help crime victims, including the launch of a first-in-thestate victims services center.

"This award is given to a member of the criminal justice system who has exemplified true advocacy on behalf of crime victims," SCVAN executive director Laura S. Hudson said. "Solicitor Stone has knocked down barriers for crime victims not only in the 14th Circuit, but with a blueprint for others in the state."

Working with several local organizations, the Solicitor's Office announced the grand opening of the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center in October 2019. The Solicitor's Office and its partners (see the next page for a full list) assist victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and other crimes against the vulnerable.

"In reality, this is a community recognition," Stone said when the award was bestowed in July 2020. "The center is the result of more than 20 organizations and individuals coming together to pro-

vide services that are critical to helping victims. Due to their work, in the first six months the center has helped more than 600 people, 100 of them children."

Through 2020, more than 630 people were assisted in the center, and 125 forensic interviews were conducted there. Additional, the center's sexual assault nurse examiners conducted more than 68 forensic medical examinations.

Brad Zervas, executive Director of Lowcountry Legal Volunteers, calls the VSC a landmark development in victim services.

"We are proud to be a part of this initiative," Zervas said. "For the past two years, our office has been able to collaborate with other organizations that share our mission and commitment to equal access to justice. Our clients, many of whom come to us in crisis, have benefitted from a seamless delivery of services and support.

"As a result, we can point to the restoration of many of our families as they have achieved greater independence, security and self-worth. Those in-



Solicitor Duffie Stone stands in front of the donor wall that recognizes contributors to the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center. Stone was recognized with an award from the S.C. Victim Assistance Network. "In reality, this is a community recognition," Stone said, in a nod to the center's many supporters.

volved in establishing such a formidable network of legal representatives and social service advocates deserve our continued support and high praise."

Although there are other victim centers in South Carolina, they lack an exam room, the presence of a prosecutorial agency or both. The 14th Circuit Victims Services Center is located just down the hall from the Solicitor's Office Special Victims Unit, which prosecutes sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse and other crimes against vulnerable people. The facility also includes a medical exam room and forensic interview room.

Stone was honored as part of the SCVAN's 2020 Victims' Rights Week Conference in Columbia, where more than 400 professionals from the criminal justice and victims services sector receive training and network. The ceremony was conducted in an online teleconference because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 forensics nurse trained to treat pediatric, adolescent and adult victims.

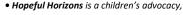
• Bikers Against Child Abuse exists with the SAGAIN

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 preanancy 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.





domestic violence and rape-crisis center serving the 14th Circuit. Hopeful Horizons offers a 24hour 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.

• 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.

• Lowcountry Legal Volunteers provides free,



critical legal services and education through community volunteers and retired lawvers to low income and families in Beaufort, Hampton, and Jasper counties. LCLV handles civil cases in the following areas: adoption. child custody. visita-

tion, 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 2021, she had not lost a jury trial involving an SVU case.

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

ason John Owen was relentless in his pursuit of his former girlfriend. For more than two years, the Lady's Island man sent her endless letters and made harassing phone calls.

The woman moved away to another state to escape the unwanted attention. However, that did not deter Owen from driving more than 600 miles to her new home. He brought with him roses, pictures and cards. Rebuffed again, he returned to Beaufort County and continued harassing the woman by sending unwanted mail; hacking her email and bank accounts; and making "spoof" calls to her and her family.

"The victim in this case worried things would continue to escalate," said Assistant Solicitor Julie Butner, a member of the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office Special Victims Unit, who prosecuted the case. "The defendant went to great and unrelenting lengths to torment this woman and her family."

In January 2020, Owen, 48, was found guilty of first-degree harassment and re"These cases can be some of the most difficult to prove, and they can be some of the most emotionally draining to prosecute. Those challenges just make the work all the more rewarding."

SVU leader Hunter Swanson

ceived the maximum penalty for that offense, five years in prison.

Owens' conviction is one of the more than 170 cases the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office Special Victims Unit closed in 2020, despite a drastic reduction in court operations because of the COVID pandemic.

Please see SVU on Page 9

SVU

Continued from Page 8

Formally launched in December 2017 and funded in part by a federal Violence Against Women Act grant provided through the S.C. Attorney General's Office, the SVU prosecutes criminal sexual conduct, domestic violence, child abuse and similar offenses against the vulnerable. The SVU has earned murder and sexual assault convictions in a 35-year-old cold case, successfully prosecuted a rapist suspected of similar crimes in North Carolina and Texas, and sent to prison a man who gunned down his underage girlfriend and unborn child.

"These cases can be some of the most difficult to prove, and they can be some of the most emotionally draining to prosecute," said Assistant Solicitor Hunter Swanson, who leads the Special Victims Unit. "Those challenges just make the work all the more rewarding."

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 a bed with the burglar.

However, victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and similar crimes introduce a different dynamic.

Set aside the wrenching physical trauma these crimes often inflict. The woman who testifies against her rapist invites scrutiny of her sexual history – potentially in twisted, lurid detail – in front of a gallery of neighbors. 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.

It's 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 lower than for most other crimes, according to data from the S.C. Judicial Department.

However, helping victims will accomplish more than blaming them, Solicitor Duffie Stone believes.

That philosophy guides the work of both the SVU and the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center, which is located just down the hallway in the Solicitor's Office Okatie headquarters. There, several nonprofit partners are given free office space and can provide a range of services – shelter, counseling and assistance with restraining orders, for example. The services are available to all who need them, whether they're involved in a case pending with the Solicitor's Office or not.

"There's a reason we put our Special Victims Unit just down the hallway from the victims center," Stone noted. "We work closely with our center 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 autonomy is part of seeking justice, as far as I'm concerned."

That was precisely the outcome following Owens' conviction in



Francine Norz of the Special Victims Unit prosecutes fraud and financial crimes, including those against the elderly.

January 2020.

At the sentencing, conducted in the evening after the jury returned its verdict, the woman Owens harassed told the judge: "For years, I have been a victim, but tonight, as of 9 p.m., I am a survivor."

PROTECTION FOR THE ELDERLY AND INFIRM

The SVU also prosecutes defendants who take advantage of vulnerable adults. That effort is led by veteran attorney Francine Norz.

"These crimes are insidious because these criminals typically place themselves in a situation where they can exert their undue influence to exploit the victim financially," Norz said. "The victim is often dependent on the criminal for care or assistance due to a physical or mental vulnerability."

To complicate the situation, the victims often do not realize or understand that they are being manipulated.

"The criminal can easily overpower the will of a vulnerable victim," Norz said. And when wrongdoing is uncovered, "victims are reluctant to report the crime because they are embarrassed that they have been betrayed by someone they had trusted and depended upon.

"In that sense, these cases are quite similar to the sexual assault and domestic violence cases our team prosecutes. The goal in these cases is the same, too: bring justice wherever an offender has preyed upon the weak or unsuspecting."

More to come ...

The 14th Circuit Vicitms 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.

Stone wraps up eventful tenure as leader of prestigious national prosecutors group

uffie Stone had big plans for his one-year term as president of the National District Attorneys Association. As it turned out, the year had big plans for him, too.

Just before he was sworn in as leader of North America's largest and most influential association of prosecutors, he testified in U.S. Senate hearings about internet child exploitation. (A summary of Stone's testimony can be found on Page 12 of this report.) By the time his term was finished, Stone had helped lead the NDAA through a pandemic and shape its positions on several criminaljustice reform issues brought to the fore by the death of George Floyd.

"The year was certainly nothing like what I anticipated, particularly the final four months," Stone said. "Many, many people who held that position before me have made an impact on our profession. I'll tell you this though: I doubt anyone has ever served as eventful a year as NDAA president."

Stone was sworn in as president during the NDAA's 2019 conference. The ceremony came shortly after he testified before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee about child exploitation on the internet, and the role Big Tech can play in either facilitating or thwarting it.

In the year that followed, Stone continued to discuss a range of related issues with Sen. Lindsey



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. An eventful year followed.

Graham of South Carolina, the committee chairman; Judicial Committee staff members; the FBI; and the Secret Service. Stone also was among a group of prosecutors and law-enforcement officials who met with representatives of Google, Apple and other tech companies in an attempt to resolve differences about device inaccessibility.

Stone said although the companies and law enforcement discussed the problem in good faith, he is convinced federal legislation is the only way around the impasse. He subsequently wrote a letter endorsing a bill authored by Graham that would require tech companies to help investigators decipher hidden data.

Under Stone's guidance, the NDAA also made significant progress toward his plan to launch regional training centers for prosecutors. In fact, the organization reached agreements with several law schools to host training, and the first event was planned for Salt Lake City, Utah. That event was ultimately canceled because of COVID-19, but centers are poised for launch when the health crisis abates.

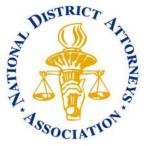
Another of Stone's agenda items was accomplished when the

NDAA instituted a standing diversity and inclusion committee of its board of directors. Work to establish the committee began well before George Floyd's death during an encounter with Minneapolis police officers seized national consciousness in March.

In the aftermath of Floyd's tragic death, the NDAA sought to be a consequential voice on important policy issues, another of Stone's goals for his presidency. In a statement soon after, the NDAA:

• Expressed outrage at the actions leading to Floyd's death;

Please see NDAA on Page 11



"Many, many people who held that position before me have made an impact on our profession. I'll tell you this though: I doubt anyone ever served as eventful year as NDAA president."

• Solicitor Duffie Stone

NDAA

Continued from Page 10

 Praised Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman for seeking assistance from other prosecutors and waiting to collect as much evidence as possible before making charging decisions related to the incident;

• Supported the right to protest but condemned the violence and looting in Minneapolis and elsewhere in the aftermath of Floyd's death.

Two weeks later, the NDAA issued six policy recommendations to reform the criminal-justice system, including investigations of officer-involved shootings by independent agencies, clarifying useof-force guidelines and changes to the qualified immunity extended to police officers.

Earlier in the summer, the NDAA rebuked a Georgia district attorney who recused himself from prosecuting suspects in the deadly shooting of Ahmaud Arbery, only to inappropriately forward his lengthy case analysis to the prosecutor who would handle the case.

Stone's term as president ended in July 2020, but he continues to serve as NDAA board chairman. He also is chairman of the S.C. Commission on Prosecution Coordination and of the state's Domestic Violence Advisory Committee. He was elected to his fifth term as the 14th Judicial Circuit's solicitor in November 2020.

"I have derived tremendous benefit from my involvement in the NDAA, and so have my constituents in South Carolina's 14th Judicial Circuit," Stone said. "So many of the innovations you can read about in this annual report can be traced to ideas hatched from NDAA functions or in my discussions with other NDAA members."

The NDAA comprises 5,000 elected and appointed prosecutors in the U.S. and Canada. Stone is just the second South Carolinian to serve as the organization's president. The first was the late Sixth Circuit Solicitor John R. Justice.



Solicitor Duffie Stone, right, prepares for his testimony before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee on July 9, 2019. Stone and four other experts discussed the challenges of protecting children in the digital age.

Shielding innocence in a digital age

Highlights of Solicitor Duffie Stone's Congressional testimony

he Senate Judiciary Committee, led by Chairman Lindsey Graham (R-SC), heard testimony from 14th Circuit Solicitor Duffie Stone and four other witnesses regarding their views on protecting children in a digital age, on July 9, 2019. Stone was shortly to be inaugurated as National District Attorneys Association president.

The speakers before the committee focused primarily on predators who target and groom children for sex trafficking and pornography through the use of social media. Additionally, Stone testified specifically about barriers to law enforcement and prosecutors posed by technology companies – particularly smartphone manufacturers – to recovering digital forensic information from devices, even when that information is sought after obtaining proper warrants.

Here are highlights from Stone's live and

written testimony:

On the gathering threat posed by the integration of online technology and criminal enterprises:

Over the past 10 years, the biggest change in criminal justice I have seen has been the use of technology by criminals. They commit crimes, brag about them and lure others to join them. They threaten, bully and exploit people. All by the use of social media. Our children are perhaps the most susceptible to these acts. We no longer live in an exclusively bricks-and-mortar world. We live in a world in which criminals can interact with our children without ever physically stepping inside our home. We must think about this threat differently than we have in the past. The safety of our children depends on it and we all have a role to play.

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

he 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. Another brandished an assault rifle. Terrified, the clerk handed over the deposit bag full of large bills.

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

The stolen money was never recovered, but authorities did see it again. In fact, that sighting helped break the case.

Acting on a tip from the U.S. Department of Justice, Solicitor's Office Investigator Dylan Hightower scoured social media until 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 the convenience store employees use to bind cash after it has been counted.

The photo, seen above with



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.

the band circled in red, was posted by the sister of a robbery suspect, who later told investigators her brother gave her the money and ordered her to arrange and post the picture.

This confirmation of the suspect's 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.

That wasn't the only online information that helped make the

case.

As with any organized crime syndicate, street gangs often create otherwise legitimate fronts through which they can launder the profits of their illegal activities. In this case, a hop-hop music group provided this cover.

However, when Hightower found the group's music videos on YouTube, he had what he needed to crack through the façade. Using his knowledge of gang members and facialrecognition software available from the S.C. State Law Enforcement Division, Hightower demonstrated the robbery suspects' connections to known gang members 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."

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DIGIAL

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On the need for manufacturers' cooperation and compliance in allowing access to information sought under court order:

As a prosecutor, my job is to protect the constitutional rights of all of our citizens, including people charged with crimes. I will never advocate for the trampling of those rights. Our Constitution provides a privacy right in people's homes and, of course, in their cellphones and computers. This right, however, gives way to a lawful search warrant backed by probable cause and authorized by a neutral and detached judge. Every day, law enforcement officers execute court orders that allow them to search through the most intimate areas of criminal suspects' homes and effects.

Court orders allowing law enforcement to

search cell phones and computers should also be enforced. Yet cellphone and computer companies can deny law enforcement access regardless of what a judge has ruled. If we want our law enforcement to investigate child exploitation, we must allow them to effectively execute search warrants on criminals' smartphones as well as their houses by mandating cell companies comply with court

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Intelligence Unit

INTEL

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MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Stone cut his teeth in the 5th Circuit Solicitor's Office in the late 1980s, prosecuting Richland County drug cases.

"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 could allow investigators to identify a dealer's clients and supplier, and confirm drug transactions. "Now, the big prize isn't the book; it's their cellphones. That's where all that information is stored."

That information can be the difference between convicting a few street-level operators and bringing down an entire ring.

Technology can help solve many other types of crime. In



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.

addition to contacts, cellphones often contain time-stamped texts and call logs that can prove communication between parties. Records from cellphone carriers includes geolocation information that might put a defendant at the scene of a crime. Phones can also

provide a gateway to photos and social-media posts that lend further insight into criminal operations and provide compelling visual displays for juries.

This data is often passwordprotected or encrypted, however. In some cases, it also requires

interpretation from a knowledgeable analyst. Our Solicitor's Office investigators are trained to retrieve and understand this data. Those capabilities have proven invaluable to our prosecutions.

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TESTIMONY

Continued from Page 12 orders and not evade them by refusing to provide give law enforcement security codes.

Why the defenses parents teach their children to help them avoid predators in the physical world are insufficient in cyberspace.

As parents, we teach our children from an early age not to talk with strangers. We teach them not to open doors unless you know who is on the other side. We would be shocked to see our child standing in the dark shadows talking with an adult that we did not know. We would immediately call the police if we saw anyone crawling in the window of our child's room, regardless of the time of day. ... And yet, predators are communicating with our children every day. They are coming into

our child's bedrooms. They are coming into our house, past the locked doors, the cameras prostitution rings outside of the prison, havand the security systems. How are they getting in? The internet. Our children, sometimes unknowingly, invite them in with their cellphones and computers.

Why criminality doesn't always stop when the criminal is in prison.

The purpose of prison is to isolate those people inside of it. If they have access to a cellphone and a cell tower inside that prison, we are not keeping our citizens, our community or our children safe from them.

How social media and mobile devices have transformed the criminal underworld.

I have seen professionally made music videos that are being used and are produced by and for gang members to basically recruit our

children. I have seen prisoners who operate ing already been convicted. I see not only drug dealers, gang members, but other criminals with all of the information inside their cellphone. In the past, it would have been a notebook. Today it's their cellphone.

Also testifying:

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- Professor Angela J. Campbell, Institute for Public Representation, Georgetown Law
- Christopher McKenna, founder and CEO • of Protect Young Eyes
- John F. Clark, president and CEO of National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
- Stephen Balkam, founder and CEO of Family Online Safety Institute

Intelligence Unit

Learn more on our social media channels



Investigator Dylan Hightower makes it a point to keep his eye on YouTube and other popular social-media channels. To learn why, go to http://bit.ly/Social_Media_Intel.

INTEL

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One example is the conviction of Hilton Head Island's John Ira Duncan III on murder charges in 2019. Through cellphone analysis, Hightower retraced Duncan's tracks from a family gathering in Hardeeville 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 hours leading to his 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 use Duncan's phone records and timestamped surveillance videos to prove that everything the witnesses were telling us was true."

A BEGINNING-TO-END CONTRIBUTION

Hightower's stable of analysts and duly sworn lawenforcement 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 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 might use this information to argue for a bond revocation, if one of their defendants has been picked up on a new charge. 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 continue to conduct 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.

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 the people, places and problems that drive 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 and map appropriate legal strategies.



Assisting law enforcement in investigations. We flesh out the story of each

defendant by gathering information from cellphones, social media and online databases such as GangNet. This can help law enforcement with their investigations and helps our prosecutors prove their cases in court beyond a reasonable doubt.



Trial preparation. Our intel team prepares court exhibits that

help prosecutors present evidence effectively. That could include drone photos that provide a better vantage point than online satellite images, adding transcription to video and audio files, or enlarging crime-scene photos to highlight details for jurors.

COVID-19 pandemic and the courts

on hold iStock photo by Maksim Tkachenko

Solicitor's Office works through pandemic despite reduced court activity

oncerns about COVID-19 brought jury trials to a halt in South Carolina for much of 2020. As a result, General Sessions Court will feel the pandemic's effects long after a vaccine is widely available and regular activity resumes.

As 2020 came to a close, a record 5,086 General Sessions cases were pending in South Carolina's 14th Judicial Circuit – a 64.3% increase since the end of 2019.

"In an unprecedented situation like this pandemic, the health of court officials, attorneys, jurors and defendants should be paramount," Solicitor Duffie Stone said. "Nonetheless, even necessary precautions have consequences. For the courts, it seems one of those consequences is likely to be a backlog that will take years to clear."

Although some guilty pleas and many types of hearings continued through the pandemic on a limited basis, no jury trials were conducted in the 14th Circuit from March 17 through Sept. 27. The Supreme Court again stopped jury trials in December as holiday-season cases surged.

During those down months, the Solicitor's Office still managed to close out 1,244 cases across the 14th Circuit. However, that was less than half of the 3,008 cases disposed during the same time frame in 2019.

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COVID-19 pandemic and the courts

The effect o	f jury-trial shu	tdowns on the	e Solicitor's	Office caseload
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	2018	2019	2020	Year-over-year increase
Cases added	4,067	3,011	3,119	3.6%
Cases disposed	3,833	3,396	1,707	-49.7%
Pending at year's end	4,067	3,704	5, 086	64.3%

With court activity slowed and jury trials shut down for most of 2020, the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office General Sessions Court backlog ballooned. It will likely take several years to reduce it, Solicitor Duffie Stone says.

COVID

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The good news is that the Solicitor's Office is poised to do its part to reduce the backlog as quickly as possible. That's because its attorneys and investigators never stopped preparing their cases for trial, even as trials were curtailed or halted altogether.

"Years ago, we prepared for the possibility of a hurricane by investing in a cloud-based case-management system and other digital tools, like electronic discovery, that make us more efficient and allow us to work remotely if need be," Stone explained. "I can't honestly say that a pandemic of this magnitude was on my radar screen back then.

"However, I can honestly say our office and the people we serve will benefit from these investments because we've been able to work on cases while other parts of the judicial system were shut down."

Similarly, not every consequence of the pandemic has been negative.

Stone said the pandemic presented an opportunity to accelerate his longstanding vision for regional and national training programs that will benefit prosecutors, lawenforcement officers and others in related fields. With training conferences that attorneys need to maintain their law licenses largely cancelled, the 14th Circuit Solicitor's



Solicitor's Office investigators help repair a roof on mobile home near Estill after tornadoes ripped through Hampton County in spring 2020.

Office launched its own in-house programs. Staff developed curriculum for the courses as well as the platform to broadcast them to a remote audience.

In fact, even while its offices were closed to the public from March to June, Solicitor's Office staff:

- Investigated more than a dozen consumer complaints of price-gouging during the pandemic, cases referred to our office from the Attorney General's Office.
- Conducted nine sexual assault exams and two forensic interviews of children as part of the 14th Circuit Victims Services Center operations.
- Wrote grant applications that netted more than \$750,000 for the office. The money will be used to update computer hardware, fund the Special Victims Unit,

and bring the office's successful Multidisciplinary Court into Colleton and Jasper counties.

- Launched a redesigned website, www.scsolicitor14.org.
- Assisted with recovery response after deadly EF-4 tornadoes ripped through Hampton and Colleton counties. Solicitor's Office employees also donated canned food, toiletries and \$1,350 to the recovery effort.

"As was the case for just about everyone in our circuit, state and country, 2020 posed a number of difficulties for our employees, both professionally and personally," Stone said. "I'm happy and grateful that we were still able to accomplish so much in the face of these challenges."

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. he 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 particu-

lar 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 comprises the office's most accomplished assistant solicitors, including Stone and Deputy Solicitor Sean Thornton. It 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, reducing the region's crime rate and making our communities safer.

From the team's inception in late 2008 through the end of 2020, the Career Criminal Unit earned convictions against 357 of the 371 defendants it prosecuted – a conviction rate of 96 percent.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic

do heir	2020 Career Criminal Unit performance							
	COUNTY	Defendants	Convictions	Percentage				
tical al	Allendale	2	2	100%				
	Beaufort	7	7	100%				
ften	Colleton	3	3	100%				
	Hampton	3	3	100%				
e as lem	Jasper	6	6	100%				
imi-	TOTAL	21	21	100%				

brought a halt to jury trials for more than half the year, yet the Career Criminal Unit still managed to dispose of cases against 21 defendants, earning convictions against each of them. Defendants received more than 200 years in prison time, with three defendants still awaiting sentencing. Offenses included murder (two counts), involuntary and voluntary manslaughter (one count each), DUI with death (one count) and various firearm-related felonies (nine counts).

Career Criminal prosecutors



Sean Thornton Deputy Solicitor and Career Criminal Unit leader



Mary Jones



Carra Henderson

Federal prosecutor

Tameaka Legette



Hunter Swanson SVU leader

Career Criminal investigators





Dylan Hightower

JoJo Woodward

www.scsolicitor14.org

CCU CASE FILE: Beaufort County

Man who helped kill neighbor convicted of arson, murder

Prosecutor: Hunter Swanson

Charge: Murder, second-degree arson

Crime: John Dontue Priester was one of three people convicted in the killing of a disabled Burton woman for her prescription pain medication

Priester, 27, admitted in January 2020 that he helped murder 56-year-old Tersa Seigler in December 2016, then tried to conceal the crime by setting fire to her mobile home.

"Despite numerous health problems that caused her nearly constant pain, Teresa had a kind heart and was known for helping people down on their luck - people like John Priester and the other defendants," said Assistant Solicitor Hunter Swanson, who prosecuted all three offenders. "John Priester, Brian Walls and Courtney Brock would have done about anything to keep their drug bender going. That includes robbing and killing a woman who had never been anything but kind and helpful to them.

"Then, John Priester tried to cover it all up with a can of gasoline and a lighter."

ed in April 2019. He was sentenced to 40 years in prison. Brock, 25, received a 30-year sentence after a jury found her guilty in October 2019.

All three defendants were among the residents of a mobile home two doors down from Seigler, who lived alone and sometimes needed a scooter to get around. She often gave her neighbors food and allowed them to shower in her home when their utilities had been disconnected. Seigler had health problems and took several pre-

scription pain medications. She was killed just days after receiving a monthly disability check and using some of the money to fill her prescriptions.

In the trials of Walls and Brock, a forensic pathologist from the University of South Carolina testified that Seigler did not die in the Walls, 38, was tried for murder and convict- fire; rather, she was likely beaten to death.



Firefighters found Teresa Seigler rolled in a blanket and bound in duct tape on her bed. This photo shows the bed after Seigler's body was removed.

Shortly before the fire, a witness spotted Priester walking toward Seigler's home and carrying a red gasoline can, similar to one arson investigators found just outside Siegler's bedroom door.

Sentence: 30 years for murder and 20 years for second-degree arson. The sentences run concurrently.

CCU CASE FILE: Allendale County

Fight over tablet ends with 1 dead, 1 injured, 1 imprisoned

Prosecutor: Reed Evans

Charges: Murder, attempted murder and possession of a weapon during the commission of a violent crime

Crime: A dispute that started over a missing tablet ended with two men shot, one fatally. It also landed the shooter in prison for life.

Jamel Dajour Williams, 30, of Allendale was found guilty in January 2020 of murder, attempted murder and possession of a weapon during the commission of a violent crime in the shooting death of 18-year-old Tyrek Mitchell. Williams also seriously injured a second victim.

"This defendant acted without remorse, even when the victim begged for his life,"

said Reed Evans of the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office, who prosecuted the case.

Mitchell and the second shooting victim were each flown to a nearby hospital, where Mitchell subsequently died from his injuries.

Just before 9 p.m. March 21, 2018, the three men gathered inside a unit at Pinewood Apartments on Allendale's Barton Road.

A witness testified during the three-day trial that while arguing over a tablet, Williams locked the apartment door, pulled



Williams

out a gun and threatened Mitchell. With his hands up, the high-school senior begged for his life, but Williams shot and killed him, anyway, the witness testified. Williams then shot the second man in the face before running into the nearby woods, leaving his gun behind.

The Allendale County jury deliberated 45 minutes before returning a guilty verdict.

Williams' criminal history includes a strongarmed robberv conviction in 2010.

Sentence: Williams was sentenced to life in prison for Mitchell's murder. He received an additional 30-year sentence for the attempted murder charge and five years on the weapons violation. The sentences are to run concurrently.

CCU CASE FILE: *Solution Sector S* Fatal DUI wreck kills passenger; driver gets 15 years in prison

Prosecutor: Dustin Whetsel Charge: Driving under the influ- community of ence resulting in death

Crime: Tessa Marie Openlander's 22-year-old passenger died when the vehicle she was driving ran off the road and into a ditch in April 2019. Openlander's blood fence post. -alcohol level was measured .15, more than twice the legal limit to senger received minor injuries. operate a motor vehicle.

Christopher Michael Clark of Savannah was killed after being ejected from the rear seat of Openlander's vehicle. He was not wearing a seat belt. The vehicle ran off the roadway near Bellinger Hill and Chalmers roads include a 2014 driving under the

in the Levy Jasper County. Clark was thrown from the car and

Openlander Openlander and a second pas-

struck a

Each survivor was wearing a seatbelt. A highway patrolman's report noted that Openlander "was so grossly impaired, she was unable to stand without assistance."

Openlander's prior convictions



Tessa Openlander had a blood-alcohol content of .15 when she drove her vehicle into a ditch in Jasper County. One of her two passengers, Christopher Michael Clark, was ejected from the vehicle and killed when he struck a fence post.

influence charge and a 2015 reckless driving charge, both from Georgia.

Sentence: 15 years

CCU CASE FILE: Colleton County

Colleton gang member convicted of federal gun charge

Prosecutor: Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Carra Henderson

Charge: Two counts of felon in possession of a firearm, and conspiracy to make false statements in connection with the purchase of a firearm

Crime: During a March 2018 traffic-safety checkpoint, Walterboro Police found a loaded .40-caliber pistol under Quentin Fishburne's seat. At the time, Fishburne was on federal supervision for a 2017 conviction for aiding and abetting attempted murder in aid of racketeering.

That conviction arose from a 2015 shooting in Colleton County, in which gang members violently disputed the outcome of an illegal car race, then attempted to rob a man holding money wagered on the race. Two men

were shot in the fracas. Fishburne admitted driving another gang member from the scene of the shooting. He was sentenced to time served and placed under federal supervision, which is simi-

lar to probation.



Fishburne

Shortly after Fishburne was arrested with the .40-caliber pistol in 2018, his girlfriend, who had purchased the pistol from a Walterboro gun store, claimed that she had inadvertently left the gun in the vehicle Fishburne was driving. Agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives became suspicious, however, when they discovered that Fishburne had previously been

arrested while in possession of another gun purchased by the same woman. Additionally, ballistic analysis showed the

gun discovered under Fishburne's seat fired three .40-caliber shell casings recovered from the scene of a gang-related shooting the same shooting, in fact, that led to Fishburne's first federal conviction.

Fishburne also was convicted of possessing another firearm purchased by the same girlfriend, which was recovered by the Colleton County Sheriff's Office following a high-speed chase involving Fishburne. The jury took only three hours to find Fishburne guilty on all charges.

Sentence: Awaiting sentence at the beginning of 2020



Armed robber leaves behind DNA evidence

Prosecutor: Reed Evans

Charge: Armed robbery, two counts of kidnapping, two counts of first-degree assault and battery, and possession of a weapon during the commission of a violent crime



Crime: Security video from the Snappy Foods in Yemassee shows Joey Dean Coleman pistol whipping a store clerk and firing multiple

Coleman

shots while stealing money from a cash register.

Footage from the November 2018 incident also shows Coleman walking up and placing a beer bottle on the counter before pulling out a handgun, pointing it at two clerks, and demanding money. Coleman then forces the two men to the floor and strikes each in the back of their head. He grabs a few fistfuls of cash and leaves. In addition to the surveillance video, DNA collected from the beer bottle left behind linked Coleman to the crime scene.

"Mr. Coleman put the two victims in grave fear for their lives," Evans said. "They were extremely fortunate to escape without being shot. I am pleased that the jury could tell that Mr. Coleman was clearly the robber in the video, and that the judge sentenced him with the gravity that his actions deserved."

Sentence: 30 years

CCU CASE FILE: (S) Federal Court



A dashboard camera captures the 2019 arrest of Tovorris Jenkins by Beaufort County Sheriff's Office deputies. Jenkins had a decade-long criminal history and was not allowed to have the handgun officers found on him that day. He was tried in federal court by 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office prosecutor Carra Henderson and sent to prison for 12 1/2 years.

CCU makes federal case out of gun, drug offenses

B eaufort County deputies were well-acquainted with Tovorris Devon Jenkins when he was arrested for possession of drugs and stolen guns in 2019. After all, he had been picked up on similar charges just a year earlier.

In fact, Jenkins' criminal history stretched back more than a decade.

He was fined for marijuana possession and resisting arrest in 2005. He was convicted of third-degree assault and battery in a 2008 incident and again on the same charges for incidents in 2009, 2011 and 2013. Jenkins served just 90 days in 2015 for possession of cocaine with intent to distribute. At the time of 2018 arrest, he also had a pending domestic violence charge.

"Jenkins had a long criminal record that included convictions in state court, but he had never served more than a year behind bars," 14th Circuit prosecutor Carra Henderson, noted.

Though a habitual offender, Jenkins' offenses were considered low-grade felonies under state law. Thus, convictions on new drug and gun charges in state court were not likely to result in a substantial sentence.

"By using the federal system's more robust laws and penalties, we were able to help make our local community a safer place," said Special U.S. Attorney Henderson, who prosecuted Jenkins in federal court.

In September 2020, Jenkins, 33, pleaded guilty to one count of felon in possession of a firearm and one count of possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine and powder cocaine.

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FEDERAL

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He was sentenced in December 2020 at the federal courthouse in Charleston to 151 months in prison. There is no parole in the federal system. Even were he to earn time off for good behavior, Jenkins must serve at least 85% of his sentence.

Jenkins' case typifies what 14th Circuit Solicitor Duffie Stone sought when he began his office's partnership with the U.S. Attorney's Office – appropriate sentences for habitual offenders who might otherwise escape them through vagaries in state law.

For instance, although federal statutes prohibit any felon from possessing a firearm, state code expressly prohibits only some violent felons from doing so. What's more, omissions from the list of crimes considered "violent" under state law would likely strike the layman as odd. Burglaries that occur during nighttime are considered violent, but those taking place during daylight are not. Also omitted from the list of violent felonies are some domestic-violence offenses. That's right. A crime with "violence" in its name is not necessarily considered a violent crime under South Carolina law.

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

In response, Stone arranged access to federal courts for Henderson, one of his most experienced prosecutors. 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.

The partnership has worked so well that the U.S. Department of Justice has encour-



Carra Henderson, center, addresses 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 then-U.S. Attorney Bill Nettles and on the right by Solicitor Duffie Stone. (Photo courtesy Bluffton Today.)

aged other Solicitor's Offices in South Carolina to follow suit. (At the start of 2020, however, Henderson remained one of only two state prosecutors focused solely on federal prosecution.) Henderson has earned convictions against 35 federal defendants since the collaboration began, including eight in 2020.

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. Henderson's fellow Career Criminal prosecutor, Tameaka Legette, worked shoulder-to-shoulder with a Washington, D.C.based Assistant U.S. Attorney who specializes in gang prosecutions in 2016 and 2017. 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.

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 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 powerful tools afforded the Solicitor's Office partnerships. There are other advantages, not available under South Carolina law. Among them:

- 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 it possible to make roundup 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 is no question the 14th Circuit is safer as a result of this collaboration."

Criminal justice reform



2020 was marked by protests and calls for criminal-justice reform. Amid the upheaval, Solicitor Stone presented a cool-headed, 10-point plan for improvement.

iStock photo by Johnnyfrs

he May 2020 death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and other highprofile cases of violent confrontations between police and African-Americans sent a cry for criminal-justice reform reverberating all the way to the halls of Congress.

However, the most important reforms will take place at state and local levels, 14th Circuit Solicitor Duffie Stone says. This is where the people most affected by criminal-justice policies have their best chance to be heard.

Further, these considerations need a prosecutor's voice. Ethical prosecutors, after all, understand the importance of objectivity and independence in making charging decisions, as well as the role they play in instilling public confidence in the justice system.

"We're in the business of making sure that we're doing the right thing to the right people for the right reasons," Stone told national outlet CBN News in June 2020.

Stone wrote an op-ed on reform that was published by The (Charleston) Post & Courier and other South Carolina newspapers in sum-

"I think we have an opportunity to make lasting changes. I want to do all I can to ensure those changes are actually improvements."

Solicitor Duffie Stone

mer 2020. That earned him an invitation from criminal-justice system falls short in that re-S.C. House Speaker Jay Lucas to speak before a S.C. House of Representatives committee studying criminal-justice reform. He presented to the panel a comprehensive plan with 10 specific recommendations. Stone appeared before both the full committee and a sub-committee that discussed hate-crime legislation.

Though crafted amid the controversy around Floyd's death, Stone noted his plan is not exclusively about addressing race-based grievances.

"That's part of it, for sure," Stone said. "We certainly must recognize where the

gard.

"However, there is a danger of making matters worse with superficial 'fixes' that don't solve underlying problems. I think we have an opportunity to make lasting changes. I want to do all I can to ensure those changes are actually improvements."

Stone has urged state leaders to adopt the following measures:

RECOMMENDATION 1: Equip every lawenforcement officer with a body-worn camera.

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Criminal justice reform

REFORM

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Every officer issued a gun should also be given a body camera and training on its proper use. Prosecutors depend on evidence to make tough decisions, including charging decisions in officer-involved shootings. It should not be left to a passerby with a cellphone to gather what will almost certainly be pivotal evidence guiding these decisions.

Body cameras can provide a beginning-toend record of an event from the officer's perspective. This protects both officers and the public, and helps instill public confidence in law-enforcement agencies. The state should provide full funding for this statutory mandate and include a criminal penalty for the willful destruction or editing of bodyworn camera footage.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Law enforcement should make evidence in all cases immediately available to prosecutors.

Officer-involved shootings and other highprofile cases pique the public's rightful desire for a timely response from prosecutors. However, an effective and just response can only be made if a prosecutor has immediate access to all available evidence. Further, the prosecutor is responsible for getting all exculpatory evidence to the defense in a timely fashion. This cannot be accomplished unless law enforcement provides the material to the prosecutor in a manner that allows for it.

In today's cyber world, most evidence can be transmitted electronically within a matter of moments. The General Assembly should authorize solicitors to develop plans requiring law enforcement to provide all evidence to the prosecutor immediately, whether that prosecutor be the circuit solicitor or the attorney general.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Pass an unnecessary-use-of-force statute.

Forty-one states have use-of-force statutes — laws to specify conditions under which law enforcement can use deadly force. South Carolina does not, however. As a result, state prosecutors are often forced to assess the circumstances of a deadly shooting against the legal elements of a murder or manslaughter charge. If the elements of those crimes did not exist or cannot be proven, the officer cannot be charged, even if some aspects of the officer's actions seem to beg for criminal penalty. A use-offorce statute would rectify this and possibly provide an additional benefit: Clearer guidance for law enforcement that would make violent interactions less frequent.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Repeal South Carolina's citizen-arrest statute.

This statute justifies vigilantism and can be used as a defense to murder. This was the case in neighboring Georgia, where a similar statute was used by defendants to justify the 2020 killing of Ahmad Arbery. Peach State lawmakers immediately began working to repeal their law. Palmetto State legislators should do the same.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Require all officerinvolved shootings and in-custody deaths to be investigated by an independent agency.

Only an independent investigation can give the public confidence that a decision in any given case is proper. Most agencies already follow this practice, but it is not required by law.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Create a statewide database for police-misconduct information and authorize prosecutor access.

Prosecutors need to know before trying a case if arresting officers have misconduct problems that affect their credibility. Additionally, prosecutors are required to disclose police misconduct information to the defense. Unfortunately, those prosecutors have no means by which to compel access to internal affairs investigations, criminal complaints or related disciplinary actions against officers. Put another way, there is no way for prosecutors to know for certain if they are fulfilling their legal duty.

This is a problem for law-enforcement agencies, as well. When they hire officers who have worked in other jurisdictions in South Carolina, they cannot reliably and completely assess the candidate's work history.

Lawmakers should ensure that there is a repository of this information, mandate participation by all law-enforcement agencies, and provide prosecutors access that allows them to meet their legal obligations. This can be accomplished with simple changes to existing statutes that heighten the requirements for law enforcement agencies to report internal investigations, criminal complaints and disciplinary actions against officers to the state's Criminal Justice Academy.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Implement sentence reform.

Some criminals struggle with anti-social behavior. Others embrace it. True reform must recognize both types of offenders and deal with them appropriately.

7(a): Adequately fund treatment courts.

Many are now convinced that drug, veterans and mental-health court programs are effective alternatives to incarceration for offenders whose addictions or mental health underlie their criminal behavior. In fact, not only do these programs help offenders resist anti-social behavior, they reduce recidivism at a fraction of the cost of incarceration.

Yet, the treatment element of these programs is so expensive, limited state funding has meant only the wealthiest counties can afford to supplement the costs. Full funding by the General Assembly would allow each county to implement treatment courts, cut inmate populations and save money. Most importantly, we can help those struggling with addiction become productive citizens.

7(b): Require those sent to prison to serve at least 85 percent of their sentence.

Those who embrace anti-social behavior, on the other hand, belong in prison. What's more, they should serve at least 85 percent of their sentence, regardless of the crime they have committed. Unfortunately, the term "sentencing reform" has become synonymous with sentence reduction.

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Criminal justice reform

SENTENCING

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Much evidence suggest this approach simply does not work.

Currently, only violent offenders are required to serve at least 85 percent of their time. Conversely, those who commit what we have been labeled "non-violent" offenses can take advantage of several early-release mechanisms. Some will serve barely more than half of their time. Many more will serve even less by getting parole. As a result, when a non-violent offender is sentenced, no one really knows how much time will actually be served. Not the victims. Not the defendant. Not the attorneys.

And perhaps most surprisingly, not even the judge. Let that sink in. The person best positioned to make an objective decision about appropriate punishment – indeed, the person whose job is to do exactly that – can have little clue how long a defendant will remain behind bars.

Here's another head-scratcher: According to S.C. Department of Corrections data, those sentenced to "non-violent" offenses are actually more likely to return to prison than "violent offenders." In fact, the recidivism rates are not particularly close. In 2016, for example, only 12.4 percent of those who served at least 85 percent of their sentence returned to prison within two years; the recidivism rate for those who served less than 85 percent of their sentence was nearly 10 points higher.

This difference holds regardless of the length of the sentence or the crime committed. Further, the gulf is not explained by "violent" criminals receiving longer sentences and thereby "aging out" of lawlessness by the time they're released from prison. The average given sentence for these "truth-insentencing" prisoners is 9.6 years, which means they are serving an average of 8.16 years. Most are released while still in their 30s or 40s.

This disproves the notion that truth in



Solicitor Stone speaks to a S.C. House subcommittee about hate crime legislation.

sentencing will make prison populations explode, as opponents assert. Further evidence is seen in neighboring North Carolina, which is among 17 states with such a policy. The Tar Heel State has a lower incarceration rate than South Carolina and a lower violentcrime rate, as well. The other 16 states with truth in sentencing compare similarly.

7(c): Replace the state parole board with a re-entry board.

In tandem with truth in sentencing, our state parole board should be re-purposed to help prisoners transition into society. The new board should oversee and coordinate programs during an inmate's incarceration counseling, education, vocational training and substance-abuse treatment, for example —to create a pathway to productive citizenship upon release.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Pass a sentenceenhancement for hate crimes.

Hate crimes bills have been passed throughout the country as either standalone legislation or as sentence enhancements. The latter hold promise. The former too often go unused. Poorly written standalone laws simply allow politicians to check a box while having done little of substance to punish or discourage crimes motivated by bigotry.

The fatal flaw in many stand-alone laws is the inclusion of additional elements, each of which must be proved to earn a conviction. So for instance, in a case in which the defendant's guilt of a murder is obvious, but the possible racial motivation to commit it is much less so, many prosecutors will simply charge the murder and leave the hate-crime charge on the shelf. Otherwise, they risk a defendant walking scot-free for a killing they unquestionably committed.

A more just outcome could be accomplished with a sentencing enhancement and bifurcated deliberations, as with deathpenalty cases. If the prosecutor can first earn a conviction on the underlying charge, he or she would then attempt to prove a specified bias as the motivation in the second phase of the trial. In the alternative, a standalone hate-crime law charged separately from the underlying offense could be effective. South Carolina currently has a law against possession of a weapon during commission of a violent crime. A jury can consider that charge only if they first agree the defendant is guilty of the underlying violent crime. Then, if the defendant is found guilty of this second charge, the judge adds additional prison time to the sentence.

Note:

Several of Solicitor Stone's recommendations to the General Assembly included model legislation. To read full details, go to https://bit.ly/SC_Justice_Reform.

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

uch of our prosecutors' time is spent putting hardened criminals behind bars. However, prison is not where every law-breaker belongs. Some are non-violent, firsttime offenders. Addiction or mental health problems might have factored into their bad decisions.

Or the offender might be a military veteran grappling with posttraumatic stress disorder that resulted from their service.

Such offenders 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. What's more, these diversionary programs are far less expensive than incarceration.

To assist these offenders, the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office began a "multidisciplinary court" program in 2010, taking over a failing Drug Court in Beaufort County. Since then, we have added programs for other sorts of treatment and for juvenile offenders.

Here's how it works: Participants plead guilty to their offense in General Sessions Court, however, their sentence is held in abeyance while going through the Multidisciplinary Court program. Although MDC is an alternative to prison and gives some offenders a chance to wipe their records clean after completing the program, it is no free pass. Participants are carefully selected and given an individualized plan to address their underlying problem. In addition, all participants are required to:

- 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 rules 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 their General Sessions sentence is imposed. Some who complete the program are eligible to have their charges expunged from their criminal record.

Through 2020, the 14th Circuit MDC program was conducted only in Beaufort County, where there was adequate access to treatment. However, a \$740,000 federal grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance awarded in fall of 2020 will allow the MDC program to hire inhouse substance-abuse and mental-health counselors, improve services for Beaufort County participants, and allow expansion into Colleton and Jasper counties.



Defendants whose offenses are driven 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, 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.

"This grant is going to allow us to serve more people and to improve the quality of that service," MDC Director Teresa Pye said. "The quality aspect should not be overlooked. We're thrilled to expand into two additional counties, but expansion only helps if we maintain a quality program.

"The additions we envision will help us continue to follow best practices for multidisciplinary courts and meet our own high expectations."

Those expectations influence the way we measure our own performance.

Specifically, we compute our recidivism rate each quarter by running national checks to see if any graduates from the past two years have been re-arrested on any charge. Other agencies – for example, the S.C. Department of Corrections – typically compute recidivism by considering only those who are convicted of a subsequent crime and returned to prison.

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Preventative and Diversionary programs

2020 success rate, participation and graduates of diversionary programs

		Alcohol	Multidisciplinary	Juvenile	Juvenile	Juvenile	Juvenile
County	Adult PTI	education	Court	arbitration	MDC	ΡΤΙ	contract
Allendale	67%	NP	х	NP	Х	NP	Х
Beaufort	88%	87%	67%	92%	68%	89%	Х
Colleton	80%	NP	х	77%	х	NP	75%
Hampton	94%	NP	Х	86%	Х	NP	Х
Jasper	100%	NP	х	92%	х	NP	Х
14th Circuit	83%	87%	67%	87%	68%	89%	75%
(2020 participants)	256	8	34	142	4	5	52
(2020 graduates)	192	2	14	64	3	3	52

<u>Key:</u> 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 2018 graduates.
- Multidisciplinary Court includes tracks for drug treatment, veterans and domestic abuse.
- "Participants" are the total people enrolled in a program at any point during the calendar year; "graduates" are those who completed a program at any point in the calendar year.

DIVERSION

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Our success rates – 67% for graduates of our adult programs and 68% for our juvenile programs in 2020 – have not varied more than one or two percentage points since 2010.

PRETRIAL INTERVENTION

Pretrial Intervention is a diversionary program, available across South Carolina for first-time offenders charged with nonviolent offenses (e.g.: various driving offenses, shoplifting, and 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 to be 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% success rate among adult enrollees and an 89% rate in the juvenile program in our most recent recidivism calculations.

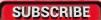
"Our goal is to prevent the next generation of career criminals," Stone said.



Participants in the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office Pretrial Intervention program hold hands while 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 is key to the effectiveness of the 14th Circuit program. The visits were temporarily suspended during 2020 because of the COVID pandemic but will resume when it is safe to do so.



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Office's bulked-up website, improves navigation, security

s 2020's COVID-19 pandemic forced some businesses and government offices to pare back daily operations, the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office moved full-steam ahead to launch a redesigned website.

It was unveiled in early April, a few weeks after Gov. Henry McMaster declared a state of emergency in South Carolina. It offers more information than ever before, in a format that makes it easier to find and view.

The new site is available at its longtime address, **www.scsolicitor14.org**.

"Events of the past year have probably made people appreciate more than ever websites that are thoughtfully designed and easy to use," 14th Circuit Solicitor Duffie Stone said. "We think our new site puts a lot of useful information at people's fingertips and will also help our office operate more efficiently."

Several staff members collaborated with Bragg Media Marketing of Bluffton, which executed the redesign. Unlike the site it replaced, the new site is "mobile-responsive," for optimum display on tablets and smartphones. The navigation makes it easier for visitors to find information about office locations, services for crime victims, and programs for offenders, such as Pretrial Intervention.

Other new features include:

- A "How do I ..." section that provides short answers to frequently asked questions, along with links to additional information.
- A public-information section with a wealth of background material about the office, as well as links to other helpful legal and lawenforcement resources.
- A library of videos from the office's popular YouTube channel and Facebook page.

Information requests



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 each CD/DVDs: \$1 each Thumb drive: \$10 each Work performed by members of our communications, administrative or intelligence teams: \$14 per hour Work that must be performed by an assistant solicitor: \$24 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, Administrative Chief of Staff jkidd@scsolicitor14.org 843-790-6439



ERINN McGUIRE, Community outreach coordinator emcguire@scsolicitor14.org 843-790-6453

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