



# ANNUAL **REPORT** 2024

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# DELAWARE COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE



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## FROM YOUR PROSECUTOR, MELISSA A. SCHIFFEL

2024 proved to be one of the busiest years for all sections of the office. January certainly set the tone and pace for the office as I was honored to receive the Public Integrity Award from State Auditor Keith Faber. The award was to recognize my efforts to pursue justice for the Columbus Zoo officials who defrauded our zoo for many years. I remember when the news broke about the private accounting that had revealed many discrepancies with these officials and their spending habits. It only took a few weeks to assemble an investigative team led by the State Auditor's office and then assemble a prosecution team with the Attorney General's Office. I am truly grateful for the assistance from our state partners who had the staff, time, and expertise to see that these individuals were held accountable as the investigation proved that our tiny office could not handle a case as massive as this. The assistance of our state partners came at no expense to us too except ministerial matters.

We also celebrated five years together as a team in the Spring of 2024. I am so proud of the work our team accomplished in five years---but I am most proud of the team assembled in our office during those five years. We established specialized prosecutors for domestic violence and special victims. We increased the staff in our civil division to better serve our clients in our county as we continue to face unprecedented growth. We have leveraged technology to increase efficiency within our processes and have invested in our staff to build our bench.

When I was sworn in in 2019, I told my team the best was yet to come. It's hard to imagine the last five years getting any better because they truly have been the most fulfilling professional years of my life. I get to lead a team that makes a difference in our community every single day. It is an honor and blessing to serve. But, as I look back on 2024 and the last five years, I'm proud to say now, I'm only getting started.

*Melissa A. Schiffel*

## MISSION STATEMENT

**For the One: Excellence. Gratitude. Community.**

- Gratitude: We are thankful that we are able to work. We are humbled and honored to be public servants for the one who needs us every single day.
- Excellence: We demonstrate excellence every day. Our excellence provides credibility to our jobs, our decisions, and our interactions with the one who needs us every single day.
- Community: We believe in uplifting our community and being a positive influence every single day. We believe that we are community partners, and we exist to serve the one in our community who needs us every single day.





# OFFICE PROFILE

## Melissa A. Schiffel



Delaware County Prosecutor  
since 2019



### EXECUTIVE TEAM



**Mark Sleeper**  
Chief of Criminal Division  
Assistant Prosecutor  
14 years at DCPO



**Christopher Betts**  
Chief of Civil Division  
Assistant Prosecutor  
23 years at DCPO



**Elizabeth Matune**  
Juvenile Division Supervisor  
Domestic Violence Prosecutor  
10 years at DCPO



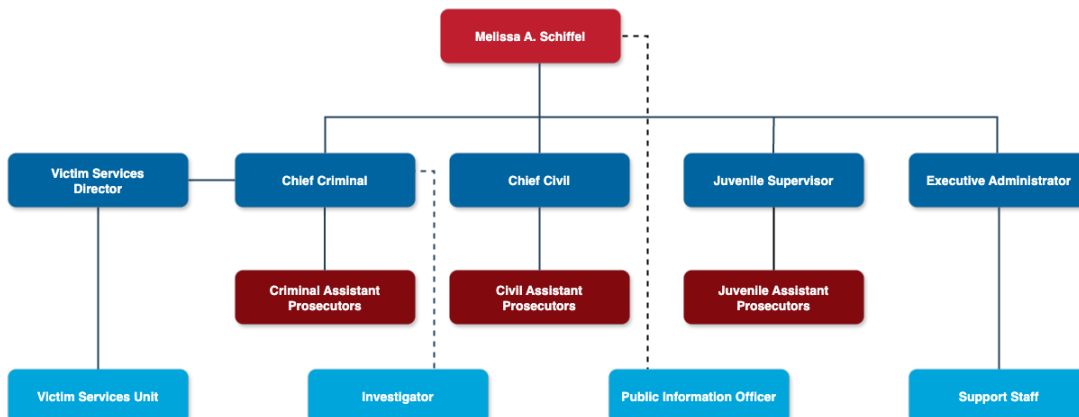
**Nicole Ford**  
Executive  
Administrator  
17 years at DCPO



**Trish Wright**  
Director  
Victim Services Unit  
16 years at DCPO

Collectively our executive team has over 100 years of combined experience dedicated to preserving the integrity of the justice system and fighting for the safety of Delaware County and its community members.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# CRIMINAL DIVISION



## INDICTMENTS

515

## CASES OPENED

833

## CASES DECLINED FOR PROSECUTION

155

## TRIALS HELD

17

## 2024 TOP 3 FELONY CRIMES

1. THEFT/FRAUD

2. DRUGS

3. DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE

Davis, Wynn, and Blakely were all identified by Columbus Police as perpetrators in a string of robberies at multiple AutoZones and other businesses during the summer of 2023 in Franklin and Delaware Counties. While inside an AutoZone in Delaware County, the defendants demanded a store clerk open a cash register, and when the clerk could not, Blakely struck him violently with a gun setting off a chain of events in which a Good Samaritan was murdered. Davis pleaded guilty to Aggravated Murder, Attempted Murder, and two firearm specifications; Wynn pleaded guilty to Murder, Aggravated Robbery, Engaging in a Pattern of Corrupt Activity, and two firearm specifications; and Blakely pleaded guilty to Murder, Engaging in a Pattern of Corrupt Activity, and Felonious Assault. Each one of the Defendants were sentenced to life in prison. Davis will be eligible for parole after 46 years, Wynn will be eligible for parole after 40 years, and Blakely will be eligible for parole (earlier than his co-defendants) at 33 years because he did not participate in a subsequent robbery that left another man paralyzed.



Zacheyis Davis



Darius Wynn



Anthony Blakely

## 2024 HIGH PROFILE CASES



William Roberts

On July 20, 2021, William Roberts shot and killed his 17 month-old daughter and shot and beat her mother in the mother's home. Roberts then loaded both victims into the mother's car and began to flee while holding the victims at gunpoint. Roberts was ultimately apprehended a few miles and minutes away, but also carjacked a victim, and attempted to carjack a second vehicle.

On September 17, 2024, William Roberts pleaded guilty to Aggravated Murder (an unclassified felony), Attempted Aggravated Murder (a felony of the first degree), Aggravated Robbery (a felony of the first degree), and 3 counts of Robbery (felonies of the second degree). Roberts was sentenced to life in prison with parole eligibility after 45 years.





## 2024 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES

### DV INDICTMENTS

69\*

### STRANGULATION INDICTMENTS

22\*

\*These numbers represent the total number of indictments containing charges of DV or strangulation. There are duplicates as many Indictments contain both Domestic Violence and Strangulation charges.

## SVP STATS

### CASES OPENED

58

### INDICTMENTS

26

### TRIALS

2



## SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT



**Sayje C. Brown**  
**Special Victims Prosecutor**



**Kyland A. Deas**  
**Law Clerk**

Our Special Victims Prosecutor Sayje Brown joined our office in the beginning of 2023. She handles all of the child victim cases and has built the prosecution of special victims into a unit and team. She is known in our office for her ability to train and help bring less experienced prosecutors alongside her as she prosecutes a very important, but complex, area of criminal law.

In 2024, Sayje handled one of the most egregious cases of child abuse that our office had seen. On December 16, 2024 Jason Fuller, a 44-year-old Delaware man was sentenced to 17.5 years in prison for endangering children by Delaware County Common Pleas Judge James P. Schuck after pleading guilty to 7 counts of Endangering Children (all felonies of the third degree). Fuller's abuse spanned across 18 years and each count of Endangering Children related to a different victim. Fuller's wife was also sentenced to community control for Obstructing Justice, (a felony of the third degree) for her role.

At the end of 2024, Sayje and legal intern Kyland Deas were recognized for exemplifying "excellence" in the prosecution of this case. While studying for the bar, Kyland also worked part time in our office as a law clerk. Sayje worked with Kyland to write a sentencing memorandum to be filed in advance of the Fuller sentencing. Kyland dug into the case and produced an excellent written sentencing memorandum that provided the Court a very detailed picture of the abuse suffered by the victims in this case. Pictured to the left is one of our office challenge coins, which are awarded once a year or in situations like these where the excellent advocacy cannot go unmentioned.

## BRADEN'S LAW

Prosecutor Schiffel was honored to stand alongside many community advocates to assist with the passage and enactment of Braden's law. This law was named in recognition of Braden Markus who was a victim of sextortion. Braden lost his life in 2021 after being threatened online, and Braden's law enacted protections for victims of sextortion and harsh criminal penalties for anyone who chooses to victimize in a similar manner.



# CRIMINAL APPEALS

## 5TH DISTRICT COURT OF APPEALS

CASES FILED BY DEFENDANTS

30

AFFIRMED IN FAVOR OF THE PROSECUTION

21

APPEAL DISMISSED BY COURT

7

## OHIO SUPREME COURT

CASES FILED

6

JURISDICTION DECLINED

7

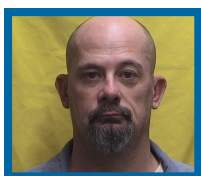


**Kathryn L. Munger**  
Appellate Division  
Prosecutor



**State of Ohio**  
v.  
**Darrell Shields**

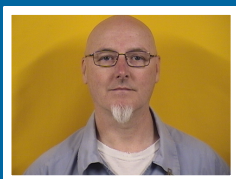
In 2013, Darrell Shields committed a string of armed robberies throughout Central Ohio, Cincinnati, and Northern Kentucky, and he was not caught for several years. Thanks to extensive detective work on the “cold case”, Shields was identified and apprehended in 2021. He pleaded guilty to three counts of aggravated robbery with a gun specification and was sentenced to an aggregate total of 12 years in prison. His appeal in 2024 challenged the trial court’s denial of his motion to suppress evidence. Appellate division attorney Kate Munger filed a brief in opposition to Shield’s motion on behalf of our office, and she later argued the appeal before the Fifth District Court of Appeals. The Fifth District upheld the trial court’s decision, affirming Shields conviction (and siding with the prosecution). Shields also then appealed the matter to the Supreme Court of Ohio, in which Munger filed a reply brief in opposition, and ultimately the Supreme Court of Ohio declined to accept jurisdiction, and Shields’ conviction stands.



**State of Ohio**  
v.  
**David R. Morris**

In 2019, David Morris was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison for sexually abusing two underage girls, ages 11 and 12. In 2024, Morris challenged his convictions and sentence in a series of petitions for post-conviction relief. He then filed a flurry of appeals at the District Court level and at the Supreme Court attempting to withdraw his guilty plea. Munger responded in opposition to all of his filings. The Fifth District Court of Appeals upheld the trial court’s dismissal of all of Morris’s post-conviction claims (siding with the prosecution). Morris was unsuccessful in getting the Supreme Court of Ohio to consider his appeal from those decisions.

## PAROLE



**John Lockhart, Jr.**



**Jason White**



**Bayne Roseberry**

When inmates incarcerated with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction become eligible for parole, the Parole Board contacts the Prosecuting Attorney in the county where the inmate’s conviction occurred. In response to these parole requests, our office contacts victims, writes letters to the Parole Board opposing release, and attends hearings. This year, our office responded to 7 requests for parole, and only 1 inmate was granted parole over our strenuous objection. Three violent offenders that were denied parole, include convicted murderers Jason White and Bayne Roseberry and convicted rapist, John Lockhart, Jr.



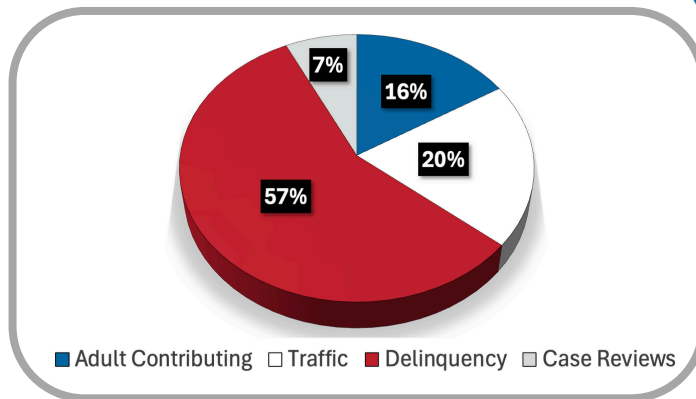
# JUVENILE DIVISION

2024 TOTAL NUMBER OF  
JUVENILE CASES: **503**



## 2024 TOP 3 JUVENILE CRIMES

1. UNRULY
2. TRAFFIC
3. TRUANCY



## 2024 Juvenile Trials

DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE

1

RECEIVING STOLEN  
PROPERTY

1

OBSTRUCTING  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

1

UNRULY

2

TRAFFIC

1

ILLEGAL USE OF A  
MINOR IN NUDITY-  
ORIENTED  
MATERIAL

1

ILLEGAL  
POSSESSION OF AN  
OBJECT  
INDISTINGUISHABLE  
FROM A FIREARM

1



### HOMICIDE

#### State of Ohio v. Rayshawn Anderson

On March 8, of 2024, Rayshawn Anderson confronted Alonzo Byrd outside his home in broad daylight before pulling out his firearm and shooting him five times in the middle of a public roadway. Delaware Police immediately arrested Anderson and, as he was 17 years old at the time, filed charges in the Delaware County Juvenile Court.

Anderson was later bound over to Common Pleas Court to be tried as an adult, and after a 7-day trial, jurors returned guilty verdicts on 2 counts of Murder, with firearm specifications, and 1 count of Discharge of a Firearm on or Near Prohibited Premises (a felony of the second degree). Judge David Gormley sentenced Anderson to life in prison and he will serve at least 27 years before he could be considered for parole or post-release control supervision.

### ARSON

A juvenile was adjudicated for Aggravated Arson after he poured gasoline on to the porch of his ex-girlfriend's family home and set it on fire. He was sentenced to a minimum of 24 months in the Department of Youth Services, classified as a Serious Youthful Offender, and given a suspended adult sentence of a minimum of five years in prison.

### AGGRAVATED VEHICULAR HOMICIDE AND VEHICULAR ASSAULT

A juvenile was adjudicated for Aggravated Vehicular Homicide and Vehicular Assault. He was ordered to spend 90 days in the Central Ohio Youth Center, and he is on probation with the Juvenile Court. The juvenile was traveling at a high rate of speed in a Tesla when he hit a speed bump and crashed the vehicle in a residential area where he hit several cars and a building. 6 teenagers were inside the vehicle at the time of the crash, including 2 in the cargo area. One teenage passenger died as a result of his injuries.

The juvenile's probation terms include suspension of his driver's license for 2 years as well as being subject to GPS monitoring, house arrest, and curfew. He must also complete 100 hours of community service including 25 hours of public speaking regarding safe driving.

# CIVIL DIVISION

NEW MATTERS  
OPENED

1,462

CONTRACTS  
REVIEWED

417

LEGAL OPINIONS  
PROVIDED

403

TOTAL NUMBER  
OF CLIENTS

60 +/-



## Statutory Clients

### County

- Adult Court Services (ACS)
- Auditor
  - Fiscal Division
  - Information Technology (IT)
  - Global Information Systems (GIS)
  - Real Estate Division
- Board of Developmental Disabilities (DD)
- Board of Elections (BOE)
- Building Safety
- Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA)
- Clerk of Courts
- Common Pleas Courts
  - Domestic Relations Division
  - Common Pleas Court General Division
  - Common Pleas Court Juvenile Court
  - Common Pleas Court Probate Division
- Coroner
- Delaware County Transit (DCT)
- Delaware Public Health District (DPHD)
- Family and Children First Council (FCFC)
- Finance Authority
- Guardianship Services Board (GSB)
- Investment Committee
- Job and Family Services (DCDJFS)
- Office of Homeland Security and Emergency (DCOHSEMA)
- Prosecutor
- Recorder
- Records Center/ Records Commission
- Sheriff
- Soil and Water Conservation District (DSWCD)
- Treasurer
- Veterans Service Commission (VSC)
- County Zoning Boards (BZA/BZC)

**Civil  
Matters**  
73% - County  
27% - Township

### Fire Departments

- Berlin Township Fire Department
- BSTG Joint Fire Department
- Concord Township Fire Department
- Elm Valley Joint Fire Department
- Genoa Township Fire Department
- Harlem Township Fire Department
- Liberty Township Fire Department
- Orange Township Fire Department
- Porter-Kingston Joint Fire Department
- Radnor Township Fire Department
- Scioto Township Fire Department
- Tri-Township Joint Fire Department
- Washington Township Fire Department

### Townships (Trustees, Fiscal Officers, Zoning Inspector and Boards (BZA/BZC))

- Berkshire Township
- Berlin Township
- Brown Township
- Concord Township
- Delaware Township
- Genoa Township
- Harlem Township
- Kingston Township
- Liberty Township
- Marlboro Township
- Orange Township
- Oxford Township
- Porter Township
- Radnor Township
- Scioto Township
- Thompson Township
- Trenton Township
- Troy Township
- Washington Township

### Law Enforcement

- Genoa Township Police Department
- Sheriff

### Libraries

- Delaware County District Library (DCDL)
- Law Library Resources Board (LRB)
- Sunbury Community Library
- Wornstaff Library

2024 was a busy year for the Delaware County Prosecutor's Office, Civil Division. This year our long time administrative assistant, Shelley Gruetter retired. While we were sorry to see her go, we were excited to add two (2) new members to our team. Lee Ann Forgrave joined us on March 11, 2024 as the 7th assistant prosecutor in our division and Brittany Dowler joined us on May 30, 2024 as a paralegal. Both have been great additions.

While the Civil Division opened a total of 1,462 new civil matters, this number is deceiving as it doesn't include the countless after-hour meetings we attended, or the thousands of phone calls and emails we fielded to help our clients. This number also doesn't include numerous carryover matters opened in prior years and that continue to be worked on by division staff. A significant amount of time is devoted to processing many of these files, including information gathering, research, writing, advising clients, and attending meetings (many of which are outside regular office hours). The assistant prosecutors diligently work to complete these tasks to advise our clients comprehensively and in a timely manner.

With nearly 60 county and township clients, the Civil Division is involved with almost every aspect of local government. This means that on a daily basis our civil assistant prosecutors work in many different areas of law, including contracts, property law, zoning, public records, policy making, litigation, employment, finance, legal opinions, and many others. In 2024 contracts topped the list of most matters opened, with an 8% increase compared to 2023. Next, the number of legal opinions requested and provided increased by 32% compared to 2023. Zoning, litigation, and public records requests each also generated significant numbers of new matters opened. With the continued growth of Delaware County, the demands on our civil assistant prosecutors will continue to increase.





# VICTIM SERVICES UNIT



## 2023 TOTAL FILES OPENED

**379**

## ADULT

**239**

## JUVENILE

**140**



In 2024, the VSU team assisted approximately 30 victims and family members in our homicide cases. The role of our victim advocates is ever changing whether it be the legal requirements they must fulfill for victims including notifications of court proceedings or just being the literal shoulder to cry on when dealing with murder of a loved one.

In addition to the homicide cases, our advocates assisted with 69 domestic violence and family violence cases, and they were often called upon to assist with temporary protection orders.

In 2024, our advocates also helped victims in 321 financial crimes. Our number one goal in these cases is to ensure we do whatever we can to help victims get restitution for their loss.

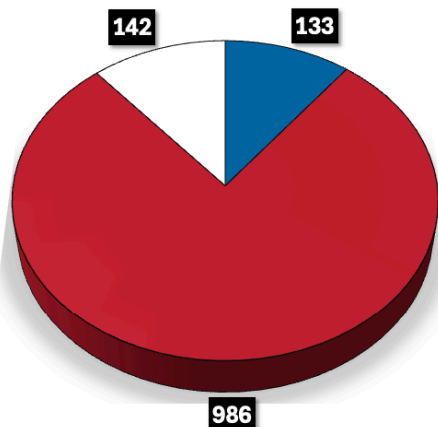
We also assisted with the filing of 90 civil protection orders, which take 2 or more court hearings to complete. This is a free service offered to our community members who are unsure of the process to seek legal protections in certain situations.

Our team also fielded 986 calls for help, and 133 walk-ins who needed our assistance. Our team enjoys being out in the community, and in 2024 presented numerous trainings on domestic violence, victim services and protection orders.

## 2024 TOTAL CIVIL PROTECTION ORDER ASSISTS

**1261**

■ Walk-ins ■ Phone Calls/ Emails ■ Filings/ Hearings



## 2024 TOP 3 VICTIM ORIENTED OFFENSES

1. IDENTITY THEFT / FRAUD / FINANCIAL CRIME
2. DOMESTIC / FAMILY VIOLENCE
3. VIOLATION OF A PROTECTION ORDER



# SPECIAL PROGRAMS



## DIVERSION

The Diversion Program is created by statute, but managed by the prosecutor's office. It is offered to certain 1st time, non-violent offenders. If completed, Diversion results in the offender's charge or case being dismissed without a conviction on their permanent record. The Diversion Program was enhanced with a new partnership with the Public Defender's Office in 2023.



## SCHIFFEL'S SAFETY SCHOLARS

Schiffel's Safety Scholars began in 2021 and partners with the county's local libraries to offer drug, alcohol, vaping, and tobacco prevention education. Schiffel's Safety Scholars is funded by monies seized from drug forfeiture cases in our county.



You be the Author Winner

Izzy S.



You be the Artist Winner

Zinera M., Liberty Middle School





# OUTSTANDING TEAM MEMBERS



Every year I recognize outstanding team members who have exemplified our values. Our values are Gratitude, Community and Excellence. This year I recognized Victim Services Director Trish Wright, Grand Jury Prosecutor Adam Meigs, and Civil Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Mark Fowler.

Director Wright was recognized for demonstrating our value of excellence. In 2024 Wright handled multiple homicide victims and families and navigated some of the most horrific cases and circumstances that our office has ever seen. Yet Wright always rose to occasion, was vulnerable herself with the victims as duty called, and never stopped advocating for all of the victims she served. And she did all of that poise, grace, and resiliency.

Grand Jury Prosecutor Meigs was recognized for our value of gratitude. Meigs was a one-man grand jury division for most of 2024. He reviews all cases, and presents all cases to grand jury. Meigs also has the most thankless position in the office. Staff can be disappointed in a way that particular cases are indicted and law enforcement can be disappointed in the way a case may be handled by the grand jury prosecutor. Yet Meigs did his job every single day to keep the wheels of justice of turning fairly and justly despite his thankless position.

Assistant Prosecutor Fowler was recognized for exemplifying our value of community. Fowler has been employed by the office in our civil division for over 13 years. During this time he represented many townships and civil clients and developed himself as trusted lawyer in our office dedicated not only to his clients but to his community as well. He is very active in several community organizations like Main Street Delaware and the Knights of Columbus. There really is no cause that he and his wife Tamar have not volunteered their time and energy to helping.





# 2024 Top Cops

Several times per year Prosecutor Schiffel honors law enforcement officers that have worked with our office who have gone above and beyond in the call of duty—whether it's with how they help a victim, conduct their investigation, or respond to a difficult call.



Officer McCoy was recognized by Prosecutor Schiffel for the outstanding work he has done in recent felony cases, and specifically for his professional and supportive demeanor with victims.

The following Columbus Division of Police officers were recognized for being Top Cops:

Officer Samuel Nance  
Officer Joseph Dickson  
Detective Chris Journey  
CSSU Mark Burghart  
CSSU Todd Cress  
CSSU Suzanne Nissley

The dedication, professionalism, and compassion of each of these officers was apparent throughout the investigation and ultimate completion of a recent homicide.



Sergeant Bolen of Delaware Police Department was recognized for the outstanding work he has done in recent felony and juvenile cases. Prosecutor Schiffel specifically highlighted his meticulous attention to detail and support of the victims.





# THANK YOU

It continues to be a blessing to serve our community. We strive every day to be much more than just a figure in the courtroom, but to be a true community partner. Thank you for your unwavering support.

*Melissa*

## CONTACT US



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