Prosecutor Recruitment Week

October 9th through the 13th marked Prosecutor Recruitment Week in Michigan and the United States. PAAM President Jeff Getting and past President Kym Worthy talked with the Detroit News* about the challenges facing prosecutor staffing, and President Getting also discussed the issue on Michigan’s Big Show with Michael Patrick Shiels.

President Getting has said “Recruiting new prosecutors has many challenges. In recent years, there are fewer people graduating from law schools, so the pool of potential applicants is smaller. Those who do graduate often have significant student loan debt. Annual starting salaries for Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys vary from county to county, with many in the mid $50,000s and almost all under $70,000. The lack of competitive pay, inadequate staffing, and heavy caseloads make it difficult for prosecutors’ offices to attract even those graduates who want to serve as prosecutors. Our counties, and the state, must increase resources for prosecutors’ offices to address this issue.”

PAAM also had an extensive social media presence during the week, with members discussing why they chose a career in prosecution.

*The article is behind a paywall and requires a subscription.
PAAM members recognized October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and in Marquette County, Prosecutor and past PAAM President Matt Wiese said an interagency plan called the Blueprint for Safety has been having a positive impact for domestic violence survivors in his jurisdiction for five years.

The Marquette County Blueprint for Safety is based on a program first used in St. Paul, Minnesota and provides an inter-agency response to domestic violence from dispatch all the way through probation. Marquette County began to implement the Blueprint in 2015, with full launch coming in 2018. Prosecutor Wiese says it has changed the way law enforcement responds to domestic violence, the manner in which offenders are handled in the courts, and how cases are processed.

“In my community, we don’t have a lot of street violence,” Prosecutor Wiese said, “but we have incredible violence in intimate partner settings and we are trying to send a message that we will not tolerate that.”

The Blueprint for Safety means that domestic violence victims are quickly put in touch with advocates, both in the community and in the Marquette County Prosecutor's Office. “I believe our community partner, our domestic violence shelter, is happy because we have created a process where someone who is a victim tonight is put in touch with a community-based advocate tonight or tomorrow morning, so we can begin to assess their situation, help them out, find out what they need. And, hand in hand with that, we have a domestic violence advocate in the Prosecutor’s Office who also reaches out to them.”

“Historically, domestic violence cases had a very low rate of prosecution,” Wiese said. “The Blueprint for Safety has changed the kind of evidence we have on cases, and our law enforcement partners are very pleased to know that these cases are handled and are going forward. We always listen to what the victim has to say, and take that into account, and the sooner we can intervene, the sooner we can create an outcome that means greater safety for victims and their families.”

On October 26, Governor Gretchen Whitmer appointed Marquette County Prosecutor Matt Wiese as the next Judge of the 25th Circuit Court in Marquette, effective November 27. As a Past President of the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan, PAAM extends its heartfelt thanks and best wishes to Prosecutor Wiese as he continues his distinguished career of service to the people of Marquette County and the State of Michigan.
Two new canine advocates are joining prosecutor’s offices in Michigan. In Wayne County, Jellybean (left), who is half Black Lab and half Golden Retriever, is helping Prosecutor Kym Worthy help kids. Jellybean was trained by the Canine Advocacy Program at CARE House in Oakland County, and is an expert in ignoring distractions, walking on a lead without pulling, and remaining in a sit/stay position.

Meanwhile, Arlo (right), has just started training in the office of Clinton County Prosecutor Tony Spagnuolo.

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