Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan

Prosecutor Update

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A "Superstar" Departs:

PACC/PAAM Says Farewell to Cheri Bruinsma

PACC/PAAM Executive Director Cheri Bruinsma.

Cheri Bruinsma, right, and PAAM 2025-2026 President Chris Becker, left.

Cheri Bruinsma, the longtime Executive Director of the Prosecuting Attorneys Coordinating Council and the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan, ended a distinguished tenure in early October as she prepared to take up a new position with the United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Michigan effective October 5.

Cheri spent 11 total years with PACC/PAAM, the first four as Assistant Executive Director and the last seven as Executive Director. Prior to her time at PAAM, she worked in the Michigan Attorney General's Office as Senior Assistant Attorney General and spent 14 years with the office of the Kalamazoo County Prosecutor.

Prosecutors around Michigan lauded Cheri's career with PACC/PAAM, using words like "leadership," "superstar," and "kindness." Cheri's time with PACC/PAAM came during an eventful era in Michigan history, as she navigated a global pandemic, a move to a new building in downtown Lansing, and elections in 2020 and 2024 that saw scores of new prosecutors elected to office. Speaking at Cheri's farewell gathering, PAAM's President, Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald, said she was "Someone who was a constant and ultimate professional, available, always responsive and a place to look for guidance on many, many things."

("Superstar," *continued on page 2*)

In the Community

Michigan's Human Trafficking Commission held its second annual mixer in Lansing in September, with Kalamazoo County Prosecutor Jeff Getting, right, a Commission member, and Calhoun County Prosecutor David Gilbert, PAAM's President-elect for 2027, on hand to listen and join in the discussion.

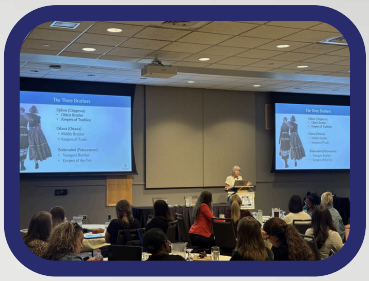
The Oakland County Prosecutor's Office spent an evening at the Southfield Public Schools Back to School Fair. Staff provided students with backpacks and school supplies and connected with parents about secure firearm storage and Michigan's recent legislation on the issue.

("*Superstar*," *continued from page 1*)

Stepping into the Executive Director role is PAAM's long-time Assistant Executive Director, Dianna Collins, who previously served at the Michigan Department of Attorney General and the Washtenaw County Prosecutor's Office.

Gathered in Lansing to mark the transition were PAAM's Preisdent-Elect, Calhoun County Prosecutor David Gilbert; Dianna Collins; Cheri Bruinsma; PAAM President and Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald; PAAM's Vice President, Alger County Prosecutor Rob Steinhoff; and PACC Chair and Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton.

2026 PAAM Victim Advocate Conference



Victim advocates gathered in northern Michigan the first week in September for the 2026 Victim Advocate Annual Conference, presented by PAAM's Victim Service Training Unit. Attendees heard about resources targeting child abuse, trauma-informed support for victim advocates, issues impacting tribal prosecutors, and helping victims and survivors with media.

PAAM's Tanya Abdelnour Honored

Tanya Abdelnour, the Director of PAAM's Violence Against Women Project.

Detroit's Avalon Health Center honored Tanya Abdelnour, the Director of PAAM's Violence Against Women Project, with its annual Waves of Change Award. The Avalon Health Center is marking its 20th anniversary in 2026 and said Ms. Abdelnour's "Vision and dedication have made a life-changing difference in the lives of thousands of survivors and have played an important role in helping Avalon grow into Michigan's largest and most comprehensive sexual assault center." Tanya Abdelnour joined PAAM in late 2018 and assumed her current role at the start of 2020. Prior to her time with PAAM, she served with the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office for almost two decades, and in 2014 was appointed the lead attorney for the Wayne County Sexual Assault Kit Task Force, where she directed prosecutions arising from Task Force investigations and oversaw assistant prosecutor attorneys assigned to the initiative.