



# JUSTICE JOURNAL

Presented by The Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office  
Paul J. Gains, Prosecutor

## Prosecutor Forms New Group Charged with Producing Social Justice in Mahoning County

During these unprecedented times, many of us have asked ourselves: How can we be present? How can we listen? How can we educate ourselves to understand the complex issues regarding race, policing, and bias, especially as it pertains to our work? In an effort to answer these questions, the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office joined together supervisors, assistant prosecutors, and staff in forming our Producing Social Justice Committee. The goal of this group is to listen, learn and improve our understanding of the issues impacting citizens in our community, and how our office can initiate efforts to contribute to equity and social justice here in Mahoning County.

To kick off our efforts, members of the committee attended a virtual seminar on June 10, 2021 put on by the National District Attorney's Association titled The Anti-Racist Prosecutor II: The Sequel – Strategies for Action. The program emphasized the need for prosecutors, as principal members in our criminal justice system, to lead the effort for meaningful change. Vera Causa Group instructors provided high-impact strategies to promote racial equity inside and outside the office. Additionally, we had the opportunity to brainstorm with our colleagues across the United States on how to best implement strategies for equity and inclusion.

In the upcoming months, we will seek input from our partners in the community and justice system to identify initiatives that we can implement to produce social justice within our office and throughout Mahoning County.

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# OFFICE NEWS

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

We are pleased to announce the appointments of Ebenezer Appiagyei, Tia N. Brown and Amanda J. Banner as Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys in the Civil Division of the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office.

APAs Appiagyei and Brown will be working directly with Mahoning County Children Services on cases involving the abuse, neglect and dependency of children. Prior to joining the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office, Attorney Appiagyei served as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney in the Juvenile Division of the Summit County Prosecutor's Office, within the Child Protective Unit. He also served as a staff attorney with the International Institute of Akron and participated in various clerkships with the Stark County Prosecutor's Office and the Trumbull County Probate Court. He holds a B.A. from the University of Ghana and a Juris Doctor from the University of Akron School of Law.

Attorney Brown served as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney in the Licking County Prosecutor's Office where she advised the Licking County Department of Jobs and Family Services on matters involving the abuse, neglect and dependency of children. She also served as a legal intern with the Family and Youth Advocacy Center in Columbus, Ohio, with the Franklin County Public Defender's Office and with the Mahoning County Juvenile Court. She holds a B.A. from Westminster College and a Juris Doctor from Capital University Law School.

Attorney Banner served as corporate counsel to Sky Bank and was associated with Henderson, Covington, Messenger, Newman & Thomas as well as Banner Law, LLC. She also served as a Municipal Attorney for the City of Columbiana and as a Judicial Staff Attorney for Judge Kathleen Bartlett. Attorney Banner has extensive experience in the areas of civil litigation, public sector law, employment and commercial law. She holds a B.A. from The College of Wooster and a Juris Doctor from the John Marshall Law School.



Ebenezer Appiagyei



Tia N. Brown



Amanda J. Banner

# OFFICE NEWS

## REASSIGNMENT

Congratulations to former Assistant Prosecutor Meghan Brundege on her recent appointment to Youngstown Municipal Court as its new Magistrate. Magistrate Brundege is replacing Magistrate Anthony Sertick who retired after serving for twenty years on the bench. Magistrate Brundege served as an assistant prosecutor with the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office since 2006, working in the Felony and Juvenile Divisions. Best of luck to you, Magistrate Brundege, on your new position!

Assistant Prosecutor Kerry Limbian will be transferred to the Juvenile Division to fill the vacancy left by Magistrate Brundege's appointment. Assistant Prosecutor Limbian along with Assistant Prosecutor Anissa Modarelli will handle all delinquency cases in the juvenile court.

## 2021 SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office welcomed their 2021 Summer Interns, who began their internships this past May and June. Throughout the summer, this group received hands-on experience with the legal system by completing various tasks. They also had the opportunity to attend seminars, hearings and trials.

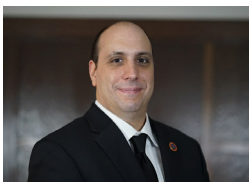
Anthony Carbone, a first year law student at Ohio Northern Petit College of Law, worked primarily in the Criminal Division, assisting with various criminal prosecutions. Anthony is a graduate of Youngstown State University where he obtained a B.A. in English.

Ke'Ania Boone was hired through the annual Summer Career Development Program offered by Inspiring Minds, an organization based in Youngstown that was started in 2005 by Deryck Toles. Ke'Ania is a graduate of Chaney High School and attends Youngstown State University where she is majoring in forensic psychology.

Delaney Less is a graduate of South Range High School and attends Youngstown State University where she is majoring in political science.

Michael Hartman is a graduate of Canfield High School and attends Youngstown State University where he is majoring in mathematics and computer science.

Alexis Eaton is a graduate of Valley Christian High School and attends Mount Vernon Nazarene University where she is majoring in history.



Anthony Carbone



Ke'Ania Boone



Delaney Less



Michael Hartman



Alexis Eaton

# OFFICE NEWS

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Chief Assistant Prosecutor, Linette M. Stratford, participated in training sponsored by the Academy of Continuing Legal Education on Ohio Election Law. Chief Assistant Stratford spoke during the Professional Conduct segment wherein she addressed disciplinary issues impacting attorneys who hold public office and ethical considerations for attorneys who represent county, township, and local government agencies.



Chief Assistant Linette Stratford

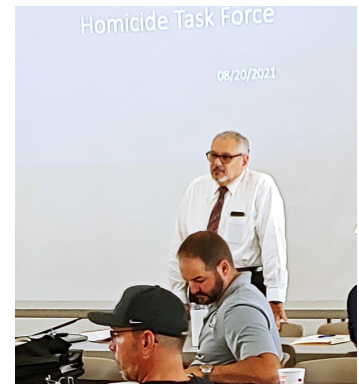
Assistant Prosecutors Nick Modarelli and Mike Yacavone, along with Assistant Criminal Chief Ralph Rivera and Chief Assistant Gina DeGenova, presented legal updates to members of the Mahoning Valley Homicide Task Force during its reorganizational meeting held on Friday, August 20, 2021. The Homicide Task Force is comprised of experienced officials employed by various Mahoning County law enforcement agencies who collaborate on homicide investigations.



Chief Assistant  
Gina DeGenova



Assistant Criminal Chief Ralph Rivera  
Assistant Prosecutor Mike Yacavone



Assistant Prosecutor  
Nick Modarelli

## SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT...

The Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office participated in the 175th Canfield Fair held at the Canfield Fairgrounds from September 1 – September 6, 2021. We enjoyed meeting everyone who came out to see us!





# CRIMINAL DIVISION NEWS

## NOTABLE PROSECUTIONS

### *State of Ohio v. Michael Malvasi II*

Michael Malvasi II was sentenced to a total of 12 years in prison for the 2017 death of Ryan Lanzo. In the early morning hours of November 18, 2017, Malvasi's SUV went off the side of Shields Road in Canfield Township, rolling at least three times, causing the death of his passenger, Ryan Lanzo. Malvasi then walked home, leaving Lanzo at the scene. The Ohio State Patrol, led by Troopers Mike Gurlea and Eric Carroll, with the assistance of the Ohio Investigative Bureau, Canfield Police Department and the Mahoning County Sheriff's Office, were able to trace Malvasi's actions from late evening of November 17, 2017. Through the testimony of Trooper Todd Jester, an accident reconstruction expert, evidence showed that Malvasi was the driver and Lanzo was the front seat passenger. On July 6, 2021, the trial commenced with over 20 witnesses and almost 200 exhibits. After a five day trial, the jury found Malvasi guilty of Aggravated Vehicular Homicide, Vehicular Homicide, two counts of Leaving the Scene of an Accident, Tampering with Evidence and Operating a Vehicle while Intoxicated. This case was tried by Grand Jury Prosecutor Michael Yacovone and Senior Trial Counsel Robert Andrews before Honorable Judge Maureen Sweeney.



Robert Andrews  
Senior Trial Counsel



Michael Yacovone  
Grand Jury Prosecutor

### *State of Ohio v. Anthony Consiglio*

Defendant Anthony Consiglio was sentenced on June 21, 2021 to an indefinite term of 19 ½ to 25 years in prison for Rape, Attempted Rape, Aggravated Robbery, Robbery, Theft from a Person in a Protected Class, Domestic Violence and Assault on a Police Officer. Defendant was convicted after a Trial to the Court in which evidence was presented that Defendant sexually assaulted his 79 year old relative and stole her cell phone, house phone and cash. When the Defendant was arrested, he attacked a Campbell Detective while the Detective was attempting to interview him. Defendant pled not guilty by reason of insanity and presented testimony that he could not understand the nature of his actions at the time of the offense due to a mental disease. Ultimately, the Court rejected this defense and found Defendant guilty. Assistant Prosecutors Kevin Day and Nicholas Brevetta tried this case before the Honorable Judge R. Scott Krichbaum.



Left: Kevin Day  
Right: Nicholas Brevetta

# CRIMINAL DIVISION NEWS

## *State of Ohio v. Francis Rydarowicz, 2019 CR 704*

Defendant Francis Rydarowicz was sentenced on August 23, 2021 to a term of life imprisonment with the possibility of parole after fifteen years for the murder of his wife, Katherine Rydarowicz. Defendant was convicted after a five day jury trial that began on August 2, 2021 of two counts of Murder as well as counts of Felonious Assault and Domestic Violence. The jury heard testimony that on June 22, 2019, Defendant stabbed Katherine at the King's Motel in Coitsville, causing her death. Defendant testified on his own behalf, claiming that he acted in self-defense. The jury was not convinced of his testimony and found Defendant guilty after several hours of deliberation. Assistant Prosecutors Jennifer Paris and Caitlyn Andrews tried the case before the Honorable Judge Anthony Donofrio.



Jennifer Paris



Caitlyn Andrews

## **TO PROTECT AND SERVE...**

A law enforcement officer's ability to adapt to the unknown could be the difference between life and death. Thanks to the diligent efforts of the Austintown Township Police Department, an intoxicated driver who fled onto Rt. 80 at a high rate of speed was apprehended without incident.

On August 4, 2020, members of the Austintown Township Police Department, including Ptl. Adam Hess, Ptl. David Yohman, Ptl. Ryan Reese, Sgt. Christopher Collins and Lt. William Hoelzel were dispatched in reference to an intoxicated female who was attempting to drive her vehicle. When officers located this driver, a stop was attempted, prompting the driver to ignore overhead lights and sirens and flee onto Route 11. The driver eventually pulled over, at which time, these officers attempted to reason with her to exit her vehicle. She refused. After yelling at Officers, she began to flee again at a high rate of speed heading directly toward Lt. Hoelzel's location. Acting quickly, Lt. Hoelzel was able to successfully deploy stop sticks despite the vehicle traveling past him at approximately 80-90 mph.

The driver continued to travel west on Rt. 80, forcing Ptl. Hess to travel at an approximate speed of 120 mph to keep up with her vehicle. Eventually, the stop sticks caused the vehicle's tires to go flat, forcing the driver to stop the car. Various officers approached the car, including Sgt. Collins and Lt. Hoelzel. Body camera footage demonstrated that the driver was hostile toward officers, in particular, Lt. Hoelzel, who she screamed at, insulted and kicked. Despite her actions, Lt. Hoelzel remained professional and respectful at all times. Due to these Officers' compassion and patience, the driver was successfully removed from her car and safely taken into custody.

Thanks for your hard work and dedication!

# CIVIL DIVISION NEWS

## SCAM ALERT!

As the number of people and communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic grows, so do the scams associated with it. Sadly, scammers use public health emergencies as opportunities for new fraud schemes, and because older adults are at greater risk for serious illness from COVID-19, they may target older populations. According to the Ohio Attorney General's Office and the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), there has been an increase in COVID-19 vaccination scams here in Ohio, too. These scammers may try to contact you through door to door visits, unsolicited emails, telephone calls or text messages, claiming to be someone from a medical office, insurance companies, or COVID-19 vaccine centers. During these communications, you may be told that your personal and/or medical information is needed to determine if you're eligible to get the vaccine. They may also try to sell you a vaccination card. It is important to remember that although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health officials may contact you if they believe you may have been exposed to the virus, they will not need to ask you for insurance or financial information.

To avoid becoming a victim of these scams, the Ohio AG and HHS suggest the following tips:

1. When dealing with a door-to-door visitor, never give out your personal, financial or medical information.
2. Never agree to purchase a vaccination card. The COVID-19 vaccine and the card of validation is provided for free by government approved providers, such as hospitals, doctors' offices and in some instances, nursing homes.
3. When taking a COVID-19 survey, be sure not to give out your personal, financial, or medical information. Hang up on any individual asking for vaccination dates or any other privileged information over the phone.
4. Beware of people claiming they are COVID-19 tracers, because legitimate tracers will never ask for your Medicare ID numbers, other medical information or financial information.
5. Finally, do not post your vaccination card on any social media platforms as this card provides a scammer with important medical and personal information.

## TOWNSHIP CORNER

### Milton Township is Booming!

Our client, Milton Township, is enjoying a resurgence as residents flock to their community to build homes on Lake Milton. According to Mike Kurilla Jr., Milton Township Zoning Inspector, during the first four and a half months of 2021 alone, he has approved 15 zoning permits for single-family homes. While the average cost to build a new home is \$364,179, the first five permits issued in Milton Township were for homes costing between \$302,000 and \$553,000. In fact, a zoning permit was recently approved for a home costing nearly \$1.06 million. Lot prices are on the rise too. In November 2020, a ninety-foot wide lake front lot sold for \$525,000 whereas in 2013 similar lots sold between \$150,000 to \$175,000.

# CIVIL DIVISION NEWS

## 2021 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD WINNER: MAHONING COUNTY COURTHOUSE EXTERIOR

The Board of Mahoning County Commissioners was one of the recipients of the Mahoning Valley Historical Society's 2021 Historic Preservation Awards. This award stemmed from renovations made to the exterior of the Mahoning County Courthouse. The present courthouse was designed by the distinguished firm of Owsley & Boucherle well over 100 years ago and remains in its original use today. The exterior restoration completes a well-planned phase by our Board of Commissioners and its project manager, longtime Purchasing Director, James Fortunato. The Historical Society heralded this project for its dedication to the original building materials and the undoing of previous renovation mistakes. Great work Commissioners and Mr. Fortunato!



## AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN MONIES

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan (ARP), a \$1.9 trillion dollar economic stimulus bill that sent \$44,350,000 directly to Mahoning County for expenditure by our County Commissioners. Additionally, the 14 Townships who are represented by the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office may receive up to \$13,200,000 through Ohio House Bill 168 (134th G.A.). In all, our office expects to assist Mahoning County and the Mahoning County Townships in administering more than \$55,000,000 in ARP Dollars.

The Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office has begun work on several programs and grant agreements targeted to improve our community. In accordance with the ARP, funds may be used to:

- Support public health expenditures;
- Address negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency;
- Replace lost public sector revenue;
- Provide premium pay for essential workers; and
- Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.

As always, our office is here to assist Mahoning County and our township clients with issues of compliance and program agreements. We look forward to assisting the numerous projects and community improvements made possible by the ARP.