



VENTURA COUNTY  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
TERM REPORT

2011 - 2014



Gregory D. Totten  
District Attorney

# COUNTY OF VENTURA BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



Supervisor  
**Steve Bennett**  
FIRST DISTRICT



Supervisor  
**Linda Parks**  
SECOND DISTRICT



Supervisor  
**Kathy Long**  
THIRD DISTRICT



Supervisor  
**Peter C. Foy**  
FOURTH DISTRICT



Supervisor  
**John C. Zaragoza**  
FIFTH DISTRICT

# District Attorney Locations



**Main Office**

800 South Victoria Ave., Hall of Justice,  
Suite 314, Ventura, CA



**Special Prosecutions**

5120 Ralston Ave., Ventura, CA



**Juvenile Unit**

Juvenile Justice Center  
4353 Vineyard Ave., Oxnard, CA



**Bureau of Investigation**

Fiscal / Administrative Services  
646 County Square Drive, Ventura, CA



**East County Office**

3855-F Alamo Street, Suite 2088, Simi Valley, CA

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# Office of the District Attorney County of Ventura

## Our Mission

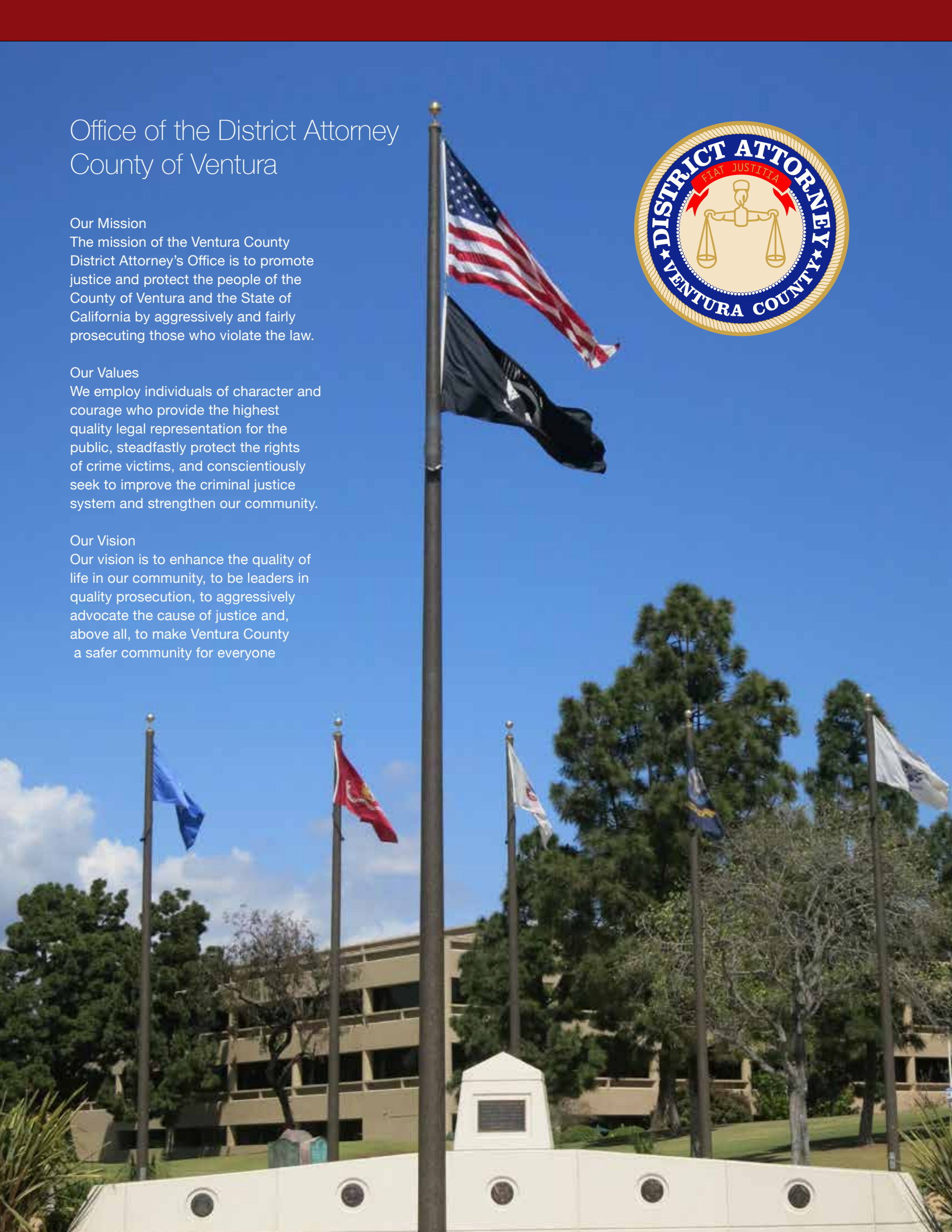
The mission of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office is to promote justice and protect the people of the County of Ventura and the State of California by aggressively and fairly prosecuting those who violate the law.

## Our Values

We employ individuals of character and courage who provide the highest quality legal representation for the public, steadfastly protect the rights of crime victims, and conscientiously seek to improve the criminal justice system and strengthen our community.

## Our Vision

Our vision is to enhance the quality of life in our community, to be leaders in quality prosecution, to aggressively advocate the cause of justice and, above all, to make Ventura County a safer community for everyone



# A Letter From Gregory D. Totten, District Attorney



*“A thoughtful mind, when it sees a Nation’s flag, sees not the flag only, but the Nation itself; and whatever may be its symbols, its insignia, he reads chiefly in the flag the Government, the principles, the truths, the history which belongs to the Nation that sets it forth.”*

**Henry Ward Beecher**  
*Abolitionist, Essayist, Clergyman*  
1813-1887

This term report is dedicated to the patriots of our nation and our community. In this report, we pay tribute to the brave men and women in the District Attorney’s Office who have served in our nation’s military.

We also acknowledge those public servants at every level of government who are devoted to doing the right thing for the members of our community. Whether legislators and county supervisors who strive to improve the quality of life in our community, or prosecutors, peace officers, and victim advocates who seek justice and safety for the residents of Ventura County, each in their own way are patriots deeply devoted to American ideals.

A hallmark of patriotism in our nation is the steadfast belief that our justice system is a cornerstone of democracy. In the District Attorney’s Office, we seek justice everyday through hardworking prosecutors, investigators, and support staff dedicated to achieving a just result in every case. We safeguard taxpayers’ funds and the health of our environment through our fraud and environmental units. We fight for the rights and protection of victims through our Safe Harbor Program, our Crime Victims’ Assistance Unit, and our Family Violence Prevention Center. We employ the most modern tools to fight crime, including forensic examination of digital evidence in the High Tech Task Force, examination of DNA, and other evidence in “cold case” homicides.

In this spirit, we offer our heartfelt gratitude to those brave patriots who have served in harm’s way. We also renew our commitment to the justice system they fought to protect – its reverence for the truth, integrity and equality – a justice system that is unquestionably the best ever created by man.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg Totten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

# Thank you to all who have served.



### David Barnes

Deputy District Attorney David Barnes served six years active duty with the United States Army. He enlisted after graduation from college in 2002, received training as an interrogator and human intelligence collector, and spent 15 months in Baghdad, Iraq, as the "Human Intelligence Collection Team Leader" for 2/325 Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. David was awarded a Bronze Star for his team's work in Baghdad and retired from the military as a staff sergeant.



### John Poore

Deputy District Attorney John Poore served in the United States Marine Corps as an infantry officer from 2000-2004. Assigned to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, John completed several overseas deployments throughout the Persian Gulf Region, leading a 40-man platoon in combat operations. Upon his return to the United States, Capt. Poore was assigned as the Company Executive Officer overseeing the day-to-day operations of a 175-man Marine Rifle Company.



### Jay Carrott

Investigator Jay Carrott served in the United States Army from 1975 to 1980 assigned to the Army Security Agency. He was stationed at intelligence bases in Okinawa Japan, the Philippines and at the demilitarized zone in Korea.

In 2010 Jay deployed to Iraq as an LEP (Law Enforcement Professional). His unit was stationed at small combat bases located in Ramadi and Fallujah, where their primary assignment was locating and capturing individuals making improvised explosive devices.



### Ken Valentini

Deputy Chief Investigator Ken Valentini served in the United States Marine Corps from 1986-1990. Corporal Valentini served in the infantry and Marine Corps security forces. He was a rifleman serving aboard the USS Tarawa (LHA-1) and completed tours of duty with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 7<sup>th</sup> Marines in the Philippines, Okinawa, Puerto Rico, and Camp Pendleton.



### Wayne Simmons

Senior Investigator Wayne Simmons served in the Army Reserve from 1969 to 1975. He completed his six-month active duty assignment at Ft. Ord, California. He was initially trained as a vehicle mechanic, then served as a Training NCO and Military Police Officer. Wayne attained the rank of E-5, (Sergeant) and served additional assignments at Ft. Hunter Liggett and Ft. Irwin.



### Kim Gibbons

Senior Deputy District Attorney Kim Gibbons began his service in the United States Navy in 1972, serving as the Communications Officer aboard the USS Fanning (FF-1076) in the Gulf of Tonkin during the Vietnam War. Kim entered the Naval Reserve after four years of active duty, then returned to active duty as a JAG Corps lawyer. Kim retired from the Naval Reserve as a lieutenant commander in 1994.



**Stuart Gardner**

Deputy District Attorney Stuart Gardner enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserve in 1996. He served as a driver/gunner with the 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion at Camp Pendleton. Stu reenlisted in the 146th AW of the California Air National Guard in 2000. While attending law school, he commissioned and served as the 144th Fighter Wing's logistics readiness officer. In 2008, Stu transferred back to the 146th in Port Hueneme where he currently serves as a JAG Corps lawyer.



**Anh Vu**

Investigative Assistant Anh Vu served nine years in the United States Army Reserves as a Water Treatment Specialist with the 968th Quartermaster Company, 419th CSSB, based in Tustin, California. He enlisted as a senior in high school in 2003, attended basic training at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina and advanced individual training at Ft. Lee, Virginia. Vu attended the University of California, Irvine while serving assignments in California, Nevada, Wyoming, Louisiana, North Carolina, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Vu was honorably discharged as a sergeant in 2012.



**Jim Ellison**

Retired Chief Assistant District Attorney James D. Ellison joined the Air Force in 1971 and became an avionics technician. He repaired Doppler navigation systems and forward-looking radar systems. Most of his time was spent at Norton Air Force Base as a sergeant repairing C-130 and C-141 cargo planes. In 1973, Jim applied for and was accepted into the Airman Education & Commissioning Program (AECP). While in the AECP, Jim completed his college education in 1976 and was commissioned a second lieutenant. He was assigned as a personnel officer at McClellan Air Force Base and continued to serve in the Air Force Reserves. Jim received an honorable discharge from the Reserves as a captain in 1988.



# Thank you to all who have served.



### **Mike Lief**

Senior Deputy District Attorney Michael Lief enlisted in the United States Navy in 1981. He served aboard the USS Blueback (SS-581), one of the last diesel submarines in the fleet. As a reservist, Lief served as a Radioman aboard the USS New Jersey (BB-62). In 2005, Lief was commissioned in the California State Military Reserve JAG Corps, where he served as a military lawyer, assigned to the 146th AW of the California Air National Guard.



### **Kelly Keenan**

Deputy District Attorney Kelly Keenan attended the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, graduating in 1982. Kelly served aboard the USS John Young (DD-973) and the USS Kittyhawk (CV-63), making two WESPAC deployments to the Far East, and an around-the-world cruise aboard the aircraft carrier. Kelly earned his Surface Warfare Officer qualification before leaving active duty in 1987. He served in the Naval Reserve until 1990.



### **Bob Coughlin**

District Attorney Investigator II Robert Coughlin served in the United States Navy from 1968 to 1977. During his nine-year career, Petty Officer Second Class Coughlin trained for the submarine nuclear power program, served aboard a submarine, and saw combat as a Navy SEAL in Viet Nam.



### **Sandra Ulrich**

Retired Legal Processing Assistant Sandy Ullrich joined the Navy in 1961 after she graduated from high school. She completed boot camp at Bainbridge, Maryland and then trained as a yeoman, the description given to clerical staff. She was stationed at Anacostia near Washington, D.C. and then at the Naval Air Facility at Andrews Air Force Base. Besides her clerical duties, she also worked occasionally as a stewardess onboard Navy airplanes. She left the Navy in 1964. Sadly, Sandy passed away after battling a lengthy illness in September 2015.



### **JohnPaul LeCedre**

Deputy District Attorney JohnPaul LeCedre graduated West Point in 2004. He began his military career as a forward observer in the Second Infantry Division. He later became a platoon leader, and was deployed to Baghdad in 2007. As a major in the Army Reserves, he previously served as an Adjunct Professor of Military Science at Georgetown University.

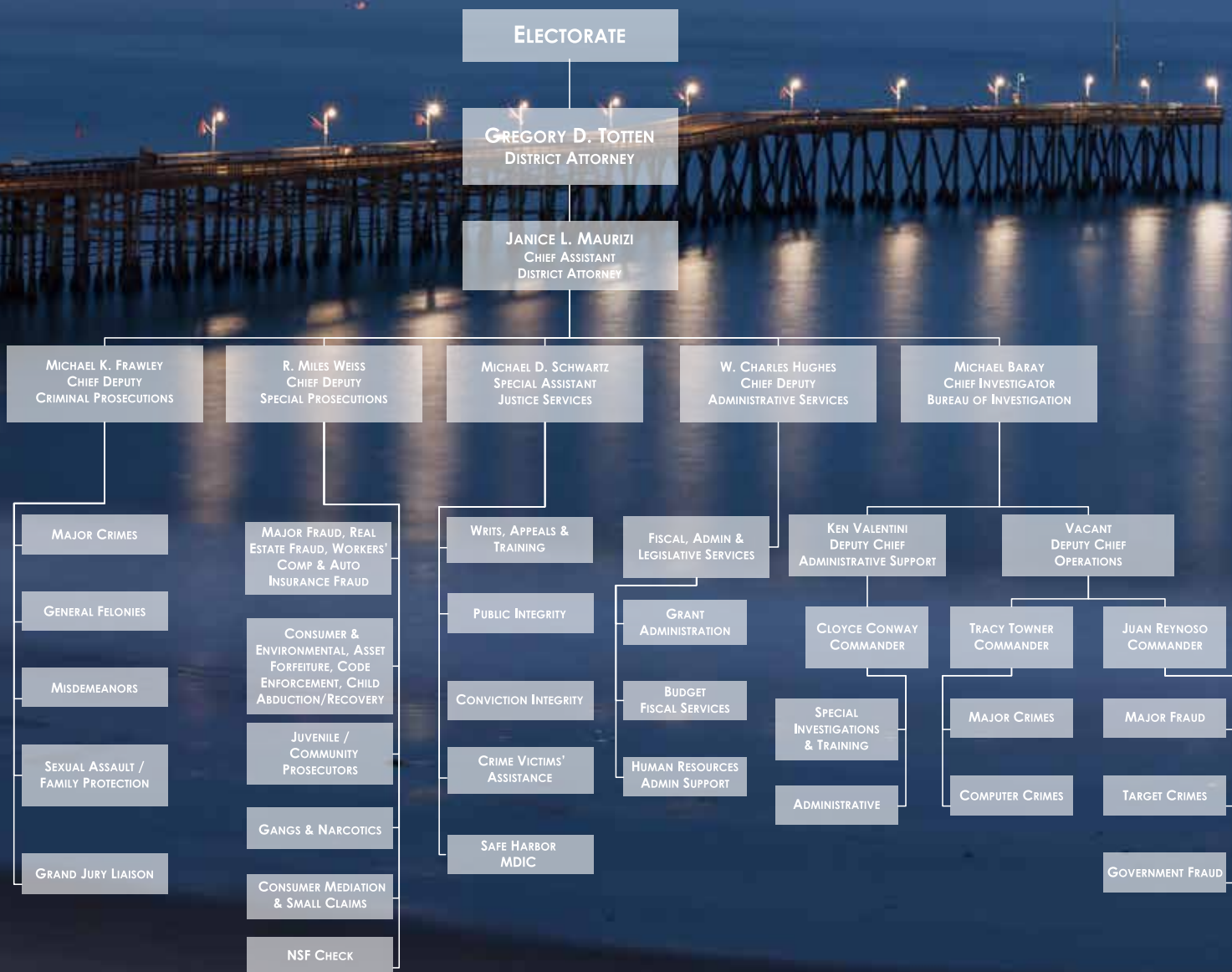
He has received the Bronze Star, Army Commendation (four awards), Combat Action Badge, and Senior Parachutist Badge. He has graduated from the Command and General Staff College, Airborne, Jumpmaster, and Pathfinder courses. Currently, he commands a company of paratroopers responsible for relief and refugee operations.



### **Paul Feldman**

Deputy District Attorney Paul Feldman was commissioned in 2012 as a captain in the United States Air Force Reserve JAG Corps. Capt. Feldman provides legal services at Edwards Air Force Base when on active duty.





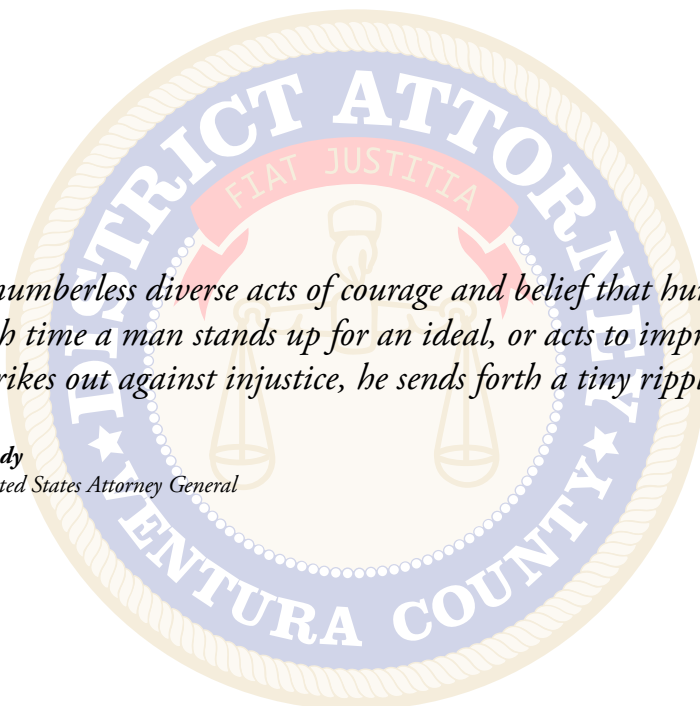
# VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY Executive Management Team



L to R: Chief Deputy District Attorney Miles Weiss, Special Assistant District Attorney Michael Schwartz, Chief Deputy District Attorney Mike Frawley, District Attorney Greg Totten, Chief Assistant District Attorney Janice Maurizi, Chief Deputy District Attorney Chuck Hughes, Chief Investigator Mike Baray.

*“It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope.”*

**Robert F. Kennedy**  
Senator, 64th United States Attorney General  
1925-1968





Janice L. Maurizi  
Chief Assistant District Attorney

## JANICE L. MAURIZI

CHIEF ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Janice L. Maurizi is a career prosecutor who was appointed to serve as Chief Assistant District Attorney in April 2013. In this role, she is the second-in-command for the office and is the chief adviser to District Attorney Greg Totten.

Ms. Maurizi served for 28 years in the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office before joining the Ventura County District Attorney's Office. During her tenure in the largest prosecutor's office in the country, Ms. Maurizi tried many high profile cases, special circumstance murders, crimes against women and children, and other violent offenses.

In 2001, Ms. Maurizi was appointed to the Executive Staff of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, supervising more than 300 attorneys as the Director of the Bureau Branch and Area Operations and later as the Director of the Bureau Fraud and Corruption Prosecution.

Ms. Maurizi has been recognized for her outstanding work by the California District Attorney Investigators Association, the Association of Los Angeles Deputy Sheriff's, the Association of Los Angeles Deputy District Attorneys, and the American Board of Trial Advocates.

## Legal Management Assistants



Seated L to R: Legal Management Assistants Cynthia Klante, Carrie Broggie; Standing L to R: Program Assistant Joyce Donehue, Legal Management Assistants Michelle McDonald, Pattie O'Donnell, Angela Daniel-Gibson



## VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY Criminal Prosecutions

Criminal Prosecutions is comprised of 60 attorneys and 5 paralegals. It encompasses the Major Crimes Unit, the General Felony Unit, the Misdemeanor Unit, and the Sexual Assault/Family Protection Unit. With the exception of the Major Crimes Unit, all units have a supervising attorney to handle immediate supervisory responsibilities. Additionally, the chief deputy of Criminal Prosecutions provides direction and guidance regarding filing decisions, trial strategy, unit assignments, three strikes and death penalty cases, grant applications, and grant reporting obligations. The chief deputy of Criminal Prosecutions also acts as a liaison to the six law enforcement agencies in the county and is responsive to inquiries from the public. This division handles most of the more than 16,000 criminal cases filed each year by the District Attorney's Office.

Michael K. Frawley  
Chief Deputy District Attorney

In addition to overseeing the prosecutorial units, the chief deputy of Criminal Prosecutions also serves as liaison to both the civil and criminal grand juries and sits on numerous countywide committees that address law enforcement issues. The chief deputy also addresses various community groups on the functions and policies of the District Attorney's Office.

## VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY Major Crimes Unit

The Major Crimes Unit is responsible for the prosecution of all criminal homicides committed in the County of Ventura. Cases prosecuted by this unit involve some of the most heinous crimes committed within Ventura County and often entail substantial follow-up investigation, trial preparation, and the use of cutting edge forensic evidence including DNA, blood spatter, tool-mark comparison, fingerprint and ballistics analysis. In recent years, prosecutors in this unit have filed numerous "cold cases" involving murders which had remained unsolved for many years, sometimes decades, before the suspect could be identified or apprehended. In some cases, the victims themselves have remained unidentified.

From 2011 to 2014, the prosecutors assigned to the Major Crimes Unit filed 54 homicide cases. Attorneys in this unit are subject to 24-hour a day on-call requests from law enforcement seeking legal assistance with search warrants, crime scene responses, legal advice and evaluation of officer-involved shootings.

Attorneys assigned to this unit also conduct law enforcement training, selected special investigations and appear as the representative of the People of California Department of Correction parole lifer hearings.



L to R: Senior Deputy District Attorneys Maeve Fox and Tom Dunlevy, Chief Deputy District Attorney Michael Frawley, Senior Deputy District Attorneys Rebecca Day, Anne Spillner, and Rameen Minoui

## People v. Victor Chavira

### **Murder While Lying in Wait and During the Commission of a Robbery; Second Degree Robbery; Exhibiting a Firearm; Dissuading a Witness by Force or Threat**

Prosecutor: Chrystina Jenson  
 Investigator: Jess Velasquez  
 Victim Advocate: Suzy Rios

In August, 2008, Victor Chavira repeatedly shot Albino Ramirez during a \$30,000 drug money robbery. The shooting occurred in the presence of Ramirez's pregnant wife and three-year-old son. After killing Ramirez, Chavira pointed the gun at Ramirez's wife and forced her to hand over the cash. Chavira then threatened the wife with death should she report the crime or cooperate with police.

The Ventura County District Attorney charged Chavira with first degree murder with special circumstances, second degree robbery, and dissuading a witness by force or threat. The jury convicted Chavira of the crimes and found the special circumstances true. In March 2013, the Ventura Superior Court sentenced Chavira to life without possibility of parole.

## People v. Gregorio Aguilar

### **Murder During the Commission of a Robbery; Second Degree Robbery and Attempted Second Degree Robbery**

Prosecutor: Rebecca Day  
 Investigator: Kimberly Michael  
 Victim Advocate: Linda Finnerty

Gregorio Aguilar and an accomplice entered the Fillmore Circle K convenience store on December 26, 2008. Aguilar, who was carrying a rifle, demanded that Sean Odle give him money. Odle called 911 and Aguilar shot him in the chest, killing him. During the course of the investigation, detectives determined Aguilar had attempted a robbery at a Shell Station and attempted a robbery at a market two weeks earlier.

The Ventura County District Attorney charged Aguilar with first degree murder in the course of an attempted robbery and with attempted robbery for the two earlier incidents. The jury convicted Aguilar of all counts. In September 2012, the Ventura Superior Court sentenced Aguilar to life without the possibility of parole plus 25 years to life.

## People v. Brandon McInerney

### Murder by Lying in Wait

Prosecutor: Maeve Fox  
Investigator: Robert Coughlin  
Victim Advocates: Catherine Duggan, Lisa Wright

In 2008, 14-year-old Brandon McInerney shot and killed his middle school classmate, Lawrence King. King, who had been bullied by fellow students due to his openness about being gay, began wearing make-up to school. King allegedly embarrassed McInerney in front of other students by expressing interest in McInerney.

McInerney told peers of his plan to shoot and kill King several days before the murder. He obtained a gun from his house, brought it to school and positioned himself behind King. McInerney opened fire, causing King to fall to the ground. McInerney then fired the fatal round as King lay helpless on the ground.

The Ventura County District Attorney charged McInerney with murder by lying in wait and decided to try McInerney as an adult. Due to significant pretrial publicity, the case was tried to a Los Angeles County jury in Chatsworth. After nine weeks of trial, the jury was unable to agree on a verdict and a mistrial was declared.

McInerney ultimately pled guilty to both murder and manslaughter and admitted use of a firearm. The Ventura Superior Court imposed a sentence of 21 years, to be served in a juvenile facility until he is at least 18 years of age, at which time he will serve the remainder of his sentence in state prison.



Senior Deputy District Attorney Andrea Tischler



Senior Deputy District Attorney Rebecca Day

## People v. Justo Navarro

### Murder; Criminal Threats

Prosecutor: Rebecca Day  
Investigator: Jim Seitz  
Victim Advocate: Suzy Rios

Justo Navarro was a partner in a flower-growing business in Somis and lived on the property. He and his business partner, Gilbert Aquilera, had a falling-out leading to a lawsuit. During an argument with Aquilera and a third party on the premises, Navarro armed himself with a shotgun and shot and killed Aquilera. He then threatened the third party who fled the scene.

The Ventura County District Attorney charged Navarro with the murder of his partner and of making criminal threats against the third person. The jury convicted Navarro of all counts. In November 2012, the Ventura Superior Court sentenced Navarro to 47 years to life plus 7 years.

## People v. Harry Joe Pahl

### Murder; Assault on a Child Causing Death

Prosecutor: Richard Simon  
Investigator: Kimberly Michael  
Victim Advocate: Linda Finnerty

In 1997, two-month-old Barbara Pahl was beaten by her father, Harry Joe Pahl, causing severe brain trauma. Barbara lived in various hospitals and board and care facilities for the rest of her life. Pahl pled guilty to assault charges in 1998. However, while he was serving his prison sentence, Barbara died as a result of those injuries.

In 2007, the Ventura County District Attorney charged Pahl with felony child abuse and murder. He pled guilty to murder, and in February 2014, was sentenced to 15 years to life in prison.

## **People v. Ricardo Villa**

### **Murder During the Commission of a Burglary and Rape**

Prosecutor: Bill Haney  
Investigator: Dennis Fitzgerald  
Victim Advocate: Patricia Wood

In 1993, Ricardo Villa entered the unlocked apartment of 87-year-old Beatrice Bellis, who was deaf and functionally mute. He held the tip of a knife to her torso in an attempt to cause her to submit to a sexual assault. When Ms. Bellis resisted, Villa stabbed her several times with the knife and raped her. Ms. Bellis bled to death from her wounds.

The Ventura County District Attorney charged Villa with murder with special circumstances. In 2011, a jury convicted Villa of all charges and the Ventura Superior Court imposed a sentence of death.

## **People v. Joe Flores**

### **Murder While a Gang Participant**

Prosecutor: Christopher Harman  
Investigator: Tom Rigali  
Victim Advocate: Linda Finnerty

Samuel Reeves was 15 years old when he accompanied his older brothers to an outdoor birthday party on the outskirts of Santa Paula. Neither Sam, nor his brothers, nor the person whose birthday was being celebrated, were associated with Santa Paula gangs, but some local gang members attended.

When a fist fight broke out, Flores, who was a member of the "Bad Boyz" gang, opened fire at the people surrounding him. Reeves was fatally shot in the chest at point blank range.

The Ventura County District Attorney charged Flores with first degree murder while participating in a gang. The jury convicted Flores and, in June 2012, the Ventura Superior Court sentenced Flores to life in prison without possibility of parole, plus a consecutive sentence of 25 years to life for use of a firearm.

## **People v. David Morales**

### **Murder; Assault by Means Likely to Produce Great Bodily Injury**

Prosecutor: Rebecca Day  
Investigator: Robert Coughlin  
Victim Advocate: Suzy Rios

David Morales beat his sister, Maricruz Morales, with a hammer and other objects. He also assaulted Roselia Morales. Neighbors who witnessed the crimes attempted to help the victims but were unable to save Morales who died at the hospital one hour after the attack.

The Ventura County District Attorney charged Morales with first degree murder and assault by means likely to produce great bodily injury. The jury convicted Morales of all counts and, in April 2013, he was sentenced to 29 years to life in prison.

## **People v. Jeffrey Aguilar and Maria Bucio**

### **Murder While Lying in Wait and During the Commission of a Robbery; Second Degree Robbery; Attempted Premeditated Murder**

Prosecutor: Andrea Tischler  
Investigator: Mike Palmieri  
Victim Advocate: Felicita Roy

Jeffrey Aguilar conspired with his aunt, Maria Bucio and two others to rob Oxnard business owner, Gurmohinder "Doc" Singh, as he left a bank in Oxnard after withdrawing cash for his business. Bucio identified Mr. Singh for Aguilar the night before the crime. During the robbery, Aguilar shot and killed Mr. Singh. In separate jury trials, Aguilar and Bucio were each convicted of murder and robbery. Bucio was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison.

The District Attorney sought the death penalty against Aguilar based on the circumstances of the murder and other crimes Aguilar committed.

During the penalty phase, the jury heard evidence that Aguilar attempted to murder a Port Hueneme man in 2004 and attempted to murder two Oxnard police officers when they tried to apprehend him. The jury recommended a sentence of death. On October 24, 2013, Ventura Superior Court sentenced Aguilar to die by lethal injection.



## VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY General Felony Unit

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The General Felony Unit is the largest prosecution unit within the Ventura County District Attorney's Office. Most felony cases submitted to the District Attorney's Office by law enforcement are handled by this unit, which is comprised of seasoned attorneys who are responsible for reviewing, filing, and prosecuting these cases. Cases are assigned to an attorney based on the complexity of the crime and the experience level of that attorney. Crimes prosecuted by the General Felony Unit include possession and/or sales of controlled substances, burglary, identity theft, forgery, robbery, assault with a deadly weapon, battery with serious injury, felony driving under the influence, and attempted murder. Auto theft cases are vertically prosecuted by a specially assigned attorney who works closely with the Ventura County Auto Theft Task Force (VENCATT.)

Kevin Drescher  
Supervising Senior Deputy District Attorney

### **People v. Judith Ramirez**

#### **Second Degree Murder with Great Bodily Injury on Two Additional Victims; Child Endangerment; Driving Under the Influence With a Prior Conviction**

Prosecutor: Tate McCallister  
Investigator: Jim Seitz  
Victim Advocate: Suzy Rios

On May 29, 2010, Judith Ramirez left a communion party in Oxnard with her 17-year-old daughter, 4-year-old son, and her daughter's 21-year-old friend. Ramirez had been drinking heavily and was warned by multiple people – including her daughter – not to drive.

Despite the concerns about her sobriety, Ramirez insisted on driving home to Santa Paula. At the time of the incident, Ramirez's blood alcohol was nearly twice the legal limit. She drove with one hand on a beer she had stopped to purchase. Ramirez ultimately lost control of her vehicle

and crashed, killing her daughter instantly and causing her son a broken arm and her daughter's friend severe facial injuries.

Ramirez had a history of drinking and driving, having been convicted of driving under the influence in 2004 and 2007.

On August 22, 2012, a jury found Ramirez guilty of all counts. The Ventura Superior Court sentenced Ramirez to 27 years to life in prison.



## People v. Thomas Heath

### Criminal Threats; Street Terrorism; Threatening a Witness; Dissuading a Witness From Reporting a Crime

Prosecutor: Tate McAllister  
Investigator: Glen Utter  
Victim Advocate: Dave Smith

In 1977, as a prospective Hells Angels member, Thomas Heath, delivered a bomb hidden in a motorcycle tire to the motorcycle shop of a rival Mongols gang member. The bomb detonated, killing two people. The murder case remained unsolved for over a decade. During that time, Heath formed the Ventura chapter of the Hells Angels with George Christie.

In 1992, Heath was convicted of two counts of battery and one count of trespassing arising from the brutal beating of his wife. He was sentenced to seven years in prison. During that time frame, his involvement in the 1977 bombing was uncovered, and in 1994, he pled guilty to two counts of second degree murder and was sentenced to prison for seven additional years.

In 2010, Heath's female roommate told him he needed to move out for not paying rent. He refused. When she told him the police were on the way to the house, Heath threatened to kill her and her son, and to tell his fellow Hells Angels members she was a "rat." When the police arrived Heath again threatened his girlfriend and later told officers he had killed people before, and when he wants to kill someone, he does not threaten them, he just kills them.

The Ventura County District Attorney charged Heath with dissuading a witness from reporting a crime, threatening a witness for giving information to law enforcement, promoting the felonious criminal conduct of the Hells Angels, and four prior strike offenses. A jury found Heath guilty, and in February 2012, the Ventura Superior Court sentenced him to 35 years to life in prison.



Seated, L to R: Deputy District Attorney Chelsea Noble; Supervising Senior Deputy District Attorney Kevin Drescher; Deputy District Attorneys Elisabeth Main and Andrew Sullivant; Standing, L to R: Deputy District Attorney Andrew Reid; Senior Deputy District Attorney Richard Simon; Deputy District Attorneys Tina Hanley, Ryan Sheahan, and Manisha Vadgama; Senior Deputy District Attorney Cynthia Nguyen; Deputy District Attorneys Lauren Malan, Tate McAllister, and Chong-hwa Lee



John West  
Supervising Senior Deputy District Attorney

## VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY Sexual Assault / Family Protection Unit

The Sexual Assault / Family Protection Unit is responsible for cases arising from four areas of criminal law: sexual assault, domestic violence, elder abuse and mental health. Prosecutors in the unit handle some of the most sensitive and challenging offenses occurring in Ventura County. The unit's prosecutors have proven trial experience and receive specialized training to further develop their expertise. They work closely with police, medical professionals, and victim advocates to investigate and prosecute offenses, while striving to minimize the emotional impact on victims.

- Crimes handled by Sexual Assault prosecutors include child molestation, rape, kidnapping, indecent exposure, failure to register as a sexual offender, and felony child abuse. Sexual Assault prosecutors are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to respond to either of the county's multi-disciplinary interview centers to observe interviews and assist law enforcement.
- Crimes handled by Domestic Violence prosecutors include spousal battery, attempted murder, spousal rape, stalking, misdemeanor child abuse, criminal threats, and similar crimes occurring within a romantic or familial relationship.
- The Elder Abuse prosecutor handles crimes committed against the elderly and developmentally delayed adults, including physical and mental abuse, neglect, identity theft, and financial crimes.
- The Mental Health prosecutor handles sexually violent predator civil commitments, as well as not guilty by reason of insanity and mentally disordered offender civil recommitment proceedings. The Mental Health prosecutor works almost exclusively with psychiatric and psychological professionals, and develops an expertise in mental health issues as well as civil litigation skills.

Between 2011 and 2014 the Sexual Assault/Family Protection Unit consisted of 15 prosecutors and filed more than 3,900 criminal complaints.

### People v. Joe Maldonado

#### **Child molestation; Sodomy with a Child; Oral Copulation with Intoxication; Contact with Minor with Intent to Commit Sexual Act**

Prosecutor: Cynthia Nguyen  
Investigator: Paul Walsh  
Victim Advocate: Celia Cardona

Joe Maldonado's mother ran a home-based daycare business. Maldonado befriended some of the children

and performed lewd acts on several children between the ages of 6 and 12, providing them with alcohol and pornography. Maldonado also molested four children who were friends of his family.

The Ventura County District Attorney charged Maldonado with multiple sex crimes and a jury convicted him of 43 felony counts of sexual assault involving minors. On August 1, 2012, the Ventura Superior Court sentenced Maldonado to 104 years to life in prison.

## People v. Andrew Enriquez

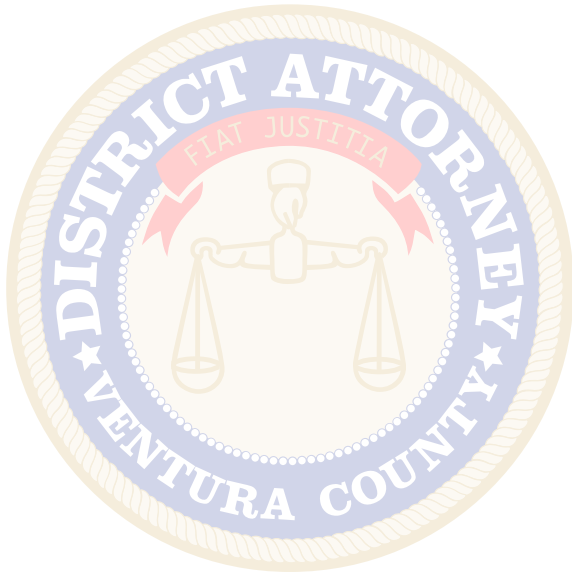
### Corporal Injury to a Cohabitant; Assault with a Deadly Weapon

Prosecutor: Brent Nibecker  
Investigator: Robert MacInnes  
Victim Advocate: Pat Wood

During an argument on November 3, 2011, Andrew Enriquez struck his girlfriend in the head with a power tool, fracturing her skull, rupturing her ear drum, and causing her to lose consciousness. Enriquez had been to prison on three prior cases and was on parole for a previous crime of domestic violence at the time of this incident.

The Ventura County District Attorney charged Enriquez with assault with a deadly weapon and causing corporal injury to a co-inhabitant. Although the victim initially refused to identify Enriquez as her assailant and testified on his behalf at trial, the jury found Enriquez guilty of all counts.

In 2012, the court sentenced Enriquez to the maximum sentence of 14 years in prison.



Seated L to R: Deputy District Attorney Erin Meister; Senior Deputy District Attorneys Patrice Koenig and Laurel McWaters;  
Standing L to R: Deputy District Attorney Ethel Hernandez; Senior Deputy District Attorney Catherine Voelker;  
Deputy District Attorneys Brent Nibecker, Jaclyn Sheehan and Jessica Giguere.



## VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY Misdemeanor Unit

The Misdemeanor Unit includes 11 entry-level attorneys and 2 paralegals who prosecute crimes having a maximum penalty of up to one year in county jail. The unit's attorneys prosecute a range of criminal violations including theft, assault, vandalism, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, hit and run, drunk in public, possession of weapons, provision of false identification, and crimes involving narcotics. These prosecutors handle by far the office's largest volume of cases, filing more than 36,000 cases from 2011 to 2014. The Misdemeanor Unit achieved an overall conviction rate during this period of 89.3 percent.

This unit includes two experienced attorneys assigned to the Office of Traffic Safety Driving Under the Influence Grant, responsible for the prosecution of felony and misdemeanor driving under the influence cases. These attorneys work closely with law enforcement responding to crime scenes and training the officers regarding legal issues and courtroom testimony.

Stacy Ratner  
Supervising Senior Deputy District Attorney



Seated, L to R: Deputy District Attorney Jennifer Sihn, Supervising Senior Deputy District Attorney Stacy Ratner, Deputy District Attorney Jennifer Laposavic; Second Row, L to R: Deputy District Attorneys Marine Dermadzhyan, Amy Johnson, Melissa Bohl, Christina Catapang, Hediye Mohajerjasbi, Jesse Arana; Back Row, L to R: Deputy District Attorneys Susan Park, Michael Kern, David Barnes, Juan Higuera, JohnPaul LeCedre, Todd Gilman

## People v. Mei Fun Chee

### Soliciting Prostitution

Prosecutor: Chong-Hwa Lee  
Investigator: Cliff Williams

A Ventura County Sheriff's deputy saw an advertisement for a "full-service massage" on a Web site often used to post advertisements for prostitution. The advertisement featured physical descriptions and mentioned acts that were of a sexual nature. Working undercover, the deputy called a phone number on the advertisement and was directed to a large apartment complex in a residential neighborhood in Thousand Oaks. This particular apartment was noted for housing several women and for non-stop traffic of different men going in and out of the apartment at 30 to 60 minute intervals. When the deputy arrived at the apartment, Mei Fun Chee answered the door and indicated that she would provide an hour of sexual services for \$170. The jury convicted Chee of one count of prostitution. On September 13, 2013, she was ordered to serve 30 days in jail plus probation and mandatory AIDS testing.

## People v. Paul Mailhot

### Vehicular Manslaughter

Prosecutor: Manisha Vadgama  
Investigator: Cliff Williams  
Victim Advocate: Rachael Watkins

On December 14, 2011, the defendant drove a silver Corvette on the 101-Freeway in the area of Oxnard towards Camarillo. The defendant was traveling at high speeds, tailgating other drivers and weaving in and out of traffic. While near the Pleasant Valley Road exit, the defendant became enraged at another driver in a Suburban, cut the Suburban off and gestured at the driver. While cutting off the Suburban, the defendant made an aggressive sharp lane change as the victim, driving a Lexus SUV, was lawfully merging into the same lane. The defendant lost control of his vehicle and crashed into the victim's vehicle, which became airborne and flipped off the 101-Freeway. The victim was killed in the collision. The defendant was convicted of vehicular manslaughter and sentenced to 210 days in jail, 36 months formal probation, one year license suspension, and anger management classes.

## People v. Alexander D'Andrea

### Impersonation of a Public Official

Prosecutor: Danny Lo  
Victim Advocate: Pat Wood

Defendant Alexander D'Andrea and his wife have a daughter who was enrolled at the Weil Tennis Academy in Ojai. A dispute arose between the defendant and the owner of the academy, and the daughter was expelled. The following day, the defendant went to the academy to demand a refund. When the owner arrived, the defendant directed his anger at him. During his tirade, the defendant flashed a gold badge claimed to be a reserve deputy from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. When Ventura County Sheriff's deputies arrived on scene, the defendant again stated that he was a reserve deputy and suggested the Ventura County Sheriff's deputies should call the sheriff of Los Angeles County. Investigation revealed that the defendant was an applicant for a reserve deputy position, but never completed the process. The defendant had a commemorative badge that had been given to him by the California Highway Patrol 11-99 Foundation. A jury convicted the defendant of impersonating a peace officer. On August 15, 2012, the Ventura Superior Court ordered him to serve 90 days in jail to stay away from the Weil Tennis Academy as a term of probation.

## People v. Eric Eilar

### Driving Without a License; Resisting Arrest

Prosecutor: Amber Lee  
Investigator: Cliff Williams

Eric Eilar was seen driving with what appeared to be a homemade, handwritten license plate issued by the "U.S. Dept. of Transportation." Officers recognized the license plate to be fraudulent and common to the Sovereign American movement. During a routine traffic stop, Eilar refused to identify himself, refused to provide a valid driver's license, and refused to keep his hands in plain sight. He ultimately provided laminated documents identifying himself as a Sovereign American and explaining that he was giving himself power to travel and that the government had no authority to stop him. Eilar represented himself at trial and never agreed that the court had jurisdiction over him. He refused to participate in the trial. The jury convicted the defendant of all charges, and on October 7, 2013, he was ordered to serve five days in county jail and was placed on probation.

## VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY Special Prosecutions



Miles Weiss  
Chief Deputy District Attorney  
Special Prosecutions

Special Prosecutions attorneys practice within units such as Consumer and Environmental Protection, Financial and Technology Crimes, Real Estate Fraud, Auto Insurance Fraud, Workers Compensation Insurance Fraud, and Child Abduction Recovery. Special Prosecutions is responsible for civil and criminal enforcement of a wide variety of economic-based crimes, as well as asset forfeiture and code enforcement actions. These cases often involve complex litigation, large volumes of documentary evidence, and sophisticated offenders adept at financial manipulation and deceit. The Non-Sufficient Funds Check Unit operates to assist businesses, merchants and individuals in recovering losses due to “bad checks.”

The Gangs, Major Narcotics and Juvenile Units all reside under the Special Prosecutions umbrella as well. These units employ a vertical prosecution strategy to effectively address the unique challenges presented by crimes committed by gang members, juveniles, and large-scale drug dealers.

Several of the Special Prosecutions positions are funded by state grants or local revenue-offset programs. In addition, restitution, civil penalties, and assets seized pursuant to the Business & Professions Code and the Health & Safety Code are applied to offset costs related to consumer and environmental prosecution.



L to R: Senior Deputy District Attorneys Steve Slyker and Micky Coyle; Supervising Senior Deputy District Attorney Brian Rafelson; Paralegal Christine Mitchell; Program Administrator Stephen Mattern



Brian Rafelson  
Supervising Senior Deputy District Attorney

## VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY Special Prosecution Unit

Major fraud or “white collar” crimes are some of the most complex cases prosecuted in the criminal justice system. Major Fraud Unit attorneys and investigators often conduct lengthy investigations into fraudulent transactions involving insurance companies, banking institutions, owners of real estate, and investors in corporate securities. Investigations may involve substantial documents, forensic accounting, forensic computer analysis, and complex legal issues. These cases often involve individual victims as well as businesses that may have suffered millions of dollars in losses. Prosecutors and investigators may coordinate enforcement actions with officials from the Department of Corporations, the Employment Development Department, the State Franchise Tax Board, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and other agencies to form specialized teams, using the latest technology and asset forfeiture procedures to investigate, prosecute and recoup restitution for victims of these sophisticated criminal enterprises. Recently, the unit was renamed the Financial and Technology Crimes Unit to reflect the increasingly important role of technology in the successful investigation and prosecution of financial and similar crimes.

### People v. Geoffrey Sjostrom

#### Grand Theft; Forgery; Perjury; Money Laundering

Prosecutor: Marc Leventhal  
Investigator: Bryan Samples, Simi Valley Police Dept.

From 2005 to 2007 Geoffrey Sjostrom was the successor trustee of a trust created by his family friend, Frank Copland, who died in 2005. Copland left his property to family members. While pretending to manage the trust, Sjostrom concealed certain trust bank accounts from which he embezzled \$265,000. He let other trust assets waste. When a trust beneficiary sued him for an accounting, Sjostrom filed perjured pleadings declaring the trust had no bank accounts. In 2010 and 2011, after the concealed accounts and his thefts were discovered and other beneficiaries sued him in probate court, Sjostrom twice falsely testified that he loaned Copland \$325,000 and that the alleged thefts were actually loan repayments. During trial, Sjostrom produced a photocopy of a notarized promissory note bearing Copland's signature that he purportedly executed to document the loan. Testimony from the notary and a handwriting expert conclusively proved the note was forged.

In December 2013, a jury found Sjostrom guilty of 20 counts of grand theft, money laundering, forgery, and perjury. The Ventura Superior Court sentenced Sjostrom to 10 years 4 months in prison and restitution totaling \$732,284.

### Real Estate Fraud Section

The Real Estate Fraud Section is dedicated to deterring, investigating, and prosecuting real estate fraud crimes. Unscrupulous individuals who perpetrate real estate fraud often target senior citizens and people with limited English speaking abilities. Investigators and prosecutors have actively pursued cases involving foreclosure rescue schemes, equity theft, securities fraud, loan modification fraud, and other fraudulent schemes.

Real Estate Fraud prosecutors collaborate with the Ventura County Real Estate Fraud Advisory Team (REFAT), comprised of real estate professionals, to raise awareness amongst industry professionals and the general public about real estate fraud. Investigators and prosecutors also work closely with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, including the Department of Corporations, Franchise Tax Board, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Housing and Urban Development Office of Inspector General.

**People v. Kenneth Powell,  
Katie Rose, and Paul Lascola**

**Grand Theft; Financial Elder Abuse and the  
Aggravated White Collar Crime Enhancement**

Prosecutors: Dominic Kardum, Tony Wold  
and Miles Weiss  
Investigator: Frank Huber  
Paralegal: Christine Mitchell

Defendants Kenneth Powell and Katie Rose were the hosts of “Academy of Real Estate” and “Money Intelligence,” infomercials airing on a local radio station. They contacted many of their victims as “Ken & Katie,” the hosts of those programs. Local law enforcement agencies received numerous complaints about the defendants based upon the marketing and sale of investments purportedly secured by real estate in Arizona and the California cities of Taft, Goleta, Canyon Country, Ventura, and Thousand Oaks.

A long-term investigation conducted by the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office Bureau of Investigation – working in conjunction with the Ventura County Sheriff’s Office Major Crimes Bureau and the Ventura Police Department – revealed that from June 2005 through May 2008, Powell and Rose lied to victims, getting them to invest by telling them that their money would be used to develop new homes on vacant lots located in Taft, California, to be built by Paul Lascola.

Additional victims were falsely led to believe their investments were being used to make loans to borrowers secured by recorded deeds of trust. Victims wired money either directly to Lascola or to escrow accounts for eventual delivery to Powell, Rose and Lascola. Contrary to what victims were told, their investment monies were not used for construction or development, but instead were immediately spent by the defendants. Many of the victims were financially devastated as a result of the crimes committed by Powell, Rose, and Lascola.

In August 2011, all three defendants were arrested and formally charged with grand theft, financial elder abuse and the aggravated white collar crime enhancement.

Powell entered a guilty plea to 15 felonies and in July 2012, was sentenced to 18 years in state prison for his leading role in this real estate investment fraud scheme. He was ordered to pay \$4.3 million in restitution.

In July 2012, Rose was sentenced to 12 years 8 months in state prison after she pled guilty to 13 felonies and was ordered to pay \$3.4 million in restitution. Lascola pled guilty to 11 felonies and was sentenced to 10 years in state prison and ordered to pay \$3 million in restitution.

Because all three defendants were licensed by the Bureau of Real Estate, the District Attorney’s Office assisted the victims in asserting claims for the statutory maximum of \$750,000 available from the state’s restitution fund.



L to R: Forensic Accountant Jim Adriansen; Senior Deputy District Attorneys Dominic Kardum and Anthony Wold



## Consumer and Environmental Protection Section

The Consumer and Environmental Protection Section investigates and prosecutes both civil and criminal violations of environmental and consumer protection laws. Consumer protection cases frequently involve unfair and fraudulent business practices, deceptive advertising, and food safety laws. Environmental protection cases include the illegal discharge of hazardous materials, improper storage or transportation of hazardous waste, illegal dumping, and water or air pollution.

Attorneys in the Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit provide outreach to schools, service clubs, and other groups. These outreach efforts help protect the community by raising awareness regarding current scams and deceptive practices.

### People v. Rite-Aide

#### Misleading Advertising; Failure to Redeem Gift Cards

Prosecutor: Linda Groberg

Together with prosecutors in Riverside and Santa Clara Counties, and the City of San Diego, the Ventura County District Attorney joined in a San Diego action against Rite-Aid Corporation and Thrifty Payless, Inc., doing business as Rite-Aid. The complaint alleged that Rite-Aid relied on misleading advertising and failed to redeem gift cards with a value of less than \$10, as required by California law.

In October 2012, a settlement was reached that required the defendants to pay \$800,000 in penalties, legal and investigative costs, and restitution. A portion of the settlement will go to the price verification program of the California Division of Measurement Standards. Rite Aid also agreed to end the deceptive practice of using advertising phrases such as, "It's like getting it for. . ." or "It's like paying. . ." In addition, the settlement requires Rite Aid to clearly disclose discount program limitations or restrictions, including quantity, expiration dates and timing, on the use of "+UP rewards" or any similar discount program.

### People v. Ferrelgas Partners

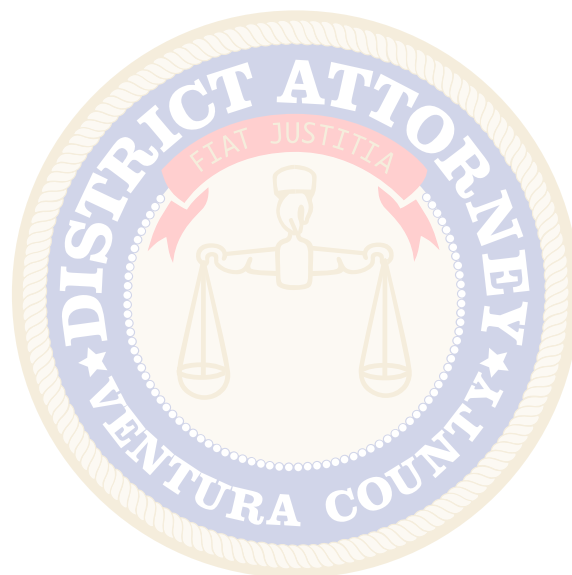
#### Unfair Business Practices

Prosecutor: Mitchell Disney

In 2008, facing rising fuel costs, suppliers of widely distributed ready-to-use propane grilling tanks reduced the volume of propane in their tanks from 17 to 15 pounds. This cut grilling time by 60 to 90 minutes. The tank labels said 15 pounds, but the tanks were stored in locked metal "cages" prior to purchase. Signs on the cages inaccurately referred to the tanks as "full" or as containing 17 pounds.

Prosecutors filed a civil complaint in Alameda County Superior Court alleging that the companies filled tanks in a manner that was deceptive to consumers, with a volume of propane less than the tanks' safe capacity. The complaint also alleged that the companies misled consumers in their advertisements and on product placards.

The Ventura County District Attorney's Office, along with the district attorneys' offices of Alameda, Fresno, Monterey, San Joaquin, Santa Clara and Sonoma Counties, settled the case. Ferrelgas Partners L.P. and Ferrelgas L.P. (Blue Rhino) agreed to pay a total of \$1 million, and AmeriGas Propane, Inc., and AmeriGas Propane, L.P., agreed to pay a total of \$800,000, in civil penalties and costs. The companies also agreed to an injunction requiring them to post notices on their propane tank enclosures informing consumers of the actual quantity of propane in the tanks.



## People v. Target Corporation

### Unlawful Handling and Disposal of Hazardous Materials

Prosecutor: Mitchell Disney  
Investigator: Catherine Mano

In 2006, Ventura County and City of Oxnard inspectors found that local Target stores were disposing of hazardous waste products in store compactors and drains. Target also disposed of its hazardous waste by dispensing it to local charities, who in turn simply discarded it. The Ventura County District Attorney's Office teamed with 19 other California district attorneys, the California Attorney General, and the city attorneys in San Diego and Los Angeles, to investigate Target's practices.

The prosecutors filed suit against Target Corporation in Alameda County in June 2009, alleging that more than 240 Target stores throughout California, including six in Ventura County, unlawfully handled and disposed of pesticides, oven cleaners, pool chemicals, drain openers, paints, aerosols, electronics, pharmaceuticals, batteries and other flammable, toxic and corrosive wastes over a seven-year period.

In March 2011, the case settled with a final judgment requiring Minnesota-based Target Corporation to pay \$22.5 million in civil penalties and costs and supplemental environmental projects. Target Corporation was ordered to hire an outside firm to audit its waste-handling practices, and will be bound under the terms of a permanent injunction. Under the settlement, the Ventura County Environmental Health Division and Oxnard Fire-HazMat received \$280,000 in civil penalties and cost recovery, and as one of the lead agencies, the Ventura County District Attorney's Office received \$1,196,250 in civil penalties and cost recovery.



Senior Deputy District Attorneys John Vanarelli and Tom Johnson

## People v. CVS Pharmacy Inc.

### Unlawful Business Practices; Hazardous Waste Violations

Prosecutor: Mitchell Disney  
Investigator: Catherine Mano

Inspectors with the Ventura County Environmental Health Division conducted a compliance review at local CVS stores (including Long's Drug Stores), pharmacies and distribution centers. The review uncovered evidence of improper storage, handling and disposal of hazardous waste and pharmaceutical waste products over a period of seven years.

The Ventura County District Attorney filed a civil enforcement action. Together with 43 other California district attorneys and the city attorneys in San Diego and Los Angeles, the Ventura County District Attorney's Office settled the case.

Under the final judgment obtained in April 2012, CVS paid \$295,750 in civil penalties and cost recovery to the Ventura County Environmental Health Division and Oxnard Fire HazMat, and \$1,277,500 for supplemental environmental projects furthering consumer protection and environmental enforcement in the state. CVS is bound by a permanent injunction prohibiting future violations.

As a result of the investigation and litigation, regulated wastes produced by California CVS stores must now be properly stored, handled, transported, and disposed of at proper facilities with appropriate records kept documenting compliance.

## **People v. Noel Thompson, Body Shaping Gyms, Inc. dba Gold's Gym and Body Shaping Investments, LLC.**

### **Unfair Business Practices; False Advertising**

Prosecutor: Karen Wold  
Investigators: Catherine Mano, Glenn Utter,  
Paul Krueger

The Ventura County District Attorney filed a civil complaint alleging that between May 2009 and October 2013 Gold's Gym in Oxnard violated consumer protection statutes by: (1) collecting monies on illegal and void contracts; (2) failing to provide cancellation addresses to members; (3) refusing to cancel contracts, including automatically renewing contracts members were seeking to cancel; (4) using collection agencies to extort members into renewing contracts they wished to cancel; and (5) taking an unlawful "final draft" at the termination of a contract.

The court ordered the defendants to pay \$6 million in civil penalties and restitution. The court also issued a permanent injunction prohibiting the defendants from violating laws related to health studio services, and other laws including taking money by false pretenses.

After Body Shaping Gyms, Inc. filed for bankruptcy protection, the District Attorney's Office intervened in the bankruptcy court to protect the victims' rights to restitution. The bankruptcy court subsequently appointed a trustee to take over all operations of the gym and ultimately the gym's facility was sold for the benefit of the bankruptcy creditors, including the victims.

## **People v. 7-Eleven, Inc.**

### **Unlawful Business Practices; Toxic Materials Violations**

Prosecutor: Karen Wold  
Investigators: James Wada and Rick Bandelin,  
Ventura County Environmental  
Health Department

In 2008, inspectors conducting the annual certification of an underground storage tank monitoring system at a Camarillo 7-Eleven gas station spotted evidence that it had been tampered with: two clamps had been installed on the tubing leading to the sensors, disabling the automatic leak detection system.

At the time of the 2008 inspection, 7-Eleven was operating under a 2004 statewide injunction for failure to comply with the underground storage tank laws, including regulations prohibiting tampering with monitoring systems.

As a result of the investigation, 7-Eleven settled the unfair business practices prosecution. Under the terms of the stipulated final judgment approved by the Court on March 21, 2013, 7-Eleven agreed to remedy any violations, ensure compliance with environmental laws, and agreed to pay \$266,684 in civil penalties, and investigative costs.

The company is subject to a permanent injunction covering gas station facilities in Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, Fillmore, and two in Oxnard, California.



Senior Deputy District Attorney Mitchell Disney

**People v. Melandre and Eligio Tavanlar****Identity Theft; Forgery; Burglary; Check Fraud; Conspiracy; Solicitation**

Prosecutor: Marc Leventhal  
 Investigator: Bryan Samples  
 Simi Valley Police Department

From 2010 to 2013 sister and brother Melandre (“Dre”) and Eligio (“Gio”) Tavanlar ran an identity theft and check fraud enterprise. The Tavanlars acquired victim identities through various means, manufactured forged checks drawn on real or fake accounts, recruited accomplices to pass the fraudulent checks, prepared counterfeit identification documents, and drove the accomplices to check cashing stores in Ventura and Los Angeles Counties. While in jail following her arrest, Dre Tavanlar actively recruited inmates to commit check fraud. The Tavanlars were recorded in numerous jail phone calls plotting these crimes, which they attempted to conceal by speaking in their native Tagalog.

The Ventura County District Attorney charged the Tavanlars with identity theft, forgery, burglary, check fraud, conspiracy, and solicitation. In September 2013, Dre Tavanlar pleaded guilty to 19 felony counts. In March 2014, Gio pleaded guilty to 17 felony counts. The Ventura County Superior Court sentenced both Tavanlars to serve nine years in jail.

**People v. Paige Jones Hibbits****Forgery; Grand Theft; Computer Fraud**

Prosecutor: Marc Leventhal  
 Investigator: Cary Peterson, Ventura County  
 Sheriff's Department

From 2009 to 2011 Paige Jones Hibbits, the CFO of Oxnard-based Scarborough Farms, secretly used the company president's signature stamp to forge 58 unauthorized checks to herself and her creditors, embezzling \$470,000. Hibbits concealed her crimes by falsifying the company's account ledgers which she was entrusted to maintain. Hibbits used some of the proceeds to open a consulting business in Camarillo, promoting herself as having several advanced degrees, extensive business management experience, and as a breast cancer survivor. All of these claims were false. Instead, Hibbits had a long criminal history including a conviction for assault with a deadly weapon in the shooting of her husband and a conviction for an escape from custody. Hibbits was sentenced to 8 years in prison in 1992. In 2006 she was convicted of a similar embezzlement and in 2011, she defrauded the court into expunging her theft conviction by concealing her theft from Scarborough.

Hibbits was convicted of 24 felony counts of forgery, grand theft, and computer fraud. She admitted allegations that she committed an excessive taking and had previously been convicted of a violent felony. Hibbits was sentenced to 10 years in prison and ordered to pay restitution of \$470,000.

## People v. Ronda Garcia

### Grand Theft; Filing False Tax Return

Prosecutor: Karen Wold  
Investigators: James Brittle, Kenneth Welch, Ventura Police Department; John Kang, Franchise Tax Board

Ronda Garcia was the office manager of Khepera House, a nonprofit corporation. Garcia had full access to bank accounts, checks, cash, a Staples credit card and bank statements. From at least 2006 through 2011, Garcia stole from Khepera House and used the money to purchase cars, vacations, computers, printers, monitors, gift cards, cameras and other personal items. Garcia also defrauded the Franchise Tax Board in the process.

The Ventura County District Attorney charged Garcia with grand theft and filing a false tax return. In 2012, Garcia pled guilty to both felony counts and admitted white collar crime special allegations of taking in excess of \$500,000.

The Ventura County Superior Court ordered Garcia to serve six years in prison, pay Khepera House \$1,108,023 in restitution, and pay \$130,498 to the Franchise Tax Board.



Senior Deputy District Attorneys Marc Leventhal and Howard Wise

## Auto Insurance Fraud Section

The Automobile Insurance Fraud Section investigates and prosecutes fraud cases committed against automobile insurance providers. The section has handled cases involving staged accidents, after-acquired insurance, fraudulent billing by repair shops, and arson by owners attempting to avoid financial obligations. The section works closely with investigators from the California Department of Insurance.



Senior Deputy District Attorney Chrystina Jensen

## Workers' Compensation Insurance Fraud Section

The Workers' Compensation Insurance Fraud Section actively investigates and prosecutes crimes involving employees (including public employees) who knowingly make material misrepresentations to obtain workers' compensation benefits. In addition, the team pursues both employers who defraud insurers to reduce their workers' compensation premiums and those who fail to obtain workers' compensation insurance for their employees. The section coordinates enforcement efforts with the California Department of Insurance.

## Gang Unit

Crimes committed by, for the benefit of, in association with, or at the direction of active criminal street gang members are prosecuted by experienced attorneys dedicated to achieving justice in these cases. Even though Ventura County is consistently ranked as one of the safest counties in the western United States, violent criminal street gangs pose an ongoing threat to local residents. The crimes committed by those involved in gang activity may include vandalism, burglary, robbery, extortion, assault with a deadly weapon, trafficking in controlled substances, and murder. While the intended targets of such crimes are often other gang members, the collateral risk and trauma caused to innocent bystanders and the community as a whole mandate that all provable cases be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. From 2011 through 2014, the Gang Unit filed 821 felony gang-related cases and obtained a 90.6 percent conviction rate on cases proceeding to jury trial. For these reasons, the prosecutors and investigators assigned to handle gang cases are among the most experienced professionals within the District Attorney's Office.

### People v. Aaron McIntosh

#### Street Terrorism; Unlawfully Taking of a Vehicle

Prosecutor: Tate McAllister  
Investigator: Tom Mendez

In 2010, McIntosh stole the motorcycle of an ex-Hells Angels member from a residential backyard to punish the ex-member for leaving the gang. The Ventura County District Attorney charged McIntosh with street terrorism and unlawfully taking a vehicle. The jury also heard evidence of a separate motorcycle theft McIntosh committed to punish another former Hell's Angels member. The jury found McIntosh guilty of one count of committing a felony while actively participating in a criminal street gang, the Hells Angels, and one count of vehicle theft.

Judge Charles Campbell sentenced McIntosh to 12 years in prison.

### People v. Jose Raul Tellez

#### First Degree Residential Robbery in Concert with Use of a Firearm; False Imprisonment; Possession of Methamphetamine

Prosecutor: David Russell  
Victim Advocate: Rachel Watkins

On May 23, 2012, the defendant and three Northside Chiques gang members carried out a home invasion robbery. The defendant, who planned the crime and recruited other criminals to carry out his plan, drove the getaway car and gave his three armed accomplices their orders.

The defendant sent the three gang members to the front door of the home of Joe Vaca, his eight-month pregnant girlfriend Mary Rydberg, and their three-year-old son. When Vaca answered the door, the three men pushed their way in, knocking Vaca to the ground and holding a gun to the back of his head. They forced the victims into a bedroom, holding them at gunpoint while they ransacked the home, stealing cash, electronics, and other valuables.

The defendant, who was waiting out front drove them to safety then divided up the stolen property. In their haste to get away, two of the gunmen left behind pieces of their latex gloves.

Deputies from Ventura County Sheriff's Office collected the pieces of the gloves from the crime scene and the recovered DNA matched two of the three men involved in the crime. Detectives served search warrants on the homes of the defendants and recovered two of the three guns used in the crime. Several grams of methamphetamine were found during the search of the defendant's home. All four men were arrested for the home invasion robbery. One of them confessed to the crime.

At trial, the man who confessed testified against the defendant, describing his role in the planning and execution of the crime. Other witnesses refused to testify, recanted, or had to be arrested in order to secure their attendance at the trial.

The jury convicted the defendant on all the charges and allegations and he was sentenced to 20 years in prison. The gang member who testified against the defendant received a reduced sentence of two years. The remaining two gang members pled guilty before trial. One was sentenced to 15 years in state prison and the other received a 13-year sentence.



L to R: Deputy District Attorney Blake Heller; Senior Deputy District Attorneys Joann Roth and John Barrick; Deputy District Attorney David Russell

## People v. Jose Lorenzo

### **Street Terrorism; Second Degree Robbery with Gang Allegation and Hate Crime Allegation; and Assault with a Deadly Weapon with Gang Allegation and Hate Crime Allegation**

Prosecutor: Anthony Sabo  
Investigator: Tracy Towner

In the early morning hours of October 8, 2012, Derek Allen was riding his bike in the dark to his campsite in the Ventura river bottom. Allen, who was homeless, had been living at the camp for some time. He needed to carry in drinking water periodically and had a cooler with several days' supply on his bike.

As he rode on Olive Street in Ventura, six Hispanic men surrounded him and demanded his property, including the cooler with his water. The men identified themselves as "Avenue Gangsters" and began yelling racial slurs at Allen, who is black.

The gang members pushed Allen off his bike and attacked him with fists, rocks, and his own cooler. After seeing the defendant pull a black object from his waistband, Allen abandoned his bike and ran away.

Allen called 911 to report the crime and begged the police to find his bike, his only possession in the world. He gave a detailed account of the crime and a description of the defendant.

Officers from the Ventura Police Department quickly responded and arrested the defendant a few blocks away from the scene of the attack. A taser matching the description of the object in the defendant's pants was found nearby. Allen identified the defendant as the man who'd attacked him and pulled an object from his waistband.

Terrified of retaliation from the defendant and his fellow gang members, Allen claimed at trial that he did not recognize the defendant, and claimed that the wrong man was in custody.

The prosecutor called a gang expert to explain how people viewed as informants are dealt with and to explain why a victim might therefore be too scared to identify a gang member in court, even if he had previously identified the suspect to police.

The defendant was convicted of all counts and special allegations and sentenced to 26 years in prison.

## Narcotics Unit

The Narcotics Unit takes an aggressive and proactive approach to drug trafficking in Ventura County. A wide range of cases involving high-level drug trafficking organizations and multiple pound quantities of cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine are handled by the Narcotics Unit. These prosecutors work closely with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies during complex multi-level narcotics investigations that utilize confidential informants, search warrants, and court authorized wiretaps. These investigations lead to the prosecution of narcotics traffickers for manufacturing, sales and possession for sales of controlled substances, as well as conspiracy and money laundering. From 2011 through 2014, the Narcotics Unit filed 1,157 cases. The unit obtained a 92.4 percent conviction rate on cases proceeding to jury trial. The Narcotics Unit is also responsible for reviewing, filing and prosecuting cases involving drug-endangered children, prescription drugs, and vice crimes, including human trafficking, pimping, pandering, and prostitution.



L to R: Senior Deputy District Attorney Derek Malan, Deputy District Attorneys Stuart Gardner and Tom Steele

### People v. Joaquin G. Cardenas and Filemon C. Gaxiola

**Sale of Cocaine in Excess of Four Kilograms; Possession for Sale of Cocaine in Excess of One Kilogram; Possession for Sale of Methamphetamine; Possession of \$100,000 or More of Drug Proceeds**

Prosecutor: David Russell

Federal and local law enforcement agents obtained a wiretap order to monitor the phones of suspected drug dealers Alejandro and Pablo Arroyo. Information obtained from the wiretap revealed that the suspects were about to buy several kilos of cocaine. Law enforcement quickly set up a surveillance at the Arroyos' home in Santa Paula.

Just after 11 p.m., detectives watched a Chevy pull into the garage at the same house. Shortly before midnight, the garage door opened and the Chevy drove away.

When officers attempted to stop Arroyo's car, he led police on a high-speed chase onto the freeway while tossing cocaine out of the car window. After the stop, law enforcement recovered about one and a half kilos of cocaine from the car's interior, Arroyo's clothing, and the side of the road.

When officers stopped the Chevy, they found the defendants inside, Gaxiola driving and Cardenas sitting in the back seat. A search of the area under the back seat revealed approximately \$120,000 in cash, three kilograms of cocaine, and about one pound of methamphetamine.

The case proceeded to jury trial in June 2011. Based on the content of the monitored calls, the total amount of cash found in the Chevy, and on the evidence recovered from both cars, the jury found that the defendants sold six kilos of cocaine in exchange for the \$120,000 in cash.

Both defendants were convicted of all charges and quantity enhancements. Gaxiola was sentenced to 11 years 4 months in prison, and Cardenas received a sentence of 8 years.



## Child Abduction and Recovery Section



Senior Deputy District Attorney  
Kathleen LaSalle

The Child Abduction and Recovery Section acts on behalf of the court to assist in the enforcement of child custody and visitation orders. This section facilitates voluntary compliance with child custody orders and enforces compliance when the subject of the order will not comply voluntarily. These actions include returning children to jurisdictions from which they were unlawfully removed. The section may file criminal charges in appropriate cases. The team successfully reunited 391 children with parents who have legal custody in both national and international child recovery efforts. Additionally, the section has reunited 497 children with parents who had visitation orders that were not being honored by the other parent.

## Community Prosecutors



Senior Deputy District Attorney  
Melissa Suttner, Community Prosecutor  
for the Cities of Thousand Oaks and  
Simi Valley



Senior Deputy District Attorney  
Scott Hendrickson, Community  
Prosecutor for the City of Oxnard

Community Prosecutors work side-by-side with law enforcement personnel providing onsite assistance at the Oxnard, Thousand Oaks, and Simi Valley Police Departments. The assigned attorneys review the majority of felony and misdemeanor crimes committed in these cities, enabling each agency to identify and react to local criminal trends and hotspots. Community Prosecutors review search warrants for these agencies and observe many of the sexual assault interviews conducted by law enforcement at our Safe Harbor Multi-Disciplinary Interview Centers. The program affords captains, sergeants, and detectives immediate access to highly experienced prosecutors, who also provide roll call and other training on current criminal justice issues and legislation. These attorneys also provide community outreach by responding directly to citizens, social service providers, and local business leaders to address their concerns.

*“The protection of our citizens — to guard them from becoming victims — is the primary purpose of our penal laws. Thus, each new victim personally represents an instance in which our system has failed to prevent crime.”*

**Ronald Reagan**  
40th President of the United States  
1911-2004

## Asset Forfeiture/ Code Enforcement

The Asset Forfeiture and Code Enforcement Unit prosecutes civil narcotics asset forfeiture cases under California law. The unit's investigator and prosecutor seek to deprive drug dealers of the proceeds of their crimes by seizing property and cash obtained through drug sales activity. The unit's attorney also prosecutes code enforcement violations related to weights and measures, building and safety, environmental health and general property maintenance.

### People v. Steven Scott Showers

#### Building Code and Sign Ordinance Violations

Prosecutor: Steven Slyker

In August 2012, numerous citizens complained about a sign Steven Showers erected at his home in Newbury Park. The large neon sign, which flashed "Save the GOP Romneys Racist Hear Dotcom," was lit by four rotating red lights. The sign violated building codes, zoning, and sign ordinances. Its glare was a nuisance to neighbors and the red lights shined into neighbors' homes as well as passing cars. The display also brought unwanted traffic and other attention to this residential neighborhood.

The Code Compliance Division of the Ventura County Resource Management Agency made several unsuccessful enforcement attempts by posting notices, imposing civil administrative penalties, and recording a notice of non-compliance against the property between August and October 2012.

The District Attorney filed eight counts alleging misdemeanor violations of building codes and sign ordinances against Showers. In June 2013, a jury convicted him of all charges. The court ordered Showers to either remove the display or bring the display into compliance with the law within 30 days or serve 45 days in jail. Showers did not bring the display into compliance and served 58 days in jail.

The Ventura County Code Compliance Division removed the display in August 2013.



Senior Deputy District Attorney Steve Slyker

*Americanism means the virtues of courage, honor, justice, truth, sincerity, and hardihood — the virtues that made America."*

**Teddy Roosevelt**

*26th President of the United States*

*1858-1919*



Rachel Dean  
Supervising Senior Deputy District Attorney

## VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY Juvenile Unit

Attorneys assigned to the Juvenile Unit review and prosecute most crimes committed by minors under the age of 18. The attorneys also work in collaboration with school officials, parents, local law enforcement, and community-based organizations focusing on juvenile crime prevention and rehabilitation. One supervising attorney, five deputy district attorneys, and one paralegal, prosecute crimes ranging from serious and violent felonies such as armed robbery and sexual assault to misdemeanor theft and school-related offenses. With juvenile crimes increasingly linked to school truancy, the unit's prosecutors are integral members of the School Attendance Review Boards. They work with school and Probation Department personnel to keep at-risk juveniles in school rather than on the streets. Prosecutors review student attendance records, conduct mediations, give educational presentations to parents, teachers, and students, and when appropriate, file petitions against truant students and parents who habitually fail to ensure school attendance. Between 2011 and 2014, Juvenile Unit prosecutors conducted 9,637 student hearings and filed 6,125 criminal cases.

### IN RE BRANDON H.

#### Child Molestation

Prosecutor: Theresa Pollara

Brandon H. molested a five-year-old girl, the daughter of a family friend, on two separate occasions. After the second crime, the child reported the sexual abuse to her mother, who then called the police.

The police discovered that Brandon H. had a history of sexual abuse: In a prior case he was alleged to have repeatedly hit a 13-year-old girl's breasts. The police also learned that Brandon H. had molested his six-year-old sister. A third crime came to light just prior to trial where the minor sexually abused his 13-year-old cousin, who suffered from Asperger's syndrome, by digitally penetrating her body and threatening that she'd get in trouble if she reported his actions.

The judge found true the crimes alleged on behalf of all three young victims and, as a result, Brandon H. was sentenced to participate in a long-term sexual offenders program within a secure residential facility under the supervision of the Probation Agency.

### IN RE JOSE O.

#### Vandalism

Prosecutor: Theresa Pollara

Jose O. is a prolific graffiti tagger associated with a known tagging crew in Oxnard who committed more than 100 incidents of tagging. Oxnard police were able to identify him as the person who vandalized property on January 3, 2013, by linking his moniker to the various incidents.

After a court trial lasting several days and a subsequent restitution hearing, the trial judge found true the alleged crime of felony vandalism and ordered Jose O. to pay \$44,165 in restitution to the City of Oxnard.

## CAPOS (Crimes Against Peace Officers)

A dedicated prosecutor reviews and vertically prosecutes crimes committed against peace officers. These cases often involve threats, assaults, and the use of guns and other weapons in the course of violent crimes perpetrated against peace officers or others. The CAPOS prosecutor also conducts training and outreach to law enforcement agencies regarding lawful use of force and related topics.

## Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) CHECK Restitution program

The Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) Check Restitution Program seeks restitution from individuals who write bad checks. Under the program's guidelines, those who pass bad checks are given 15 days to pay full restitution without further consequences. If restitution is not paid in that time frame, the check writer must complete a diversion class about proper handling and balancing of a personal checking account. If the bad check writer fails to meet the requirements of the program, criminal charges may be filed and restitution ordered with additional fines and fees. From 2011 through 2014, the NSF program handled just under 5,000 bad checks and returned nearly \$ 624,000 to local businesses and other victims.

*“A real patriot is the fellow who gets a parking ticket and rejoices that the system works.”*

**Bill Vaughan**  
*American Columnist and Author*  
1915-1997

## Consumer Mediation Unit

The District Attorney's Consumer Mediation Unit assists Ventura County residents in resolving a variety of business and consumer-related disputes. The unit provides information regarding consumer protection laws and referrals to specialized state or federal agencies. Additionally, the Consumer Mediation Unit serves as a dispute resolution forum to resolve conflicts between consumers and businesses without court action.

Between 2011 and 2014, mediators responded to more than 10,000 inquiries from the public. Mediators handled 1,394 formal mediations that resulted in voluntary restitution of \$1,557,412 to consumers and businesses without judicial intervention.

## Small Claims Assistance Program

The Small Claims Assistance Program provides advice to litigants regarding procedures for filing and presenting claims in Small Claims Court, defending claims, and collecting judgments. Small Claims Court advisors assisted more than 43,800 persons either by telephone or in person with their Small Claims Court inquiries between 2011 and 2014.



Consumer Mediator John Howard and  
Administrative Assistant Robin Estes



## VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY Justice Services

Under the direction of the Special Assistant District Attorney, the Justice Services Division is comprised of the Writs, Appeals, and Training Unit, the Public Integrity Unit, the Ellie Liston Crime Victims' Assistance Unit, and the Safe Harbor Multi-Disciplinary Interview Centers. The Special Assistant District Attorney also enforces the Ralph M. Brown Act (public meeting law), handles peace officer misconduct issues under Brady v. Maryland, assists cooperative victims with obtaining U Visas, and serves as the Conviction Integrity Deputy, reviewing claims of factual innocence on completed cases.

**Michael D. Schwartz**  
Special Assistant District Attorney

### Writs, Appeals, and Training

Attorneys assigned to the Writs, Appeals, and Training Unit file writs and appeals in state and federal courts, including the California Supreme Court, and respond to writs and appeals filed by the defense. The unit also provides attorneys in the office with Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) courses required by the State Bar of California, new prosecutor training, and training to local law enforcement on a variety of topics.

### Public Integrity Unit

The Public Integrity Unit evaluates and prosecutes complaints against public officials and others in a position of public trust for misappropriation of public funds and other official misconduct. Matters handled by attorneys assigned to this unit include embezzlement by officials of non-profit organizations or the government, misuse of government resources, conflicts of interest, failing to report economic interests, and violations of election laws.

### Conviction Integrity Unit

The Conviction Integrity Unit was created in October 2012 to examine claims of factual innocence. In a number of cases throughout the United States, DNA and other new evidence has exonerated defendants, sometimes after they have served years in prison. To ensure that no such tragedies occur in Ventura County, we formalized a process to evaluate claims of factual innocence, review the evidence, and in some cases conduct additional investigation. The Ventura County District Attorney was one of the first in the state to create such a unit.

As the Supreme Court recognized in Berger v. United States, the twofold aim of the prosecutor "is that guilt shall not escape nor innocence suffer." This program supplements existing trial and appellate rights to ensure that justice is done in every case.



Deputy District Attorney Taylor Waters; Senior Deputy District Attorney Michelle Contois; Special Assistant District Attorney Michael D. Schwartz; Senior Deputy District Attorneys Lisa Lytikainen and Mike Leif

## Andrew Luster

Appellate prosecutor: Michelle Contois

Max Factor heir Andrew Luster, who fled to Mexico during his trial, was found guilty by a jury of sexually assaulting three unconscious women between 1996 and 2000. Luster, who was still on the run at the time of his sentencing, was sentenced in absentia to 124 years in prison.

After his capture and return to Ventura County, he filed a petition for writ of habeas corpus in the Court of Appeal, claiming that his attorney was incompetent for having failed to make a “deal” and for aiding his escape to Mexico.

The case was sent back to superior court for an evidentiary hearing. At the conclusion of that hearing, the court rejected the claims of incompetence of counsel, but reduced Luster’s sentence by more than half, to 50 years.

The defense has appealed the new sentence to the Court of Appeal.

## Calvin Sharp

Appellate prosecutor: Lisa Lytikainen

Calvin Sharp entered a guilty plea to six counts arising from the brutal murder of six-year-old Sev’n Molina and the attempted murder of his mother, and a neighbor who attempted to come to their aid. Sharp claimed that he was insane at the time of the crimes.

The resulting sanity trial was delayed while the defense challenged the examination of the defendant by a psychiatrist obtained by the prosecution. After briefing and argument, the California Supreme Court upheld the legality of the psychiatric examination.

Sharp was found to have been sane at the time of the crimes and was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.

## Report on Oxnard City Officials

Prosecutors: Chuck Hughes, Karen Wold and Taylor Waters  
Investigators: Wayne Simmons, Lori Erickson, Kimberly Michael and Jeff Barry

In 2010, The District Attorney's Office received reports that Oxnard City officials had committed numerous acts of misconduct, including allegations of conflicts of interest, misappropriation of public funds, and failure to report the receipt of gifts.

In response, the District Attorney's Office began an intensive investigation lasting nearly two years. The focus of the investigation was to determine whether elected and un-elected Oxnard officials had claimed excessive travel expenses, failed to report gifts from companies doing business with the city, made an improper loan to the former city manager, and created a supplemental retirement plan for high-ranking members of city government without proper authorization.

The results of the exhaustive investigation were released in a 99-page public report on April 18, 2012. The District Attorney concluded that the most serious allegations of misconduct were not supported by the evidence, or were barred by the statute of limitations.

The report and its conclusions were then referred to the California Fair Political Practices Commission which similarly concluded that 12 Oxnard city officials had failed to report gifts. As a result, those officials were fined a total of \$63,000.

## People v. Greg Lauren Winslow

**Misappropriation of Public Funds in excess of \$50,000; Failure to Pay Public Money in excess of \$50,000; Embezzlement by a Public Officer in excess of \$50,000; Grand Theft in excess of \$50,000; Identity Theft; Filing a False Financial Statement; Forgery; and Dissuading a Witness.**

Prosecutor: Karen Wold  
Investigator: Greg Hayes

Greg Winslow was the co-athletic director of the Ventura Community College and the head coach of the Ventura College men's basketball team.

Between 2003 and 2008, he diverted \$60,554 from the college team's taxpayer- and donor-funded budget to a personal bank account; funds meant for the college went instead to his son's youth basketball team, and Winslow wrote \$28,500 in checks from the college account to himself, his wife, or to "cash."

Winslow used the stolen funds in part to repair his boat and to rent a vacation home.

After a month-long trial, the jury found Winslow guilty of misappropriation of public funds, failure to pay public money, and grand theft. He was sentenced one year in county jail, placed on probation for five years, and ordered to pay \$45,000 in restitution.

*"You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. We will preserve for our children (America), the last best hope of man on earth, or we will sentence them to take the first step into a thousand years of darkness. If we fail, at least let our children and our children's children say of us we justified our brief moment here. We did all that could be done."*

**Ronald Reagan**  
40th President of the United States  
1911-2004

## Ellie Liston Crime Victims' Assistance Unit



Catherine Duggan  
Director

The Ellie Liston Crime Victims' Assistance Unit guides victims through the criminal justice process, ensures that victims' rights are honored, and assists victims in obtaining services to help them cope with the trauma they have suffered. Through the efforts of a dedicated team of 15 victim advocates, a victim advocate supervisor, an office assistant, and the unit director, the Crime Victims' Assistance Unit provides comprehensive services to victims of all types of crime.

Victim advocates provide victims with crisis intervention and emergency assistance, advise them of the rights assured to them under the California Constitution, and update them on the progress of their cases. Victim advocates offer an array of referrals to service providers to address the individual needs of victims. Advocates assist in processing, filing, and verifying claims submitted to the California Victims of Crime Compensation Program. Victim advocates also make regular presentations to community organizations, service clubs, schools, and law enforcement agencies and publish brochures in English and Spanish on topics such as domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse, and crimes involving juvenile offenders.

The number of victims served by the unit has steadily grown from just under 6,000 in 2011, to over 7,000 in 2014. To expand the services advocates are able to provide in shrinking budget times, the Victims' Assistance Unit has developed a robust volunteer program. Volunteer staff complete an initial 48 hours of training, which prepares them to assist victims with obtaining a restraining order, emergency shelter placement, and court accompaniment. In 2014, 9 volunteers provided nearly 3,000 volunteer hours to victims.



Seated, L to R: Carlos Martinez, Rachael Watkins, David Smith; Standing, L to R: Felicita Roy, Brenda Marquez, Zephree Brinson, Jose Martinez, Patricia Caputo, Sandra Avila, Jennifer Barbettini, Patricia Wood, Maria-Campos Davies, Conan Perdomo, Dina Zuhric



## Ventura County Safe Harbor



Jaquie Richardson, Director, Safe Harbor East;  
Susan Becker, Director, Safe Harbor West

Ventura County Safe Harbor East and West are multi-disciplinary interview and advocacy centers used by law enforcement to conduct interviews and forensic medical examinations for child victims of crime and for adult sexual assault victims. The goal of the Safe Harbor program is to minimize trauma to victims during the criminal investigation by reducing the number of interviews the victim must submit to, and by providing a secure, confidential and comfortable environment for interviews and medical examinations. The investigation is enhanced through the use of state-of-the-art recording and forensic medical equipment. Each of the two Safe Harbor locations is overseen by a Program Administrator from the District Attorney's Office.

Using a team approach, all involved agencies meet and obtain the required information at the same time. Prosecutors are on call 24 hours a day to observe interviews and assist detectives with the investigative process. Victim advocates provide crisis intervention, referrals and support to victims, alongside crisis counselors from the local rape crisis center. Specially-trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners provide forensic medical exams at the centers.

The program partners the District Attorney's Office with all local law enforcement agencies, the Ventura County Health Care Agency, the Ventura County Human Services Agency, Children and Family Services Division, and local community service providers. Representatives from these agencies enhance their effectiveness through team training and case reviews.

From January 2011 through December 2014, Safe Harbor provided services to 1,286 victims of sexual assault and child abuse.

## Crime Victim Assistance Unit Volunteers



Volunteer Victim Advocates Nancy Wilkerson  
and Lorraine Alvarado

## Restraining Order Clinic

The Restraining Order Clinic provides victims of family violence with a single location to access governmental and non-profit services designed to help them rebuild their lives. Community based organizations such as Interface Children and Family Services and The Coalition for Family Harmony provide mental health services. District Attorney victim advocates provide classes in both English and Spanish on the process and forms required to obtain restraining orders, as well as information on the dynamics and dangers of violent relationships. The clinic also provides referrals to community-based counseling services and local shelter programs. From 2011 to 2014, the clinic provided restraining order and referral services to over 8,000 victims of family violence in Ventura County.

*"I urge all citizens, from all walks of life, to remember that the personal tragedy of the victim is their own tragedy as well."*

**Ronald Reagan**  
40th President of the United States  
1911-2004



Chuck Hughes  
Chief Deputy District Attorney

## VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY Administrative Services

The Administrative Services Division provides operational support to the more than 260 employees of the District Attorney's Office. Administrative Services is managed by a Chief Deputy District Attorney and a unit manager who work closely to oversee the budgetary, personnel, litigation, and legislative functions of the office.

### Fiscal, Administrative, and Legislative Services Unit

The Fiscal, Administrative, and Legislative Services Unit's staff coordinates the critical financial and human resource operations of the District Attorney's Office, including: preparation and administration of a \$44 million annual budget, administration of grant and revenue programs, recruitment and hiring, employee benefits, leaves of absence, employee and witness travel, facilities, space acquisition, equipment and supply purchasing, auditing, fiscal compliance, payroll, accounts payable and receivable, and myriad other operational duties. The unit also coordinates legislative efforts on behalf of prosecutors at the local, state, and national levels and works closely with the County Executive Office, Human Resources, Labor Relations, Risk Management, and the Auditor-Controller's Office.



Seated L to R: Mike Jump, Judy Coronado; Standing L to R back row: Edwin Sampang, Karen Simpson, Yolanda Angeles

# Legal Support Services Unit



Ann Phelps  
Staff Services Manager

Between 2011 and 2014, the District Attorney's Office filed more than 71,000 criminal cases. The Legal Support Services Unit's 52 clerical and support staff are essential to the department's ability to handle such a large volume of cases. This unit's highly skilled employees support all areas of the District Attorney's Office by providing witness coordination, word processing, discovery, subpoena preparation, secretarial support, reception, mail room/courier and a host of other services that assist attorneys and investigators in performing their duties.

Between 2011 and 2014, Legal Support Services Unit staff processed over 300,000 subpoenas, reproduced 3.5 million pages of documentation, duplicated an average of 13,000 CD/DVD's, typed over 17 million words, prepared and processed an average of 4,200 felony cases, 11,000 misdemeanor cases, and 2,400 juvenile cases each year. In 2011, Request Manager was implemented to provide a timely and efficient method of requesting information from law enforcement and other units within the office while also tracking requests. In 2013, electronic issuance of traffic subpoenas to law enforcement was developed for instant service, eliminating paper and mailing. In 2014, the Readiness Memo went electronic to provide the calendar deputy in court with quick information about the case and witness status.

The Legal Support Services Unit provides the critical "behind the scenes" work that enables the District Attorney's Office to function at the highest professional level.

## Clerical Supervisors



Aggie Willis, Roberta Parada, Linda Vivian, Laura Lovio

## Witness Coordination



Jenni Hu, Vilma Fullante

## Discovery



Christine Hanna, Rosaura Reyes

## SA/FP Secretaries



Francine Garcia, Daniel Cruz

## Misdemeanor Secretaries



Marlena Olguin, Julie Purnell, Yalitza Esparza,  
Jo Ann DelaCruz

## Courier



Shaun Gildroy

# Information Technology Unit



**Gene Mecagni**  
Director

The Information Technology Unit (ITU) provides the technological tools and services necessary to keep the District Attorney's Office functioning at a high level of efficiency and professionalism. Under the leadership of the Information Technology Director, the ITU is responsible for the design, development, implementation, and support of all information technology hardware, software, and business applications, as well as support for prosecution efforts in the courtroom and community outreach efforts. The ITU also provides direct support to local law enforcement in their use of the Ventura County Integrated Justice Information System (VCIJIS) case management database system.

The ITU supports the office's sophisticated data network, linking the five office locations and more than 600 desktops, laptops, and printers to more than 15 virtual servers. In addition, the ITU provides on-demand technical support to all office calls for assistance through its Help Desk. Additionally, in an effort to improve computing capabilities and services, our team continues to test emerging technologies including mobile devices, multimedia, and productivity software. The unit also manages the department's intranet and public Web site, which receives hundreds of views each week.



Alfredo Valenzuela



Steve Davidson



Charles Swaim



Mike Sanders

# VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY Bureau of Investigation



Michael Baray  
Chief Investigator

The Bureau of Investigation provides professional investigative support in both criminal and civil matters and plays a crucial role in preparing cases for trial. The Bureau is staffed with a chief investigator, one deputy chief investigator, three commanders, district attorney investigators, a welfare fraud investigator and investigative assistants.

Investigators serving within the Bureau are highly experienced and trained sworn peace officers who have been recruited from law enforcement agencies throughout California. Members of the Bureau of Investigation are available 24 hours a day to respond to investigative requests and critical incidents such as homicides and officer involved shootings. Bureau investigators are called upon for assistance by their colleagues throughout the state and have been recognized as experts in a wide range of investigations from homicides to complex white collar crimes. The Bureau has a Special Response Team comprised of highly trained investigators prepared to respond to threats against DA staff and critical incidents throughout the County.



Ken Valentini  
Deputy Chief Investigator

The Bureau of Investigation is divided into three divisions: Major Crimes, Major Fraud and Administration. The Major Crimes Division includes units that investigate major crimes, sexual assault, domestic violence, cold case homicides, computer crimes, and gangs, and includes members of an auto theft task force. The Major Fraud Division includes units that investigate major fraud, real estate fraud, consumer and environmental crimes, child abduction, auto insurance fraud, worker's compensation fraud, public assistance fraud, and non-sufficient funds checks, and includes members of narcotic and pharmaceutical crimes task forces. The Administration Division investigates citizen complaints involving members of the District Attorney's Office, internal administrative investigations, and special external investigations involving public corruption and conducts background investigations on prospective employees.



Commander  
Tracy Towner



Commander  
Juan Reynoso



Commander  
Cloyce Conway



Senior Investigator  
Adam Wittkins



Senior Investigator  
Lori Erickson



Senior Investigator  
Frank Huber



Senior Investigator  
Sean Conroy



Senior Investigator  
Wayne Simmons



Senior Investigator  
Tom Mendez



Senior Investigator  
Ralph Martinez



Major Fraud Unit



L to R: Investigator Paul Krueger, Senior Investigator Frank Huber, Investigative Assistant Joanie Bazaldua, Investigator Daniel Horan

Target Crimes Unit



Senior Investigator Sean Conroy, Investigator Brenda Lemos

Litigation Support



Office Systems Coordinator  
Jacob Topolinski

Investigative Assistants



L to R: Investigative Assistants Joanie Bazaldua, Rosario Gonzalez, Stephen Seeger, Dominique Rosales

Major Crimes Unit



Seated L to R: Investigative Assistant Anh Vu, Investigators Jess Velasquez, Paul Walsh; Second Row, L to R: Investigative Assistants Oralia Acuna, Rosario Gonzalez, Investigators Sonia Sanchez, Kimberly Michael, Catherine Mano; Back Row, L to R: Investigators Mike Palmieri, Robert MacInnes, Investigative Assistant Stephen Seeger, Investigator Heather Tallent

# Elevated to the Bench

Ventura Superior Court Judge  
GILBERT A. ROMERO



*Appointed to bench in 2012*

**Education**

University of California,  
Hastings – J.D.

California State University,  
Northridge – B.A.

**Public Law Practice**

Ventura County District  
Attorney's Office  
(1999-2012)

Ventura Superior Court Commissioner  
ANTHONY J. SABO



*Appointed to Commissioner in 2014*

**Education**

University of North Dakota  
School of Law – J.D.

Indiana University – B.A.

**Public Law Practice**

City Attorney, Rising Sun, Indiana  
(2002-2006)

Deputy Prosecutor, Indiana (1997-2008)

Ventura County District  
Attorney's Office (2008-2014)

**Private Law Practice**

Sabo Law Office (1995-2008)

Ventura Superior Court Judge  
MICHAEL S. LIEF



*Elected to bench in 2014*

**Education**

Pepperdine University  
School of Law – J.D.

Drew University – B.A.

**Public Law Practice**

Ventura County District  
Attorney's Office (1996 – 2015)

**Military**

U.S. Navy (1981-1985)

# Retirements

YEAR	NAME	TITLE	RETIREMENT DATE	NUMBER OF YEARS WORKED
2011	Gregory W. Brose	Chief Deputy District Attorney	2/5/2011	27
	Nancy Turner	Information Processing Officer	4/9/2011	11
2012	Jeffrey Robinson	Investigator	8/20/2011	17
	Matthew Harvill	Senior Investigator	10/1/2011	6
	Glen Kitzmann	Deputy Chief Investigator	10/29/2011	20
	Robert Briner	Chief Investigator	3/31/2012	23
	Kristina Lee-Bailey	Investigative Assistant	4/2/2012	22
	Tom Henry	Office Systems Coordinator	5/1/2012	5
	James D. Ellison	Chief Assistant District Attorney	5/5/2012	33
	Pam Grossman	Senior Deputy District Attorney	6/22/2012	19
	Sandra Ullrich	Legal Processing Assistant	11/24/2012	9
	2013	Noel San Jose	Investigator	4/1/2013
Irene Rauschenberger		Fiscal Specialist	8/3/2013	24
Julie Sanders		Legal Processing Assistant	7/31/2013	30
Kathleen Ford		Legal Processing Assistant	9/21/2013	28
Peggy Drury		Legal Management Assistant	10/26/2013	22
Lance Steaman		Senior Investigator	11/16/2013	13
2014	Danny Miller	Deputy Chief Investigator	2/1/2014	24
	Christine Heckerman	Legal Processing Assistant	2/1/2014	14





## Crime Victims' Rights Ceremony Award Presentations



### Ellie Liston Hero Award

The ELLIE LISTON HERO AWARD is presented to citizens, witnesses, or victims who came to the aid of crime victims, helped capture suspects, prevented crimes from occurring, testified under pressure, or acted selflessly.

**2011 Recipient:** Rosalina Moreno

**2013 Recipient:** Diane Cox

### Attorney General's Certificate of Commendation for Outstanding Performance



L to R: California Department of Justice Assistant to the Director Wayne Quint, Investigator Jeff Barry, District Attorney Greg Totten

On November 10, 2011, District Attorney Investigator Jeff Barry was awarded the Attorney General's Certificate of Commendation for Outstanding Performance. Investigator Barry was recognized for his outstanding contributions to the Ventura County Combined Agency Taskforce (VOCAT), his dedication to ongoing training, and an effective, collaborative approach to narcotics investigations. During his tenure, Investigator Barry processed more than 100 new state and federal asset forfeiture cases resulting in the seizure of \$2,812,849, and the successful prosecution of multiple, high-level drug traffickers and money launderers.



### Justice for Victims Award

The JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS AWARD is presented to individuals, programs, organizations, or teams who have provided extraordinary service on behalf of crime victims.

**2012 Recipients:** Ventura County Sheriff's Senior Deputy Ryan Clark and Deputy William Hollowell

**2014 Recipient:** Oxnard Police Detective Dale McAlpine

### California State Association of Counties (CSAC) Merit Award - 2014 Real Estate Fraud Prosecution Program



L to R: Investigative Assistant Lisa Simmons, Investigators Joey De Los Reyes, Christopher Borkovec, Frank Huber, Legal Processing Assistant Cynthia Troutman, Legal Management Assistant Pattie O'Donnell, Senior Deputy District Attorney Dominic Kardum, Investigator Dan Horan, CSAC Senior Legislative Representative Jean Hurst, Chief Deputy District Attorney Miles Weiss, District Attorney Greg Totten, Supervisor Kathy Long.

Since its inception in 2005, the Real Estate Fraud Prosecution Program (REFPP) has been a resource for victims of all forms of real estate fraud in order to centralize suspect-related data and facilitate the investigation and prosecution of cases. In 2009, REFPP received a \$1.6 million federal grant based on the early success of this program. The California State Association of Counties recognized this program with their 2014 Merit Award.

# Employee Award Recipients

EMPLOYEE NAME	YEAR	TYPE OF AWARD
John Barrick	2014	Prosecutor of the Year
Patrice Koenig	2014	Prosecutor of the Year
Barry, Jeff	2014	Investigator of the Year
<i>People v. Laura Means</i> - Dominic Kardum, Frank Huber, James Adriansen, Patricia Wood, Lisa Simmons, Francine Garcia	2014	Team of the Year
Marlena Olguin	2014	Employee of the Year
Nancy Wilkerson	2014	Volunteer of the Year
Dominique Rosales	2014	Employee of the Year
Information Technologies Unit	2014	Unit of the Year
David Russell	2013	Prosecutor of the Year
Anne Spillner	2013	Prosecutor of the Year
Alfredo Valenzuela Jr.	2013	Employee of the Year
Joey De Los Reyes	2013	Investigator of the Year
Christine Mitchell	2013	Employee of the Year
Zephree Brinson	2013	Employee of the Year
<i>People v. Jeffrey Aguilar</i> - Andrea Tischler, Mike Palmieri, Felicita Roy Christine Heckerman, Rosario Gonzalez	2013	Team of the Year
Felony Secretaries - Pam Potter, Pam Dixon, Pam Booker	2013	Team of the Year
Kimberly Michael	2013	"Top Gun" Award
Robert Coughlin	2012	Investigator of the Year
Pamela Dixon	2012	Employee of the Year
Tom Dunlevy	2012	Prosecutor of the Year
Cole Gibson	2012	Employee of the Year
Yvonne Pampalone	2012	Employee of the Year
Richard Simon	2012	Prosecutor of the Year
<i>People v. Sharp</i> - Maeve Fox, Mike Palmieri, Kim Michael, Lisa Lyytikainen, Catherine Duggan, Lisa Wright	2012	Team of the Year
Lori Erickson	2012	"Top Gun" Award
Stephen Slyker	2011	Prosecutor of the Year
Jaclyn Sheehan	2011	Prosecutor of the Year
Michael Aguilar	2011	Investigator of the Year
Karen Simpson	2011	Employee of the Year
Elizabeth Elizondo	2011	Employee of the Year
Christina Therrein	2011	Employee of the Year
Mayela Ramirez	2011	Employee of the Year
Bobbie McQueen	2011	Employee of the Year
Subpoena Unit - Dominique Rosales, Chris Hart, Michelle Serrano, Francisco Martinez, Sean Creadick	2011	Unit of the Year
Dirk Boon	2011	"Top Gun" Award

# Dedication



**JAMES D. ELLISON**  
CHIEF ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Jim Ellison began his career with the Ventura County District Attorney's Office as a law clerk in August 1979. Later that year, Jim passed the bar and was appointed as a deputy district attorney. For 33 years, he demonstrated the skill, perseverance, knowledge and talent to become one of the most effective and respected prosecutors in the Ventura County District Attorney's Office. Jim was known for his candor and wit inside and outside the courtroom. As a senior prosecutor, he successfully prosecuted some of the most heinous crimes in the county. In 2006, Jim was asked by District Attorney Gregory Totten to serve as his top advisor and second in command as the Chief Assistant District Attorney.

Although Jim could be counted upon to aggressively pursue a conviction in the courtroom, he was also the first person in line to organize office events. He cooked and served breakfast to support staff every Administrative Professionals' Day and would don his Santa suit and pass out gifts at the office's holiday luncheon.

Jim retired from the District Attorney's Office in 2012. At his retirement, District Attorney Greg Totten remarked, "While others would be wise to endeavor to emulate him, in my judgment, he is one of a kind and cannot be replaced or duplicated."



**ROBERT A. BRINER**  
CHIEF INVESTIGATOR

After graduating from the Ventura County Sheriff's/Police Academy in December 1980, Rob Briner spent the first few years of his law enforcement career as a police officer for the Ventura, Port Hueneme, and Oxnard Police Departments. In November 1989, Rob began his career in the District Attorney's Office as a front-line investigator. Seasoned prosecutors and investigators learned early on that Rob was "an intelligent and tenacious investigator who leaves no stone unturned." Rob quickly promoted through all ranks of the Bureau of Investigation, where he served in almost every unit in the office. Rob promoted to Supervising Senior District Attorney Investigator in 1999 and Deputy Chief Investigator in 2006. In February 2007, District Attorney Greg Totten appointed Rob Chief Investigator of the Bureau of Investigation.

Throughout his 22-year career in the District Attorney's Office, Rob's motto was "fast, focused, flexible and friendly." This leadership style, combined with his natural personal warmth and genuine concern for others, garnered him the reputation as the "Good Will Ambassador" of the office. A colleague once wrote of him, "Rob's genuine caring for the success and well-being of others is part of the reason that he has such a loyal following of Bureau staff."

Rob's character in his professional life as well as his personal life can perhaps be summed up best by these words from a long-time colleague:

George Washington, the father of our great nation, once said, "Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation. It is better to be alone than in bad company." I am honored and thankful to be associated with such an outstanding friend and colleague as Rob, who habitually champions the highest professional standards with a strong commitment to doing the right thing.



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