



Sharen Wilson, Criminal District Attorney

cda.tarrantcounty.com

SUMMER 2017

The Docket



Since 1995, the Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney's Office has sent a trial prosecutor down to Austin during the legislative session to serve as a resource for legislators on issues of criminal and civil law in Texas. We share the goal with our local delegation of keeping violent criminals off our streets, and giving second chances to deserving citizens. Our legislative focus is shaped by the real-life scenarios we deal with here in the courthouse each day. This term, our office was represented in Austin by Assistant Criminal District Attorney Vincent Giardino.

An Update from Your CDA

Vincent worked closely with the eleven Representatives and 4 Senators that make up the powerful Tarrant County delegation to represent the criminal justice needs and interests of our community, and the State at large. He was able to offer his experience in an advisory role, to support good legislation, help to improve troubled legislation, and maintain a direct line of communication with the legislators on behalf of our office.

Among the bills actively supported by our office this term were:

- Senate Bill 524 by Senator Brian Birdwell and Representative Geren, to raise the punishment on abuse of a corpse (*signed into law*);
- House Bill 1266 by Rep. Charlie Geren and Sen. Jane Nelson, to allow prosecutors and defense attorneys three days to prepare cases before pretrial hearings (*signed into law*);
- HB 8 & 9 by Rep. Giovanni Capriglione, to strengthen cybercrime security and prosecution (*signed into law*);
- HB 557 by Sen. Konni Burton and Rep. Nicole Collier, to allow prosecutors to expunge cases after acquittals and to allow judges to return part or all of the filing fees on expunction cases (*signed into law*);
- SB 323 by Sen. Nelson, to make it a crime to transport females for the purpose of female genital mutilation (*signed into law*);
- SB 1728/HB 2441 by Sen. Birdwell and Rep. Craig Goldman, to call for a hearing on the record if either side seeks to close a juvenile court proceeding to the public;
- HB 2085 by Rep. Carol Alvarado, to provide for Grand Jurors to have available the same stress counseling available to trial jurors after their service.

We appreciate the hardworking, dedicated legislators who represent our community in Austin. As they return to the Capitol for the Special Session this summer, we will continue to work with them to protect the rights and liberties of Tarrant County residents.

With best wishes,

4th of July "No Refusal"

During these periods, drivers pulled over for suspicion of DWI will be required by court order to submit to a blood test.

July 4th Weekend

9:30pm, Monday, July 3 until

5:30am, Wednesday, July 5



ACDA and felony court chief David Alex testified this legislative session as an expert on the prosecution of animal cruelty cases.

Earned Second Chances - Expunctions & Non-Disclosures

Those eligible for expunctions and non-disclosures should be able to re-enter society without the stigma of being labeled a criminal offender. Our office has partnered with the L. Clifford Davis Legal Association (LCDLA), the historic Stop Six Initiative and Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas for the last two years to assist the public in obtaining these orders. In the Fall of 2016 and Spring of 2017, the partners hosted Expunction Clinics in South Fort Worth. These clinics, which were open to the public, included information and legal volunteers to advise and assist people in filing for an expunction or non-disclosure. More than 700 people attended the clinics, with the result of 230 filings. The LCDLA also hosted a credited training session earlier this year to train local defense attorneys on how to seek expunctions for their clients who have earned the right to a clean slate.

Court costs can be a significant barrier preventing low-income residents from applying for expunctions. Each year during the clinics, our Tarrant County Commissioners agreed to lower the filing costs to make these orders more accessible in our county. Expanding on this, our office worked closely with State Sen. Konni Burton and State Rep. Nicole Collier this legislative term on HB 557, which was referenced in the opening update of this newsletter. This legislation not only allows judges to return part or all of the filing fees on expunction cases, but enables prosecutors to expunge cases directly after an acquittal on a case.

We are continuing to work with our partners in the community on this important part of our mission to ensure fair and equal justice for all Tarrant County residents. We hope to expand the Expunction Clinic program into Arlington this Fall, in collaboration with the Tarrant County Bar Association.



ACDA Art Clayton, Chief of our Intimate Partner Violence Unit, recently joined TCU students for the campus' annual "Take Back the Night" event to raise awareness for survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence.

DON'T FORGET: The 2017 Citizen Prosecutor Academy (CPA) is an 11-week program designed to give citizens an in-depth understanding of the criminal justice system in Tarrant County.

Classes will be held Thursday evenings from 6:30 - 8:30 pm starting Sept. 7th and completing on Nov. 16th at the Tim Curry Criminal Justice Center in downtown Fort Worth.

For more information, please visit cda.tarrantcounty.com or contact our Community Outreach Coordinator, Amy Bearden at AHBearden@tarrantcountytx.gov.

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The number of murder victims stemming from intimate partner violence in Tarrant County this year, as of June 29th.

Recent Trials of Note

The State of Texas v. Alan Fowler

In this unusual case out of Southlake, Fowler, the disgruntled former employee of a well-known accounting firm, blamed his former supervisor for his dismissal. After months of planning, he went to the supervisor's home in the middle of the night, cut the power and fired into the house, hoping to provoke the man to come outside where Fowler could shoot him. The supervisor was out of town, but his wife was home and immediately called police. She remained barricaded inside the home until officers arrived, at which time they located Fowler sitting quietly on the home's back patio. His claims that he only wanted to kill himself in front of his supervisor were not believed by the jury given his meticulous planning of the crime, and he was found guilty of the charge of Attempted Murder.

Sentence (by jury): 20 years in prison

Prosecutors: Kevin Boneberg, Ashlea Deener

CDA Investigator: Don Pilcher

CDA Victim Advocate: Gabrielle Lepe

Southlake Police Department: Det. James Sutton

The State of Texas v. Howard Wayne Baker

In this high profile trial, Baker, the President of the Fort Worth arm of the notorious Bandidos motorcycle gang, was charged with organizing a 2015 ambush by dozens of Bandidos and other supporting gang members at the Gators Inn bar in Fort Worth. In a barrage of gunfire, the bikers stormed the club where members of another gang were present, dragged a rival member out onto the front lawn, assaulting and ultimately murdering him in front of his wife and friends.

Sentence (by judge):

Directing the Activities of a Criminal Street Gang, 45 yrs in prison
Engaging in the Activities of a Criminal Street Gang, 40 yrs in prison
Murder, 40 yrs in prison

Prosecutors: Pamela Boggess, Allenna Bangs

CDA Investigators: Don Pilcher, Booker Hamilton

CDA Victim Advocate: Laura Flores

Fort Worth Police Department:

Dets. Tom O'Brien, Matt Barron, Jerry Cedillo
& Ernie Pate, Ofc. Steve Groppi