

# JACKSON COUNTY PROSECUTOR 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



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# Jackson County Prosecutor's Office

### **Mission Statement**

In partnership with our Community, the office is dedicated to ethically and professionally pursuing the cause of justice, promoting public safety through data-driven practices and providing a voice for victims of crime.

Dear Community Members,

In 2018, the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office improved the well-being of our community, addressing violent crime more effectively and initiating new innovative efforts to reduce crime. We also enhanced procedural fairness and strengthened our office's bond with the community, especially with the survivors of crime who too long in the past suffered the consequences of crime with little or no support from the community.

Among many successes last year, our office:

Filed 15.7% more criminal cases

**Established new Caring for Crime Survivors program** 

Prosecutor Baker and new COMBAT team launched new approach

Prosecuted 'serial arsonist' for fire that killed two firefighters

Organized first "Gun Violence Summit" in Kansas City

Sent felony cases to first Neighborhood Accountability Board

Handled more than 8,000 child support cases

Celebrated 150th graduating class of Drug Court

This past year netted tremendous successes and encouraging progress. New efforts in the past couple years led to meaningful collaborations with the community and with partners in the criminal justice system, much of it focused on new approaches to reducing violent crime. As we continue forward, we are aiming for a new public safety model that places a priority on our overall community's health.

Thank you for taking an interest in the important work of the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office. We look ahead with the hope that we can even further improve public safety and benefit everyone in our community.

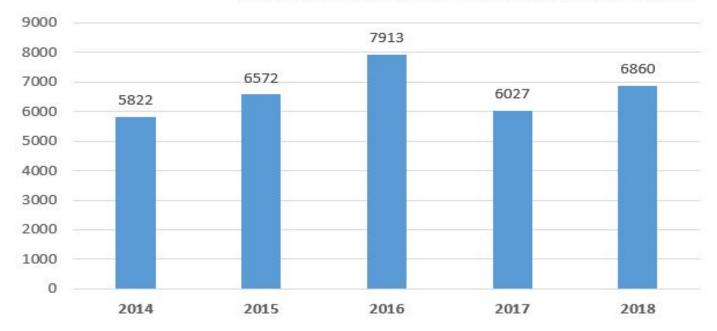
Regards,



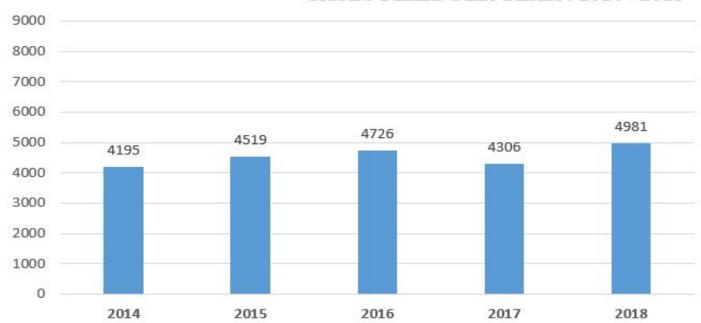


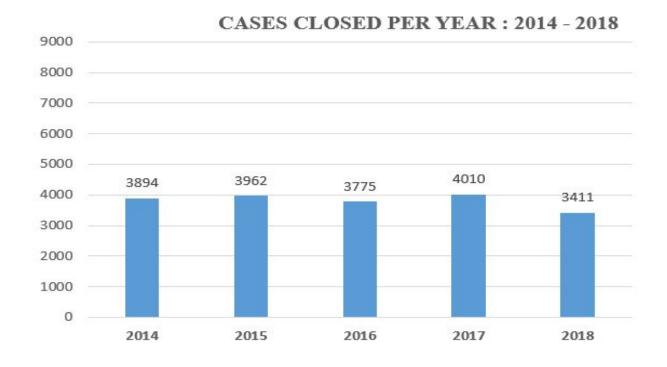


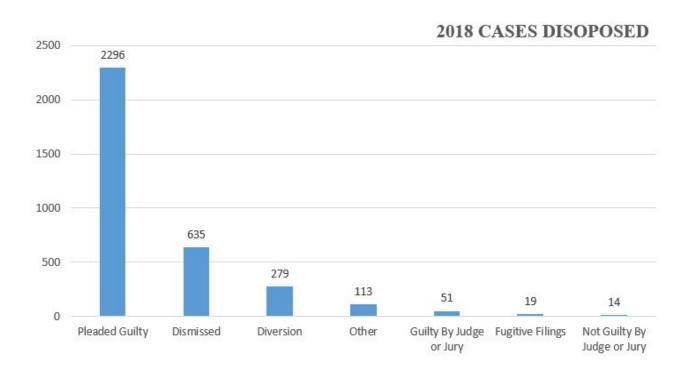
#### CASES RECEIVED PER YEAR: 2014 - 2018



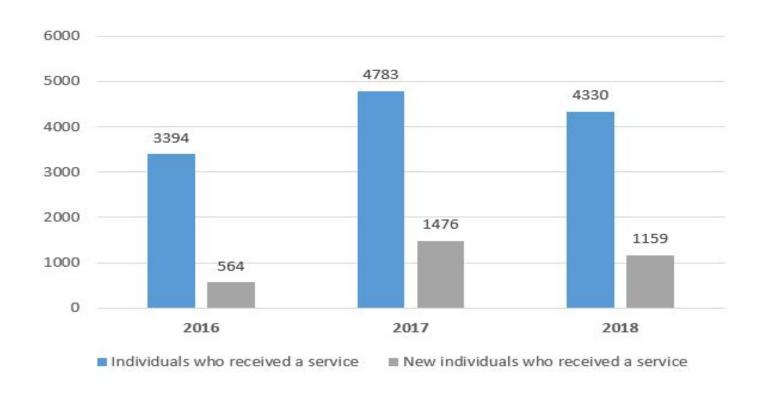
#### CASES FILED PER YEAR: 2014 - 2018

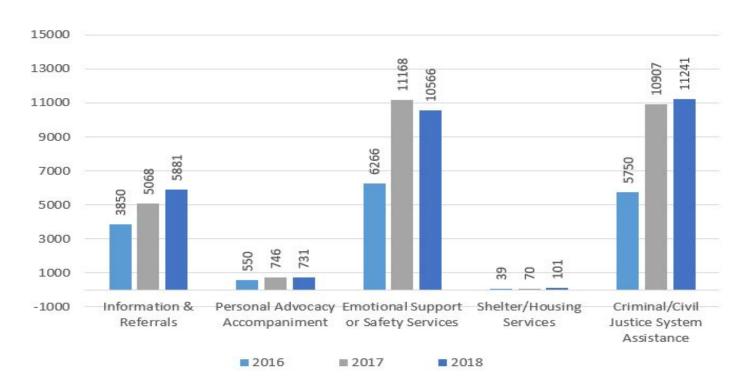






# STAT





# **Caring for Crime Survivors**

**Restoring Hope for Victims of Crime** 



# New Crime Survivors program assists more than 100 households in 2018

"Out of 25 years that I've worked at the prosecutor's office, this is the best thing that has ever happened," veteran victim advocate Marilyn Layton told the Kansas City Star.

Layton was explaining the new Jackson County Prosecutor's Office's Caring for Crime Survivors program, initiated in 2018. The program allows, for a first time Layton and a well-known community advocacy group, the Ad Hoc Group Against Crime, to offer help and services to the victims of crimes that have not been submitted for filing of criminal charges.

Traditionally, those crime survivors – who are about three times, at least, in number as those who are victims in charged criminal cases – receive no offer of help.

"This is what a healthy community looks like," explained Jackson County Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker. "When bad things happen to a member of a community, the other members reach out and offer to help."

Continuing to let these crime victims fend for themselves, Baker added, is not a recipe for building a strong and healthy community.

Growing up in the Osage County, MO, small town of Frankenstein, Baker recalled that "when something happened to a neighbor, no matter whether it was good or bad, residents would stop by, usually with a casserole."

Caring for Crime Survivors program, Baker said, is the Frankenstein casserole.







Baker said she hopes one outgrowth of this effort will be to mend, at least in part, the tattered trust between law enforcement and the community.

Layton is the front-end of the program, helping to find victims by talking to police agencies about recent gun violence, especially cases where there's not a clear suspect identified. These include drive-by shootings and non-fatal shootings, which usually number 500 or more each year in Kansas City.

Each week, Layton and Branden Mims of the Ad Hoc Group Against Crime would visit the crime survivor and their family and find out how they could be helped. If bullets ripped holes in the home's siding, the program may be able to repair the damage. Auto glass and tire repair may be arranged. If the traumatized family members could benefit from counseling, it can be offered in their home. Victims also are given a bag of groceries; some may be assisted with utilities.

In 11 months of 2018, the Caring for Crime Survivors program reached more than 100 households. It operated in 2018 on a \$100,000 grant from Jackson County COMBAT.

The Victim Service Help Line, Monday – Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. -- (816) 842-8467

# COMBAT

### Jackson County Prosecutor pledges transparency in oversight of COMBAT

Jackson County COMBAT, the county's violence and drug prevention program, is now under the oversight of the Jackson County Prosecutor.

"I will oversee this program in a straightforward and transparent manner," Jackson County Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker stated as soon as she learned of a Jackson County circuit court's ruling upholding COMBAT's move to the prosecutor's oversight.

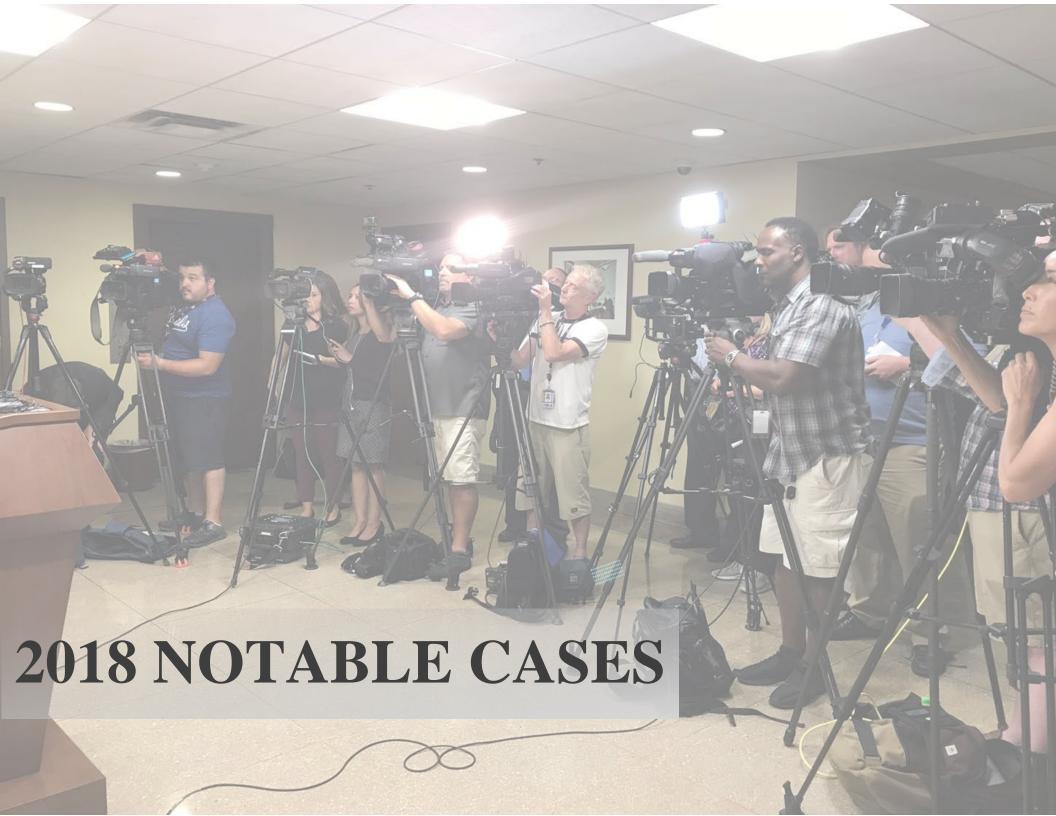
Baker immediately initiated a performance audit by Missouri Auditor Nicole Galloway. Baker also announced that BKD would perform a financial audit of COMBAT funds. Both audits are underway; reports are expected later in 2019.

On Aug. 31, 2018, a Jackson County Circuit judge upheld the Jackson County Legislature's passage of a resolution to place COMBAT under the prosecutor's office. In December 2017, the Legislature unanimously voted for the move, but the County Executive sued. The legal question ended up before a Jackson County judge.

After the trial court upheld the Legislature's action, the Prosecutor's Office guided and supported the COMBAT staff in awarding Treatment and Prevention grants. Following the Aug. 31, 2018, ruling, Baker enlisted the Midwest Center for Non-profit Leadership and a nominating committee of community leaders in a search for a new director of COMBAT. On Oct. 29, Vince Ortega, who had served as deputy director, was selected.

Ortega and Baker quickly championed a new approach for COMBAT – focusing more resources on "crime hotspots" identified by current police crime data. "Building community involvement in this effort will be an important key to success," Ortega said.

Baker added, "Our community today needs more than ever for COMBAT to effectively reduce the disastrous impacts of illegal drugs and violence."



# Firefighters' Case



#### A 74-year prison sentence in firefighters' death case

# Jackson County prosecution team successfully pursued "serial arsonist" and the fatal consequences of a devastating Northeast Kansas City fire

Those Kansas City firefighters who survived the Oct. 12, 2015 fire of a three-story brick building in the city's historic Northeast area described it as the hottest fire they had ever fought.

In the end, it killed two of their colleagues – firefighters John Mesh and Larry Leggio – injured two other firefighters and etched in Kansas City's history a milestone of grief and loss.

On Sept. 21, 2018, a Jackson County judge, following a week-long bench trial in July, sentenced the woman responsible for that fire -- nail salon owner Thu Jong Nguyen -- to 74 years in a Missouri prison.

The judge sentenced her to 30 years in prison for each of the two counts of felony murder related to Mesh and Leggio's deaths, plus seven years on each of the two counts of second-degree assault for the firefighters who were permanently injured in the fire. Nguyen will be required to serve 85 percent of the murder sentences before she is eligible for parole.

The verdicts were a significant marker in a nearly three-year effort by the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office to prosecute the case against Nguyen. The trial team included Chief Deputy Dan Nelson, Chief Trial Assistant Theresa Crayon and Trial Team Leader Daniel Portnoy.

The prosecutor's office credited the investigation by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, which not only helped to document the fire's origin but also the defendant's association with previous fires and insurance payouts over the years, a pattern that prosecutors called the work of a "serial arsonist."

The prosecution of arson cases are always complex, but this case may have been among the most complex. The prosecution team had 58,000 individual documents in discovery, some of them hundreds of pages long. More than 150 reports were generated by law enforcement and five expert witnesses testified in the week-long trial. The team acknowledged the special efforts of Special Agent Ryan Zornes from the ATF.

"The ATF's expertise, dedication and unwavering support of this investigation and these victims, up to charging and all through the exceedingly complex trial, allowed us to obtain justice for these firefighters' families," Nelson said.

The trial evidence showed that the defendant over seven years had received nearly \$268,000 from 24 insurance payouts related to 16 separate insurance claims. Six of those events were fires.

Following the verdict, Missy Leggio, the wife of deceased firefighter Larry Leggio, thanked the ATF, the Kansas City Police Department and the prosecution team. "It lifted a little bit of weight off our chest," she said.

About two months later, the families and supporters of the fallen firefighters gathered to hear the sentence – 74 years. They were pleased but still somber about their loss.

"Although it is 74 years, this is something that will go on forever...for us," Missy Leggio said.

Prosecutor Baker hugged the families and praised the teamwork that led to the final outcome.

"We are obviously very, very pleased with the outcome of this case," Baker told the media. "But we're also very pleased with the investigation by the ATF."

# **Amorian Hale Case**

#### Two KC men sentenced to prison in fatal shooting

Two defendants were sentenced to more than 200 years in a Missouri prison for the 2015 fatal shooting of 3-year-old Amorian Hale, who was shot while sleeping in his bed at home.

Dominique Marchbanks was sentenced to 165 years plus a life sentence in the Missouri Department of Corrections, while SirTerry Stevenson was sentenced to 15 years in prison on convictions of Murder 2nd Degree, Unlawful Use of a Weapon and two counts of Armed Criminal Action.

"Amorian was a wholly innocent 3 year old," Jackson County Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker said in a statement after Marchbanks' sentencing. "His life was callously taken from his family and this community. His contribution will never be realized because of this man's cowardly act of spraying Amorian's home with gunfire, fatally striking Amorian as he slept in his bed. We are grateful that Judge Harrell issued a sentence that acknowledges what was lost – not just a life, but a lifetime of potential, hope, and the kind of unconditional love that can only be given through a child's eyes. Though 165 consecutive years, plus a life sentence will not restore our community, this sentence serves as a statement that violence in our community will not be tolerated."

When handing down the sentence, Jackson County Circuit Court Judge Kevin D. Harrell said he "hopes you [defendant] will think about your [defendant's] actions and grieve Amorian Hale, who will never grow old.

At Stevenson's sentencing, Amorian's family members described for a Jackson County judge the great impact of losing their son and grandson. Family members said they are still trying to recover emotionally for something that should have never happened.

According to court records, Dominque Marchbanks was a passenger in Stevenson's car on May 31, 2015. Witness statements indicate Marchbanks leaned out of the vehicle and fired a high-powered assault rifle into 6701 Walrond, before fleeing the scene. When questioned regarding the incident, Marchbanks denied involvement.

In court, Stevenson told the child's family members he was sorry about Amorian's death. "It is true," he said. "I'm sorry for the loss of the little boy's life...It shouldn't have happened."



# Grand Jury Reports on Poor Conditions at Jackson County Detention Center

A Jackson County grand jury has filed a 70-plus page report with the 16th Circuit Court that details the poor conditions at the Jackson County Detention Center, Jackson County Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker announced today. Baker issued a letter to the citizens of Jackson County, alerting them of the grand jurors service and diligence in examining the conditions of the jail.

Link to the report





## **Eric Greitens Case**

#### Prosecutor declines to file charges against former governor of Missouri

Jackson County Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker announced that after a diligent review of evidence, she is declining to file further charges in the Eric Greitens case referred to her office in May 2018.

Baker's office received a file from the Circuit Attorney of St. Louis on May 22, 2018. Since then, she and a team of assistant prosecutors have exhausted potential leads in examining submitted evidence and enlisting the Missouri Highway Patrol to investigate issues in this case.

As of the day of Baker's announcement, the statute of limitations were nearly set to expire, Baker stated that her office did not have sufficient evidence to consider filing new charges against Greitens, the former governor of Missouri. Still missing was corroborating evidence for an invasion of privacy case, Baker noted.



# **David Jungerman Case**



David Jungerman, 80, was charged in the October 2017 fatal shooting of Kansas City lawyer Thomas Pickert on his front walk. He faces Murder 1st Degree and Armed Criminal Action.\*

According to court records, KCPD officers responded at about 8:07 a.m. on Oct. 25, 2017, to a Kansas City residence. They found the victim's body on the front walk. He had been shot once by a .17 caliber bullet. Before the shooting, the victim had obtained a jury verdict in the amount of \$5.75 million against David Jungerman, of Raytown on behalf of his client. The day before the murder, Jungerman was served property liens by the Jackson County Sheriff's Office.

A white van was tracked traveling from near Raytown to the victim's neighborhood, according to court records. The defendant owns a white van and told the media that no one used his van that day and that he had the only key to that van. A witness – a man walking his dog -- told police that he saw an older white man with grey hair standing behind an idling white van. The man then parked the van directly across from the victim's house. The witness also stated the man wore khaki pants and a tan jacket darker than the pants.

The fatal bullet, according to court records, was identified as a .17 caliber round, a relatively rare caliber. On March 8, 2018, a search warrant was obtained for the defendant's car. Under the passenger seat an unspent .17 caliber bullet was located. A witness told police that he had a conversation with Jungerman in March 2018. During that conversation, Jungerman stated he had killed a lawyer with a gun and gotten away with it. He did it because the lawyer stole his money.

Recently, police executed search warrants, according to court records, at the defendant's home and business. At his business, police found a print out from the Jackson County property tax database. It showed the victim's home address. An Olympus audio recorder with a recording was recovered. The first part of the recording captured a court hearing that the defendant attended in November 2017. But after the hearing, the recorder continued to run. Later, the defendant talked to his employee about a .17 caliber rifle and about killing the victim.

Prosecutors requested that Jungerman continue to be held on no bond.

\*Charges are only accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until the defendant is either found guilty or has pleaded.

# South Kansas City Trail Case

A Kansas City man faces charges in six homicides, all fatal shootings in Kansas City in remote areas, including a homeless camp and a walking trail in south Kansas City.

A Jackson County grand jury indicted Fredrick Scott, dob: 11/18/1994, in three other murders in south Kansas City. Those new charges were in connection with the fatal shootings of David Lenox on about Feb. 27, 2017, Timothy Rice, who was found around April 3, 2017, and Michael Darby, who was fatally shot on May 18, 2017.

Scott faces Murder 1st Degree and Armed Criminal Charges in those fatal shootings\*. In 2017, Scott was charged in three other homicides in the same general area of south Kansas City\*. Those earlier charges accused Scott of the murders of Karen Harmeyer, 64, whose body was found in July in Grandview, Steven Gibbons, 57, and John Palmer, 56. Gibbons was killed on Aug. 13, 2017 and Palmer's body was found on Aug. 19, 2016.

\*Charges are only accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until the defendant is either found guilty or has pleaded. **Public Assistance** Requested - 474-·Anyone with information regarding Fredr Scott and firearms · Any Fredrick D. See



# Day Long Conference Explores Gun Violence in Our Community

For high school students across Kansas City, the new reality of gun violence requires that they now think about the possibility of being shot at school.

And for some urban students such fear can extend to their journey home and to their neighborhoods, where gun violence has become too common

In the city's emergency rooms, meanwhile, physicians regularly see the physical and emotional casualties of this new gun reality in Kansas City.

These were among the graphic realities described by speakers at the Kansas City Gun Summit, called "The Realities of Gun Violence in Kansas City: A Community Discussion." The daylong event, held April 20, 2018 at the Kauffman Foundation Conference Center in Kansas City was hosted by the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office with support from Prosecutors Against Gun Violence, a national organization of big-city prosecutors dedicated to reducing gun violence.

The discussion was intended to capture the new reality of gun violence in our city, but also present some possibilities for coping with it.

"Our community must learn to better cope with the daily violence and its enormous impacts on children, families and community," said Jackson County Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker. "Our children bear the greatest burden. Some in urban neighborhoods go to bed despite the sound of gunfire in the night. Others can't help but worry about an unsuspected shooter at school."

"We must all work together to reduce the level of violence," Baker added.
"But we also must all make ourselves more aware of the impacts of this level of violence on the institutions of our city, the hospitals, the schools, the businesses and our households







# **Innovative Solutions**

#### Federal grant allows Jackson County to try restorative justice, other new ways to reduce violent crime

Police were dispatched the evening of Feb. 11, 2017, to the 5100 block of East 24<sup>th</sup> Street, where the community center Hope City engages and feeds the homeless, including drug addicts.

Video surveillance showed a man punching another man at least three times before the suspect drove away. The victim knew his attacker. He identified him for police.

A few months later, Kansas City police arrested the suspect in his residence. He was charged with assault.

Now, this story takes a different turn thanks to a federal grant called Innovative Prosecution Strategies from the U.S. Department of Justice.

As part of that grant, a Jackson County prosecutor is dedicated to reviewing cases in Kansas City Police Department's East Patrol. The prosecutor was searching for felony cases that might benefit from a new approach – using a community-led Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB) who would help find a resolution outside the walls of the Jackson County Courthouse. This process uses restorative justice principles to address harm and hold individuals accountable for offenses. If the victim agrees, the prosecutor's office would dismiss the case and hold open the option of re-filing if the defendant does not complete his or her program with the NAB.

This case looked like it might be a good candidate for NAB because the victim supported trying the restorative justice approach. He wanted his attacker to address his substance abuse problems. And the suspect was also sincerely grateful for the opportunity to right his wrong in a more substantive way.

The suspect told police that before the Feb. 11, 2017, assault he was drinking at a bar not far from Hope City. He was upset about family turmoil. He was so drunk that he didn't remember hitting anyone. But if he hurt anyone, he told police he was very sorry. He wanted to apologize to the victim.

In March 2018, a group of four community leaders, who had been trained by the Center for Conflict Resolution in restorative justice, heard the case. The suspect faced the board and board members and the suspect agreed to a plan for his future improvement. Anger management. An apology to the victim. And an assessment for substance abuse. A mediation with the suspect and his family members also was set up. The suspect has complied with the agreement to date.

In 2016, the U.S. Department of Justice selected the Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office ("JCPAO") as one of a handful of recipients of a SMART Prosecution Grant, now called Innovative Prosecution Strategies. These monies give JCPAO the resources to research and develop innovative approaches to gun violence in our city, including the restorative justice process. Prosecutors work with KCPD and academic partners to devise, implement and monitor these new strategies.

The Smart Prosecution project has two organizing principles. First, the concept of geographic prosecution according to which designated attorneys handle only cases from designated areas, and second, engaging the community in substantive and meaningful ways.





JCPAO worked with KCPD to select five target areas, each approximately one-half square mile, of violent crime in Kansas City's East Zone. Two JCPAO prosecutors are assigned to the East Zone and prosecute all violent crime, with the exception of sex crimes and domestic violence, arising in the target areas. The prosecutors use data to understand crime patterns in each hotspot, as well as engage with community members to gain knowledge of the make-up of the community and the particular issues that contribute to violent crime. This type of community involvement enables prosecutors to bring stronger and smarter cases. Community knowledge and crime statistics help law enforcement target those individuals at the center of criminal activity and to see the interconnectedness of cases and individuals, as opposed to traditional methods of looking at defendants and cases on a one-by-one basis.

In addition to enhanced prosecution techniques, JCPAO has implemented a number of initiatives to address crime and engage the community.

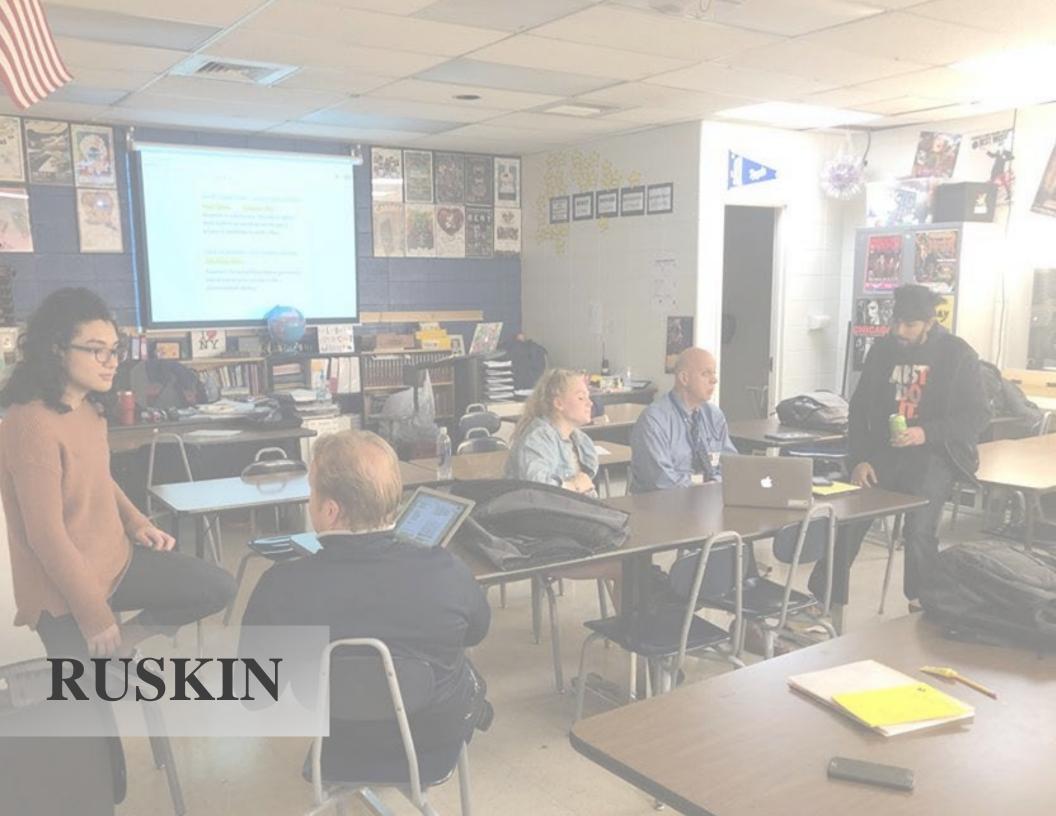
<u>Abandoned Housing Initiative</u> - Abandoned houses and properties contribute to criminal activity. Recent studies have shown a link between ameliorating urban blight and lower gun violence rates. Prosecutors have partnered with Legal Aid to clear titles and rehabilitate abandoned homes in our target areas.

**Restorative Justice Diversion** - The Center for Conflict Resolution has trained Neighborhood Accountability Boards to hear and resolve a limited number of cases using restorative justice practices. This approach allows the community to have a voice in repairing the harm caused by certain offenses.

<u>Victim Advocacy</u> - Prosecutors have increased the resources available to victims, as well as the number of victims we are able to contact. We strive to talk to victims much earlier in the criminal justice process, regardless of whether we are able to file charges related to the offense.

<u>Community Engagement/Expungement</u> - The prosecutor's office seeks to engage the community and build bridges with key community stakeholders. To this end, the prosecutor's office has hosted community events in the target areas and also supports local groups who work to address violence in their neighborhoods. Additionally, the prosecutor's office is funding an Expungement Clinic at UMKC School of Law to assist individuals who have old convictions eligible to be stricken from their records. This project is part of the larger effort in building bridges to high-crime areas and revealing ways that the law and law enforcement can work for them.

Our grant ends in September 2019 and we will work with our research partners to publish a report on our findings. Our efforts have already improved outcomes in our office by strengthening relationships with the community and the KCPD, and gaining significant insight into high-crime neighborhoods.



## **Ruskin High Debate**

Jackson County prosecutors and their friends, including Asst. U.S. Attorney Adam Caine, spent afternoons during the school year with Ruskin High debate and forensics students, helping them ready for weekend tournament, including the national qualification event. Students had one-on-one help and group discussions with the volunteers, who included Prosecutor Baker.







# **Family Support Division**

#### Focusing every day on lifting families out of poverty

In this division of the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office, the main focus is to help to lift families out of poverty, with some special attention on the children.

The Family Support Division of the prosecutor's office works closely with hundreds of parents and guardians each year. Among its tasks:

- Locate a parent.
- Establish a legal father for a child (Paternity).
- Obtain a child support order, and when available, establish an order for health care coverage.
- Collect regular child support payments.
- Enforce medical support.
- Review child support orders for modification, when appropriate.
- Collaborate with other states and countries to pursue child support actions.

This office places a special emphasis on obtaining orders that establish paternity, child support and medical coverage, as well as collecting regular child support for those children. Ensuring economic support for the children builds stability and well-being for the children and our community.

Each month over 400 children, mothers and alleged fathers are scheduled for collection of a genetic sample (DNA) in the office. The DNA from those samples is analyzed by an accredited laboratory to scientifically determine the probability of paternity of a child and alleged father. It is very important for children to know the identity of their father, and for fathers to be certain of paternity which will hopefully result in a supportive relationship.

The child support professionals of the Family Support Division are passionate about the service they provide in our community. They handle 8,000 child support cases the office. Technicians send out wage withholding orders to employers to collect money from a nonpaying parent's wages. They prepare administrative action for orders of support for children and are involved in hearings and meetings to resolve those cases. Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys and legal assistants file actions in court to collect child support that is due to children. Staff investigate and locate parents that need to be found in order for actions to begin. Genetic testing is scheduled each day, and paternity actions are filed, along with child support orders.

Family support staff also engage the community at numerous family outreach, school and health events to encourage responsible parenting and to benefit children in need in Jackson County. They also participate in National Child Support Awareness Month activities, including this bi-lingual informational display.

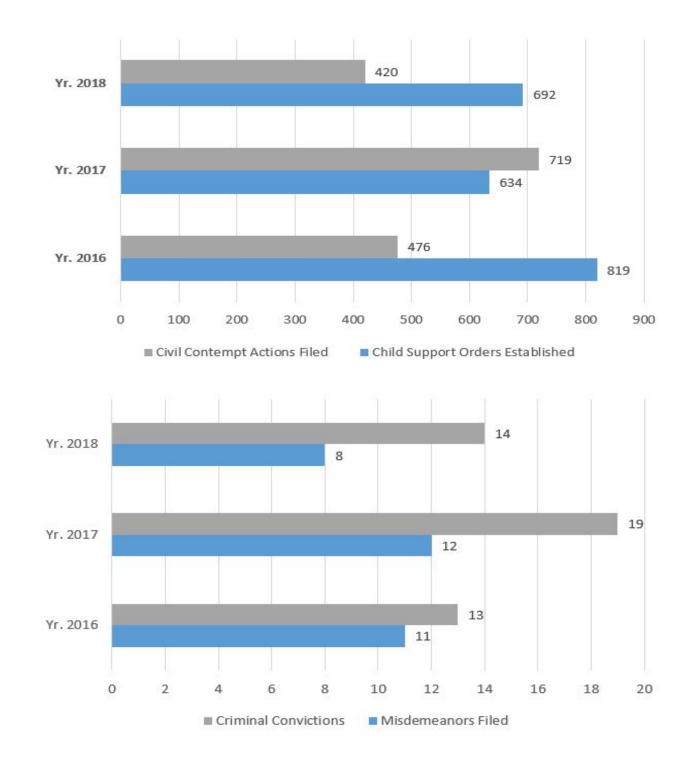
Family Support also partners with the client advocates in the prosecutor's office's KC NOVA and Drug Court programs to assist participants in those programs with child support issues.

"The most positive and profound impact our work makes on the community is being a catalyst for the support children receive -- support provided in the form of cash and medical benefits that advances the quality of health, education, and social economic status for fragile families," said Debra deClue, Child Support Enforcement Supervisor with over 30 years as a child support professional.

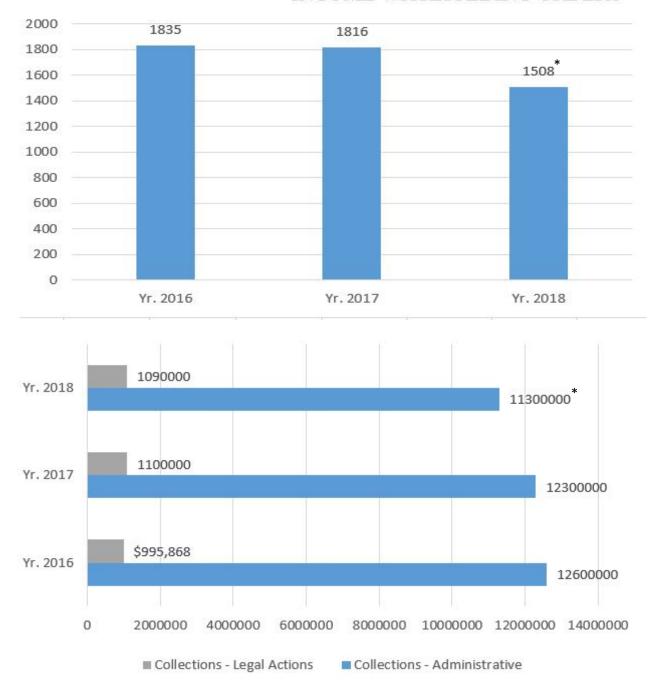
Bret Myers, who has served over 20 years in the Prosecutor's Office "This may sound a bit like a cliché, but we provide for the children and the children, for better or worse, are our future."



# STATI



#### INCOME WITHHOLDING ORDERS



<sup>\*</sup> Nearly 500 Cases were transferred out of the office in 2018 as part of a statewide case redistribution



# **Drug Court**

#### Jackson County celebrates 150th class of Drug Court graduates

The Jackson County Prosecutor's Office celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> class of Drug Court graduates with a special guest, then - U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill, who helped initiate the first Drug Court in Jackson County.

McCaskill greeted and congratulated about two dozen new graduates of Jackson County Drug Court in a special ceremony Monday at the Jackson County Courthouse in Kansas City.

McCaskill delivered remarks for the graduates and their supporters, praising the graduates and noting how far the program has come since it was initiated in the early 1990s, when she was prosecutor here. Now, nearly 3,000 persons have benefited from the program, which allows drug offenders to receive treatment in lieu of traditional prosecution. McCaskill noted the strong, bi-partisan support for such programs and recalled how she knew the program had achieved some success when police drug officers, who initially were skeptical of it, attended a graduation a few years later and applauded the graduates.

"At that moment, I knew we had created something special," McCaskill stated.

Jackson County Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker introduced McCaskill, who would later win her bid for re-election, and detailed how such programs have grown in Missouri and across the nation. Now, nearly 165 Drug Court programs exist in Missouri. The ceremony on Monday marked the 150th class of Drug Court graduates. Drug Court Commissioner David Fry, with McCaskill, handed each graduate their certificate of completion.





## **Kids' Court**

#### Testifying in court does not have to be a terrible experience. For some it helps heal.

Going to court is seen by many adults as an intimidating experience. When the witness is a child, we assume the experience will be traumatic. Children often feel they are to blame, that they are on trial themselves or that they are the guilty ones. Many times children and their families feel they are being drawn into complicated legal proceedings that seem confusing and at times hostile.

Children are credible witnesses and deserve to be treated with the respect to which they are entitled. But children require education and special support prior to giving testimony. The preparation is not to help them remember what happened, but how to be able to communicate their experience and knowledge from the witness stand.

**Kids' Court** is a program designed to prepare children for the court experience. Trained advocates provide education and support to children and their families as they anticipate going to court to testify. Many times children do not know court terminology such as "prosecutor," "defense attorney," "sequestration oath."

Children are shown the courthouse and given a "hands on tour" of an actual court room. They are able to see touch and experience a new and strange environment. And they learn their job in court is to tell the truth.



