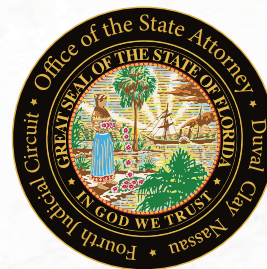


STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA  
**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**







Originally the federal building constructed and pictured in the 1930s (outside and inside cover), the Ed Austin Building now houses the Duval County office of the State Attorney's Office. Photos courtesy of the City of Jacksonville Planning Department's Historic Preservation Section and the Saxelbye, Powell, Roberts, and Ponder Collection.

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**Melissa W. Nelson**  
*State Attorney for Florida's  
Fourth Judicial Circuit*

## MESSAGE TO THE COMMUNITY

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### **The year 2020 will largely be remembered as one of struggle.**

The country grappled with a newfound enemy: a pandemic invisible to the human eye but nonetheless, devastating. Thousands of lives were lost, businesses were shuttered, and the way we lived changed in ways we had never experienced.

The criminal justice system was not immune to the impacts of COVID-19. Jury trials — a tenet of our democracy — were largely halted. Like the work of so many others, however, the work of a prosecutor's office does not stop. We had to adapt and move forward.

The in-person meetings that were so common before turned into Zoom calls and FaceTime sessions. Remote work became the norm. And the cases that continued to accumulate on our desks were resolved through a lens of not only public safety, but public health. Despite the best efforts of everyone involved, the backlog of cases was inevitable — a result that will be felt for the foreseeable future.

The struggle went beyond the virus and bled into the streets in more than one form.

After the tragic killing of George Floyd, our nation erupted in protests and violence. Across the country and locally, the scenes of protests and calls for transparency were loud and reverberated through our halls.

We listened. And, in response, created a new policy locally that related to the swift release of body camera footage in police shootings.

For reasons criminologists and social scientists will study for years to come, the same streets were filled with bloodshed — gun violence ticked upward in Jacksonville and all across the country in numbers we had not seen in decades. At the State Attorney's Office, we redoubled our efforts to stem this tide of violence and implemented new policies to further analyze and scrutinize firearms cases. As we move through 2021, we are encouraged that our efforts in this regard are taking root.

Although 2020 will largely be remembered as one of struggle, it was not solely defined by those challenges. Even through the bleakness, I saw hope.

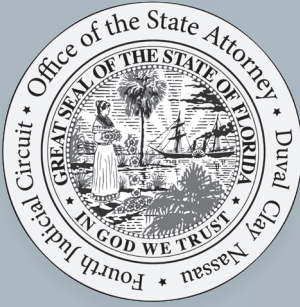
Firsthand, I saw how the 300-plus attorneys, investigators, and staff at our office stepped up, adjusted, and persevered.

We continued to bring justice to victims of crime. We continued to do our part to keep the community safe and healthy. And we continued to work for you, the people we serve, to pursue justice always.

You will see many of those stories of struggle and hope throughout the following pages of this, our fourth Annual Report. Thank you for your continued interest in our work.

Stay safe, stay healthy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa".



# Our Mission

The mission of the State Attorney's Office is to pursue justice for the citizens of the Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida and to fairly and impartially enforce the law.

---

## Core Guiding Principles

We will:

- 1 Treat all participants in the criminal justice system with **RESPECT**
- 2 Empower crime victims, and treat them with **DIGNITY**
- 3 Strive for **FAIRNESS** and **IMPARTIALITY** in our use of prosecutorial discretion
- 4 Pursue just punishment and **ACCOUNTABILITY** for those guilty of crimes
- 5 Actively seek **INPUT** from the diverse communities we serve
- 6 Lead with **TRANSPARENCY** in our actions and decision-making
- 7 Seek **EFFECTIVE** and **INNOVATIVE** strategies for preventing and controlling crime
- 8 **SUPPORT** and **EXPLORE** alternatives to the penal system when appropriate
- 9 Act as good **STEWARDS** of public resources entrusted to us for our work
- 10 Stay abreast of **BEST PRACTICES** in our field and employ technology effectively
- 11 **COLLABORATE** with other government and law enforcement agencies and community partners to enhance public safety
- 12 Act with **PROFESSIONALISM**

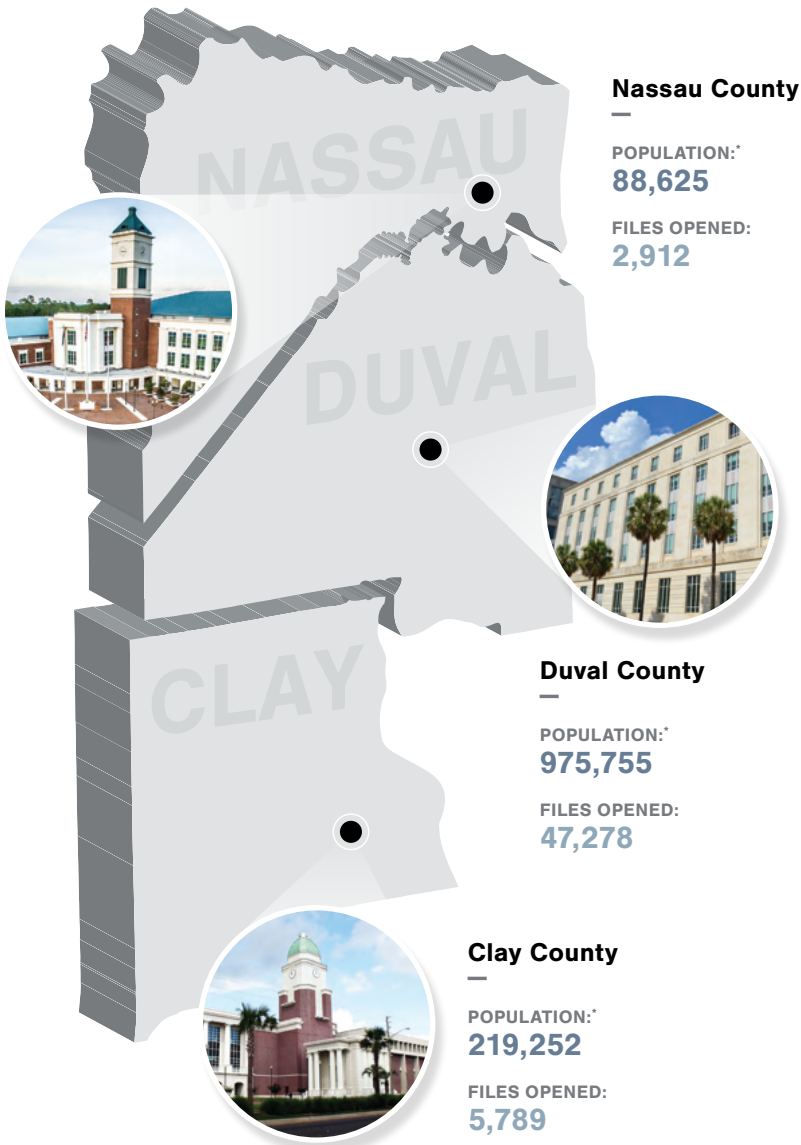
PURSUE  
JUSTICE ALWAYS





## STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE FOR FLORIDA'S FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

## 2020 Office at a Glance



Our duty to the people of Northeast Florida comprises two main tenets. The first is to keep people safe by prosecuting those who disrupt our community. The second is to ensure the pursuit of justice is done in a transparent, fair, and thoughtful way that maintains the trust of those we serve.

State Attorney Melissa Nelson



STATE ATTORNEY:  
**Melissa W. Nelson**



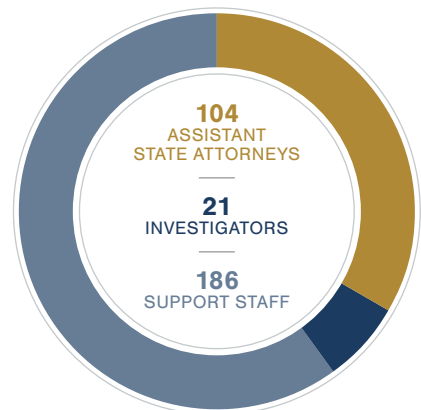
TOTAL POPULATION:  
**1,265,632**



TOTAL FILES OPENED:  
**55,979**



TOTAL EMPLOYEES:  
**311**



NUMBER OF PUBLIC RECORDS  
REQUESTS CLOSED:  
**1,715**



BUDGET:  
**\$31.4 million**



## STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE FOR FLORIDA'S FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

# 2020 by the Numbers

To benefit our community, these four key programs and initiatives were priorities in 2020.



## Juvenile Civil Citations

This program allows youth with no previous criminal history to avoid a criminal record. Instead of an arrest, law enforcement officers can issue a civil citation.

**SAVINGS:****\$2.1 million<sup>1</sup>****2020 UTILIZATION RATE:<sup>2</sup>**

- **78%** – SAO4 Post-COVID
- **90%** – SAO4 Pre-COVID
- **55%** – Florida Average

**NUMBER OF CIVIL CITATIONS ISSUED:****460<sup>3</sup>**

## KEYS 2 Drive

This program helps eligible offenders obtain a valid driver's license and puts them back on the road safely and legally.

	DUVAL	NASSAU	TOTAL
SAVINGS*	<b>\$74,000+</b>	<b>\$4,000+</b>	<b>\$78,000+</b>
PAID TO FLORIDA FROM KEYS 2 DRIVE*	<b>\$500,000+</b>	<b>\$42,000+</b>	<b>\$542,000+</b>
CLIENTS SERVED*	<b>1,186</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1,253</b>
RELICENSED*	<b>504</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>552</b>



## Restitution Enforcement Program\*\*

This pre-arrest diversion program gives offenders the opportunity to pay restitution to victims and avoid arrest.

**COLLECTED FOR THE STATE OF FLORIDA IN RESTITUTION THAT GOES TO VICTIMS:****\$650,000<sup>4</sup>****CASES ACCEPTED INTO THE PROGRAM:****1,879<sup>5</sup>****CASES DISMISSED FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OR SUBSTANTIAL COMPLIANCE:****1,029<sup>7</sup>**

## First Seal and Expungement Fair

On January 22, 2020, we hosted our first event to help eligible Duval County offenders expunge or seal their criminal records.

**PEOPLE SERVED INCLUDING PRE-REGISTRATIONS AND DAY OF EVENT:****400+****EVENT ATTENDEES:****160+****EVENT ATTENDEES IDENTIFIED AS ELIGIBLE TO SEAL OR EXPUNGE A RECORD:****100+**

\*\* From March 2020 to December 2020, an automatic 10-month forbearance was granted to program participants who could not fulfill their restitution obligations due to hardships created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Restitution was collected during this period, but no one was rejected for failure to pay. Since this time period, many payment plans were renegotiated to accommodate those who want to remain compliant but have fallen behind on their payments.

1. The cost to arrest a juvenile is \$5000. The cost to issue a Civil Citation is \$386, saving \$4614 for each juvenile issued a civil citation and not arrested. Florida DJJ Civil Citation Initiative, <https://juvjustice.org/sites/default/files/ckfinder/files/STTAC%20Civil%20CitationWebinar.pdf>, September 22, 2014, pg. 27; Florida DJJ Roadmap to System Excellence, <https://www.scribd.com/document/162251091/Florida-Department-of-Juvenile-Justice-Roadmap-to-System-Excellence>, August 1, 2013, pg. 32; Florida DJJ Civil Citations, <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/quality-improvement-residential/2012-civil-citation-powerpoint>, May 2012, pg. 7. Estimated cost savings from using juvenile pre-arrest diversions rather than arrests is \$2,122,440.

2. CC Dashboard | Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (state.fl.us)

3. Due to COVID-19, the number of juvenile civil citations issued were less than prior years. 1005 juvenile civil citation were issued in 2019.

4. Court Options, KEYS 2 Drive data, Fourth Judicial Circuit, Duval County, Florida.

5. The Restitution Enforcement Program (REP) is a pre-arrest diversion program designed to give offenders the opportunity to pay restitution and avoid arrest. Restitution is collected by the office on behalf of several state agencies including the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Revenue, the Department of Economic Opportunity, and the Jacksonville Housing Authority. REP collected \$650,430.

6. Cases accepted into REP in 2020 may still be participating in REP.

7. Completion rates may include cases diverted in previous years, completed in 2020.

8. Duval and Nassau counties.





## Tax Dollars Saved



JUVENILE CIVIL CITATIONS:

**\$2.1 million+**



KEYS 2 DRIVE:

**\$78,000+<sup>8</sup>**

## Money to the State of Florida



RESTITUTION ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM:

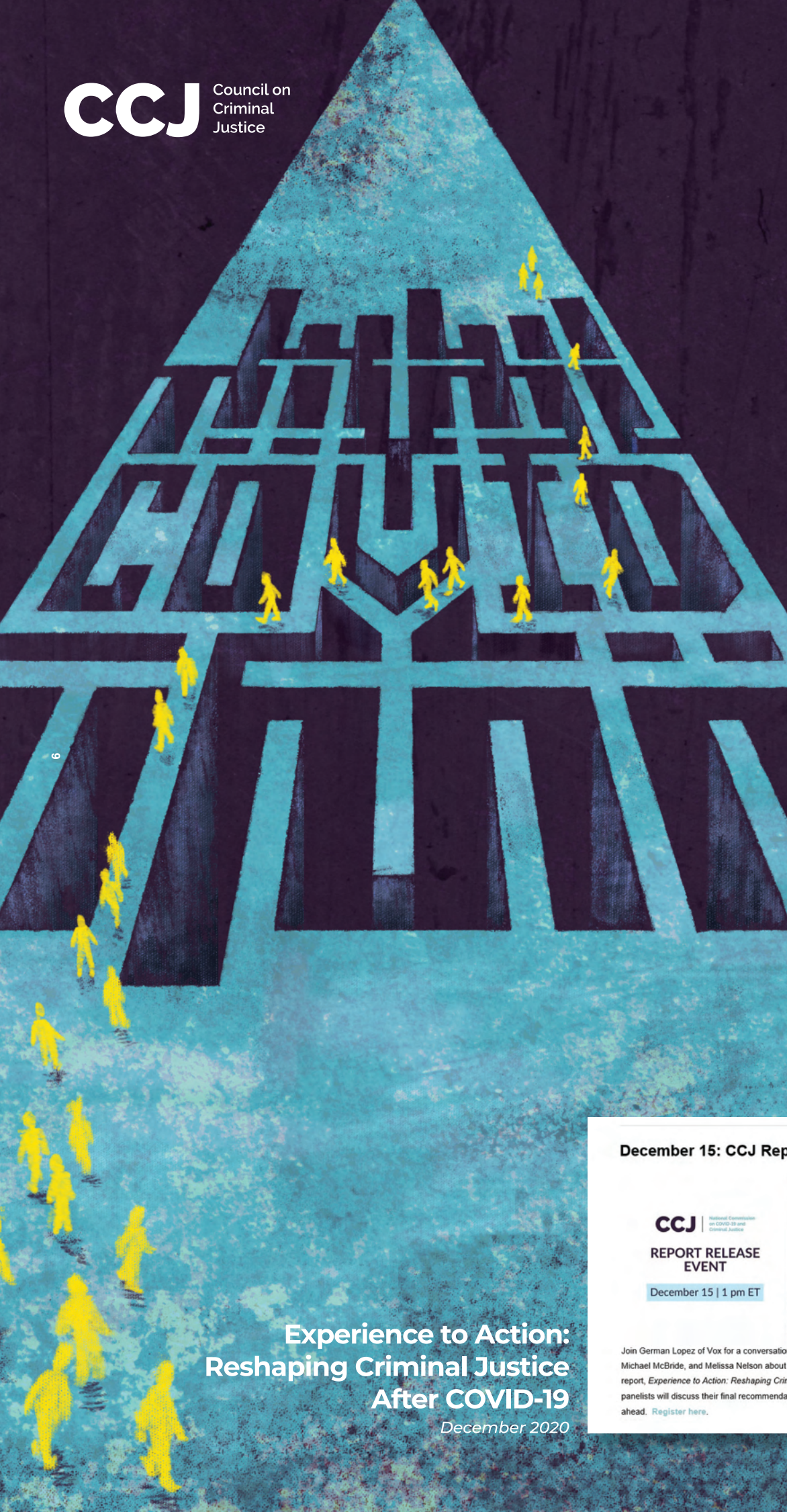
**\$650,000+**



KEYS 2 DRIVE:

**\$542,000+<sup>8</sup>**





**18%**

DECREASE IN DUVAL  
JAIL POPULATIONS DUE  
TO COVID-19 EXPEDITED  
CASE REVIEW

Left: CCJ's December 2020  
Report – "Experience to Action:  
Reshaping Criminal Justice  
After COVID-19"

## Experience to Action: Reshaping Criminal Justice After COVID-19

December 2020

### December 15: CCJ Report Release Event

**CCJ** National Commission  
on COVID-19 and  
Criminal Justice  
**REPORT RELEASE  
EVENT**

December 15 | 1 pm ET



Join German Lopez of Vox for a conversation with Dr. Tom Inglesby, Pastor Michael McBride, and Melissa Nelson about the release of the Commission's final report, *Experience to Action: Reshaping Criminal Justice After COVID-19*. The panelists will discuss their final recommendations and explore the path ahead. [Register here.](#)





# COVID-19 Impacts the System—and the Country

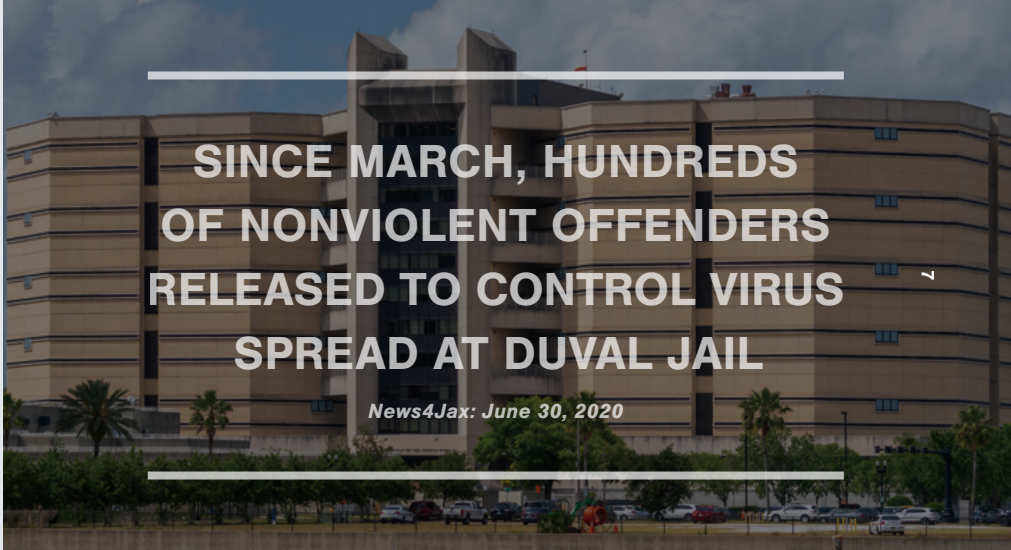
The virus that affected the entire world in 2020 also impacted the criminal justice system. Despite overwhelming challenges, the State Attorney's Office adapted its practices to continue to pursue justice for the people of the Fourth Circuit — **mostly masked and from a distance.**

As federal, state, and local officials in mid-March began taking precautions against the virus, we initiated measures to maintain operations and keep the community safe.

In an effort that balanced public health and public safety, the office established an expedited review policy to safely remove non-violent, non-sex offender defendants from jail to limit the virus' spread. These efforts decreased jail populations throughout the year, including a nearly 18% decrease in early May — a mark it had not reached in nearly a decade. Assistant State Attorney Matt O'Keefe spearheaded the office's efforts.

**Working closely with our law enforcement partners, we established protocols when they were needed the most.**

*Matt O'Keefe, Assistant State Attorney*



**SINCE MARCH, HUNDREDS  
OF NONVIOLENT OFFENDERS  
RELEASED TO CONTROL VIRUS  
SPREAD AT DUVAL JAIL**

*News4Jax: June 30, 2020*

The pandemic also impacted how the 300-plus employees of the State Attorney's Office could continue to operate. To reduce the spread of the virus, most employees went to a work-from-home model that required adaptive IT needs to ensure a seamless transition. This shift required the capability to go paperless — a project once slated to take part over a number of years, but instead was accomplished in weeks thanks to the staff's concerted efforts.

The virus halted jury trials throughout the state, but the wheels of the criminal justice system could not simply grind to a halt. It also adapted with Zoom court hearings, virtual depositions, and other technological advances by necessity for much of the year.

The office's influence was felt nationally when State Attorney Melissa Nelson participated on the National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice,

part of the work of the Council on Criminal Justice. Led by former U.S. Attorneys General Alberto Gonzales and Loretta Lynch, Nelson and the committee worked throughout the year to assess the impact of the virus on the criminal justice system and developed recommendations on policy and practices to minimize harm in the event of a COVID-19 resurgence or future pandemics.

**It was a tremendous honor to work with criminal justice thought leaders and develop strategies to combat the enormous threat that COVID-19 poses to the system. It is work that serves us now and in the future.** *State Attorney Melissa Nelson*



## A FOCUS ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE

# A Summer of Unrest

As the COVID-19 pandemic stretched into summer, the country was forced to reckon with another widespread community concern: a lack of trust in the criminal justice system.



After a peaceful protest outside the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office headquarters ended with violence and vandalism in downtown Jacksonville, Florida, JSO officers in riot gear broke up and dispersed the remaining crowds using what appeared to be tear gas as they cleared the core downtown Saturday evening, May 30, 2020. *Dede Smith/Times-Union*

**The flashpoint was the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer.** Floyd's death ignited a series of protests throughout the country calling for change and accountability in the justice system.

The effects were felt in the Fourth Circuit when protesters took to the streets of Downtown Jacksonville the weekend following Floyd's death. In all, 54 people were arrested during the two-day span, the first day of which turned to riot. The State Attorney's Office ultimately prosecuted the few who committed violent acts, while cases were dismissed for others with non-violent charges.

During this time of unrest, one call for action from the community was for greater transparency and timeliness in the release of body-worn camera (BWC) footage. In response, State Attorney Melissa Nelson, Sheriff Mike Williams, and Mayor Lenny Curry met with members of the community to hear thoughts and concerns. The office worked with law enforcement leaders to establish a new policy on body-worn camera footage.

— **This policy will balance the integrity of investigative action and the public's right to transparency. We have identified several opportunities that exist for improvement upon our current practices... We also intend to solicit feedback from the community as part of this process in implementing the new BWC policy.** SAO body-worn camera memorandum

The State Attorney's Office published its new policy on September 1, establishing that within 30 days of an Officer-Involved Critical Incident, the office will provide notice to law enforcement agencies of any objections it had to footage being released.

This decision significantly reduced the public disclosure of footage from months — or years — to weeks when release will not damage the integrity of an investigation.

The decision was met with approval from many community leaders and the office's commitment was upheld in November, after the first incident occurred to which the new policy could be applied.



Changes in how body camera footage of police-involved shootings in review by the State Attorney's Office. *News4Jax*



**Our efforts went beyond policy changes, however.** We continue to take a proactive and open-door approach in our dialogue with community leaders on topics of concern and have continued to incorporate discussions of race in trainings and education.

In September, the office welcomed award-winning author, civil rights activist, and Jacksonville native Rodney L. Hurst. Hurst shared stories about his lifelong dedication to fighting injustice, the importance of Black History, and his personal experience at Ax Handle Saturday — the brutal attack on Black youths in August 1960 that serves as one of Jacksonville's darkest days.



**Rodney L. Hurst**

Right: Hurst, center, participates in the peaceful lunch counter demonstration that ended in the violence of Ax Handle Saturday – August 27, 1960.



In December, the University of North Florida's OneJax — a collaboration of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, Jacksonville Human Rights Commission, and the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change — led an interactive presentation with the office about structural racism and understanding causes of disparities and implicit biases.

These efforts will continue as we listen and adapt to the needs of the community in a way that promotes equitable justice for all.



Deputy Director Octavius Holliday represented the SAO4 in October in the "Racism and Policing" community forum hosted by the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission. Holliday discussed the office's community engagement efforts, its role in recent protests, and his personal experiences, among other topics.

# LISTEN AND ADAPT

PURSUE JUSTICE ALWAYS



—  
We're charged with enforcing the laws that our lawmakers deem to be the criminal laws of our State. And that's true for every state in the United States and every district attorney's office. So if that – that is our charge and our mission. It's our responsibility.

*Verbal testimony from State Attorney Melissa Nelson*

# Our Continued Fight Against Violent Crime

Jacksonville and the Fourth Judicial Circuit were not spared from the 2020 nationwide trend of rising violent crime — a trend scholars will study for years to come.



State Attorney Melissa Nelson addressed a national audience on the local landscape when she provided testimony to the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. Nelson told the group about prosecutorial strategies we have implemented that can be replicated in other jurisdictions. Those initiatives included shifting the office's organizational structure, creating a Targeted Prosecution Division, and implementing state-of-the-art crime-solving technologies.

You can read a transcript of Nelson's testimony at [bit.ly/3dfIPaM](https://bit.ly/3dfIPaM).





Left: State Attorney Melissa Nelson, author Thomas Abt, and Sheriff Mike Williams. Above: Abt presents at the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys' Major County Prosecutor's Council meeting.

We also hosted a collection of elected prosecutors from across the country in Jacksonville as part of the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys' Major County Prosecutor's Council meeting. The multi-day event focused on sharing strategies to reduce violent crime. It was headlined by an educational session with Thomas Abt, national violence reduction expert and author of "Bleeding Out: The Devastating Consequences of Urban Violence—and a Bold New Plan for Peace in the Streets."

**With cooperative strategy at the forefront of our initiatives,** the office assisted greatly in the creation of a document highlighting the benefits of establishing a Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.



The Jacksonville CGIC opened in 2019 and is a central hub for law enforcement partnership, combatting gun violence.

Community Crime Strategies Unit: from left: Human Rights Division Deputy Director Octavius Holliday, CCSU Lead Community Prosecutor Vironica Brown, Community Prosecution Coordinator Brian Jefferson, and CCSU Coordinator Kiaira Nixon.

From a policy standpoint, we took aim at reducing gun violence and illegal crime guns with the implementation of a new firearms policy. The policy addressed prosecutorial direction toward those identified as being a danger and illegally possessing a firearm. To balance this policy, a diversion program was created for those who own a firearm and were simply negligent in their care and registration.

In an effort to increase the public's trust in the work we do and encourage information sharing, we launched our Community Crime Strategies Unit (CCSU).

Typically, a prosecutor's office, as an arm of enforcement, becomes involved in a case after a crime has already occurred. The objective of a CCSU team is to work within impacted communities to understand problems and concerns, and address them before crime is committed. The CCSU will do this by harnessing the collective resources of a prosecutor's office to develop and implement intelligence-driven strategies that address crime and target priority offenders, partnering with other agencies in the areas of prevention and intervention.

**Despite an unusual year, our efforts to combat violent crime did not diminish — nor will they in the year ahead.**





## IN THE COURTROOM

# 2020 Notable Cases

In mid-March 2020, courtrooms across the state were closed, and jury trials were suspended due to the pandemic. But the wheels of justice did not grind to a halt.

Hearings and court proceedings shifted to virtual platforms. “You’re on mute” became the unofficial slogan of 2020.

Our attorneys continued to pursue justice, and positive outcomes were reached without jury trials.

- 1 **Jacksonville police dog killer, carjacker gets 25 years in prison**
- 2 **Guilty plea in death of transgender woman leads to 35-year sentence for Jacksonville man**
- 3 **Judge sentences Jacksonville man to 3 consecutive life terms for gunning down ex-girlfriend**
- 4 **Jacksonville man sentenced to nearly 2 years in prison for attack on officer during protest**
- 5 **Mother who almost lost hope has answers in cold-case murder**
- 6 **Ex-wife of JSO detective pleads guilty in 1999 murder**



(Fang) went out of my sight, doing what he loved, going to get the bad guy, and three gunshots rang out, followed by a yelp from my dog. And that was the last noise he ever made. Fang gave me the opportunity to go home to my family and my children that night.

*JSO Officer Matt Herrera*



## Jacksonville police dog killer, carjacker gets 25 years in prison

**A violent crime claimed the life of K-9 Fang.**

He was mourned by the community, and his death sparked change in Tallahassee.

On September 30, 2019, Jhamal Paskel carjacked two women at a Westside gas station and made one of the victims drive while he held her at gunpoint. With GPS, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office was able to track the car and additional technology allowed for the car's engine to be remotely deactivated. When it shut off, Paskel abandoned the car and fled on foot into a wooded area. Officer Matt Herrera released Fang to pursue Paskel. The fleeing Paskel shot and killed Fang.

Moved by the case, lawmakers in the Florida Legislature, led by State Sen. Aaron Bean, toughened the penalty for murdering a police dog. The crime is now a second-degree felony, punishable by up to 15 years in Florida State Prison. Fittingly, it was called the “Fang Memorial Bill.”

The case was prosecuted by Chief Assistant L.E. Hutton.



# JUSTICE



## Jacksonville man sentenced to nearly 2 years in prison for attack on officer during protest

First Coast News 11/24/20

During the summer of civil unrest that gripped the nation, protesters took to the streets of Downtown Jacksonville on May 30 and 31 in what were mostly peaceful demonstrations.

However, the first evening of protests ultimately turned into a riot that required police response. Martin Bryan Silvera-Albor jumped up and down on a police cruiser and punched a responding officer several times, causing a neck injury to the officer. The crime was captured on video and released to the public.

Thanks to a tip from the public, Silvera-Albor was arrested weeks later and identified as the attacker. In November 2020, he pleaded guilty to battery on a law enforcement officer and criminal mischief, and was sentenced to 21 months in Florida State Prison.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant State Attorney Joe Licandro.

—  
**We remain committed to protecting peaceful protests while holding those accountable who resort to violence.**

State Attorney Melissa Nelson



## Ex-wife of JSO detective pleads guilty in 1999 murder

News4Jax

**An over 20-year-old cold murder case was solved through the hard work of Jacksonville Sheriff's Office cold case detectives and genetic genealogy.**

In the early morning hours of May 17, 1999, Melissa Jo Schafer and her now ex-husband — Jacksonville Sheriff's Office detective William Baer — attacked local businessman Saad Kawaf at his Deerwood home. Kawaf's wife, Samar, heard the violent struggle and rushed to his aid. She witnessed Baer stabbing Kawaf, but Schafer forcefully stopped her from helping her husband. Schafer and Baer demanded money and robbed the Kawafs of \$53,000 before binding Samar's mouth, wrists, and body with duct tape. Samar eventually was able

to escape and call police, but Saad ultimately died from his injuries. DNA evidence was collected at the scene and preserved. Advances in forensic technology later led to the DNA tracing to Baer and Schafer, who were arrested in July 2020. Schafer pled guilty to her role in the 1999 murder and robbery and agreed to cooperate and truthfully testify against her ex-husband, Baer.

This case is being prosecuted by State Attorney Melissa Nelson and Chief Assistant L.E. Hutton.

—  
**We are grateful to the brave members of the cold case unit and all members of law enforcement who have worked tirelessly to ensure justice and that Saad's memory will never be forgotten.**

Heather Kayal, Kawaf's niece

## Guilty plea in death of transgender woman leads to 35-year sentence for Jacksonville man

**On February 4, 2018, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office responded to a Southside hotel after receiving a call about a person being shot.**

When they arrived, they found Celine Walker, a transgender woman, dead from several bullet wounds. Detectives quickly ruled Walker's death a homicide and an investigation ensued. DNA evidence and shell casings were recovered from inside the room.

An analysis revealed Sean Phoenix's DNA in the hotel room and, while being interviewed, Phoenix admitted to killing Walker after an argument and then selling the gun he used to commit the crime. He was subsequently charged with second-degree murder.

—  
**It was a pretty traumatic time and a lot of people were concerned about the level of violence directed at the transgender community. Great credit to JSO for getting this arrest. It is a real relief to know what happened in this case.**

JASMYN Director of Policy Dan Merkan to Florida Times-Union

In October 2020, Phoenix pleaded guilty to his crime and was sentenced to 35 years in Florida State Prison.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant State Attorney Corey Milo.

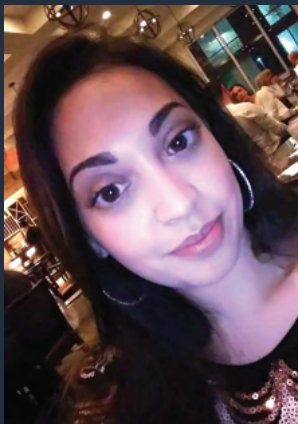
# JUSTICE

IN THE COURTROOM – 2020 NOTABLE CASES (CONTINUED)



Drive-thru line in Baymeadows where shooting death occurred. *News4Jax*

## Judge sentences Jacksonville man to 3 consecutive life terms for gunning down ex-girlfriend



Jamie Roque

**A mother of three who was gunned down in the drive-thru line of a Baymeadows fast food restaurant received justice when her killer was sentenced to three consecutive life sentences in November 2020.**

In the early morning hours of August 10, 2018, Jamie Roque was in her car when Rasheed Ali Kareem approached on foot and shot her multiple times before running away. Witnesses provided a description of Kareem, who was arrested later in the day on other charges.

An investigation by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office linked Kareem to the crime as well as a past physically abusive relationship between Roque and Kareem.

Roque's sister, Sharon Kates, told media after Kareem was sentenced her sister was larger than life.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Trey Atkinson and Alan Mizrahi.

**Jamie was an amazing woman; she was an amazing mom. She wanted the best for everyone and that will always resonate in every one of us.**

*Sharon Kates to News4Jax*

## Mother who almost lost hope has answers in cold-case murder

*News4Jax*

**On November 9, 2012, Lance Morene was found dead from multiple gunshots inside a Murray Hill home. Despite the active investigation, leads were sparse and the case eventually turned cold.**

However, years later, there was a break in the case. In April 2016, detectives with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office reopened the case after a witness came forward to provide information about a conversation with Cecil Ford, who admitted going to the home to commit a robbery. During the robbery, Ford's co-defendant said Ford's name, which identified him to the victim. Ford shot Morene to eliminate him as a witness to the robbery.

Ford went on to brag about cutting his hair and going to work, which he hoped would serve as his alibi.

Additional investigation into the case and an interview of witnesses confirmed the new details and series of events, putting Ford at the scene. Ford's fingerprint was also found at the home.

After Ford's arrest in December 2016, Morene's mother, Janice Brown, said she hadn't given up hope, but admitted that she was starting to.

**A burden, a pain – it's just released... I thought you had given up on me. When a mother loses a child, you take a part of them with you.** *Janice Brown to News4Jax*



Ford was convicted of first-degree murder at trial and was sentenced to life in prison in October.

This case was prosecuted by former Assistant State Attorneys London Kite and Karri Becker and Assistant State Attorney Lauren Anderson.





## COLD CASE INITIATIVE

# SAO4 Receives \$470,000 Grant from DOJ

**We are motivated to bring justice to surviving families of cold case homicides and to hold offenders accountable. Many families have been searching for answers for decades; many have given up hope. The State Attorney's Office has not given up hope, and we have not forgotten.**

A cold case is a homicide that has gone unsolved for three years or more; some cold cases go back decades. In 2017, the State Attorney's Office began re-evaluating the way we review cold cases and developed forward-thinking processes to solve them. We conducted a nationwide review of other jurisdictions to identify best practices.

Together with a multidisciplinary team including law enforcement, forensic experts, and Project Cold Case, we began systematically reviewing and analyzing existing cold cases to determine potential solvability based on several factors, including DNA evidence. We partnered with the UF Levin College of Law and assigned interns to this project. To date, these students have dedicated over 1,200 hours to review of cases.

In October, we were awarded a \$470,000, three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to support investigative activities and prosecution of cold cases homicides with DNA. This funding will allow for more testing, and in some cases, retesting of DNA evidence with the latest technology.

DNA was used to solve these three local cold cases in recent years. As the forensic sciences advance and the application of DNA technology expands, unsolved cases from the past receive another opportunity for resolution.

**This grant will allow the office to seek answers and pursue justice.**

### Recent Cold Cases Making News in the Fourth Circuit:



**Family members never forget. And neither should we. Cold cases are challenging to investigate and rewarding to solve. This funding will help us continue our search for truth and bring peace to some whose hearts still ache for their loved one.**

State Attorney Melissa Nelson



# Data Leading the Way

**Government cannot be run exactly like a private business, but it can adapt some business practices that promote fairness, transparency, and uniformity.**

Data is commonly used to improve private sector operations and drive decision-making — and now the office is harnessing the power of data even more to advance justice in the public sector.

The latest example of this improvement was announced in December 2020, when we launched our Data Dashboard and made it available to the public. The dashboard features nearly three dozen metrics called Prosecutorial Performance Indicators, or PPIs, that showcase data in areas like office capacity and efficiency, community safety, and fairness and justice. With this dashboard, the public will have the opportunity to see how we are performing. Internally, we can use this data to identify areas that need further analysis and improvement.

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sao4thdatadashboard.com



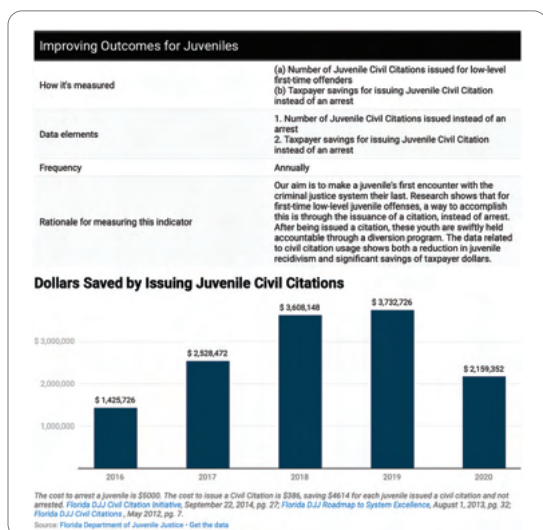
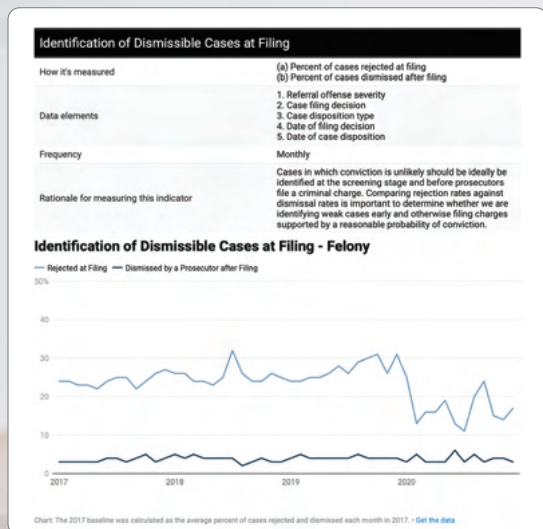
**State Attorney's Office  
Florida's Fourth  
Judicial Circuit  
Data Dashboard**

Since taking office in 2017, State Attorney Melissa Nelson began collecting and analyzing data about the office's work. We remain committed to transparency and accountability. We will regularly release data on key decision-points and indicators of our performance. This effort is part of the **Prosecutorial Performance Indicators (PPIs)**, a national network of prosecutors and researchers working toward data-driven reforms.

1-Office felony & misdemeanor caseloads · 2-Felony caseload distribution · 3-Leadership & line prosecutor diversity · 4-Staff retention rate · 5-Clerical & paralegal capacity · 6-Data & analytic capacity · 7-Ability to identify dismissible cases at filing · 8-Strategic case rejections at filing & dismissal · 9-Prioritizing cases with the greatest public safety returns · 10-Reserving incarceration for serious offenders · 11-Accurate diversion decisions & placements · 12-Time to felony disposition · 13-Efficient filing decisions for cases with pretrial detainees · 14-Time to disposition for pretrial detainees · 15-Conforming to ABA disposition time standards · 16-Minimizing delays in case processing by limiting continuances · 17-Dismissal timeliness · 18-Violent crime prevention · 19-Acquittal for violent crimes · 20-Violent recidivism · 21-Felony recidivism of diversioners · 22-Escalation in offending · 23-Treating serious crime the same across neighborhoods · 24-Addressing the opioid epidemic · 25-Victim support outreach · 26-Speedy contact with victims · 27-Avoiding victim coercion · 28-Addressing violent victimization of children · 29-Addressing victimization of the poor · 30-Addressing sexual assault victimization · 31-Accessibility of prosecutor's office · 32-Expanded crime reporting opportunities · 33-Engagement with economically diverse communities · 34-Prosecutorial participation in community events · 35-Witness cooperation · 36-Responsiveness to public record requests · 37-Victimization of racial/ethnic minorities · 38-Case dismissal differences by victim race/ethnicity · 39-Case filing differences by defendant race/ethnicity · 40-Pretrial detention differences by defendant race/ethnicity · 41-Diversion differences by defendant race/ethnicity · 42-Charging & plea offer differences by defendant race/ethnicity · 43-Incarceration differences by defendant race/ethnicity · 44-Avoiding unnecessary felony charges at filing · 45-Diversion as an alternative to incarceration · 46-Reducing reliance on pretrial detention · 47-Avoiding felony incarceration when possible · 48-Incarceration triggered by pretrial detention of the poor · 49-Discretion over guidelines to avoid excessive penalties · 50-Disproportionate punishment for the poor · 51-Procedural & ethics violations · 52-Dedication to conviction integrity · 53-Commitment to law enforcement accountability · 54-Charging integrity · 55-Discovery compliance

**The national Prosecutorial Performance Indicators project created a menu of 55 indicator tools that prosecutors' offices throughout the country can use to measure effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness.**





# Tampa Bay Times

OPINION

Andrew Warren and Melissa Nelson

## As prosecutors, we're working to be more more accountable and transparent | Column

New indicators will tell us — and the public — about the quality and impact of our work, write the state attorneys for Hillsborough and Jacksonville.

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The project is the result of the continued partnership between the office and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge, along with researchers at Florida International University and Loyola University of Chicago, who have worked with us since 2018 to find ways to incorporate data into operations and policies as a means of measuring the impact of the work we do.

Another one of those strategies was the hiring of skilled data specialist Avinash Namilla through grant funding to assist with data collection and analysis. Namilla's expertise will help translate data into workable, solution-based sets to benefit everyone in the office and the community.



Avinash Namilla





—  
 This is like searching for a needle in a haystack... we did this for one reason:  
**A RELENTLESS SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH.** *State Attorney Melissa Nelson*







## WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE

### The Search for Susan Mauldin

In October 2019, 65-year-old Susan Mauldin was reported missing to the Clay County Sheriff’s Office (CCSO), which began an investigation that ultimately led to the search of a Charlton County, Georgia landfill.

The FBI Jacksonville, CCSO, State Attorney’s Office, and others began planning logistics for the massive search effort in late 2019. Over 200 officials from Florida and Georgia agencies worked to find Mauldin, sifting through more than 7,000 tons of debris. On the ninth day of the search, Mauldin’s remains were found. Corey Binderim, a Clay County contractor, was arrested for her murder.

“Now, Susan Mauldin can be properly laid to rest, and we will begin our work to seek justice on her behalf,” said State Attorney Melissa Nelson during a February 2020 news conference.



**We know how difficult this is for all of Susan Mauldin’s friends and neighbors. But we’re also pleased and thankful that we have some answers we can provide.**

*FBI Special Agent in Charge Rachel Rojas, at the February news conference*

Binderim in April 2021 was indicted by a Clay County grand jury on charges of first-degree murder, burglary with assault or battery, and evidence tampering. The case remains ongoing.



### Operation Legend

The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Middle District of Florida announced a more than \$350,000 grant to cross-designate a special prosecutor from the State Attorney’s Office to assist with federal firearms cases in Clay, Duval, and Nassau counties.

The grant is part of Operation Legend, named after 4-year-old LeGend Taliferro, who was shot and killed while he slept in Kansas City.

**We remain committed to addressing the violent gun crime plaguing our community and are grateful for the opportunity to expand our partnership in this public safety effort.**

*State Attorney Melissa Nelson*



Charron Powell and her 4-year-old son, LeGend Taliferro, who was shot and killed as he slept June 29, 2020.



## WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE (CONTINUED)



State Attorney Melissa Nelson initiated the first meeting of the Team in September, pictured in hybrid virtual and in-person attendance.

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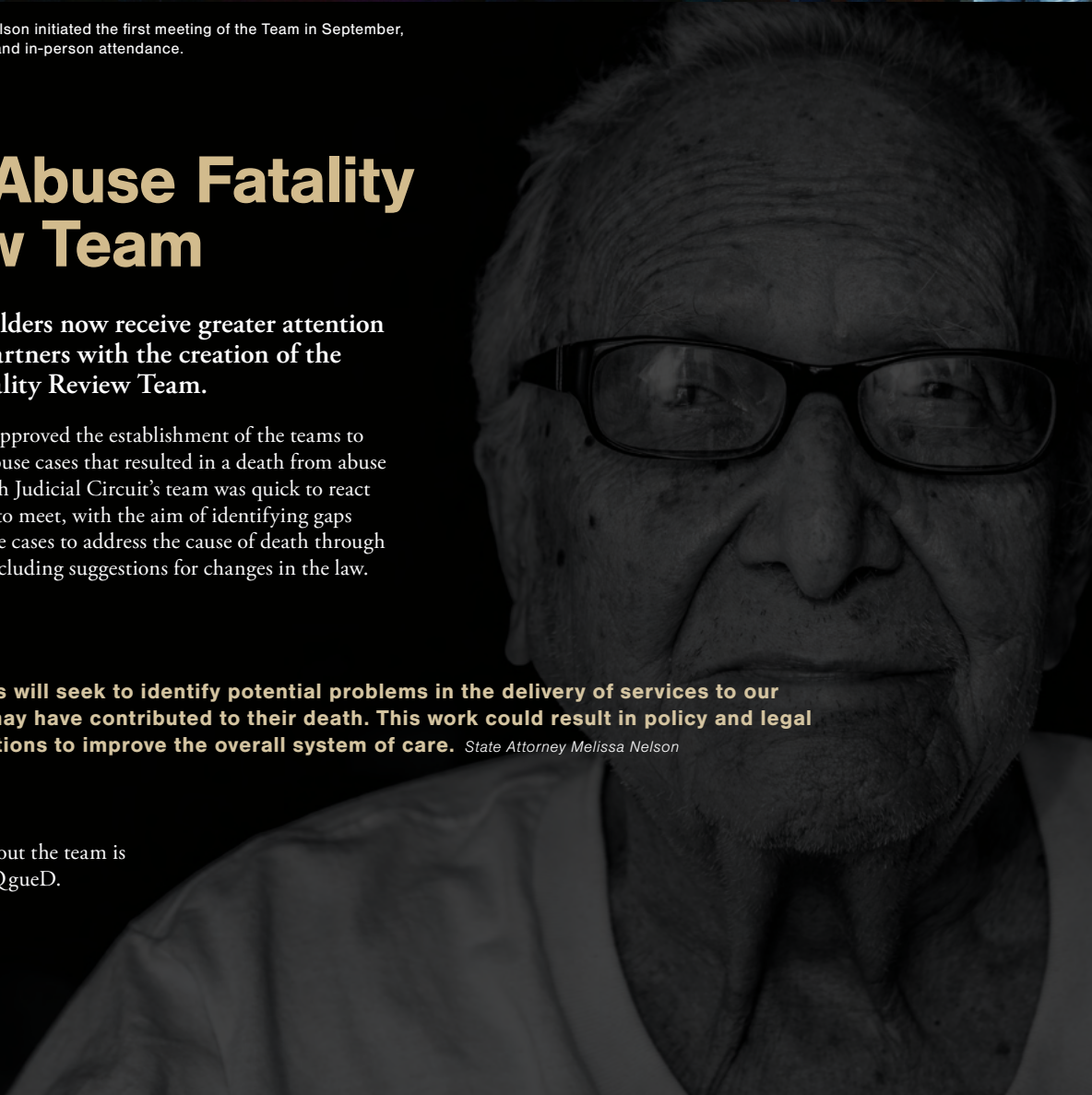
# Elder Abuse Fatality Review Team

Crimes against elders now receive greater attention from a host of partners with the creation of the Elder Abuse Fatality Review Team.

Lawmakers in 2020 approved the establishment of the teams to review closed elder abuse cases that resulted in a death from abuse or neglect. The Fourth Judicial Circuit's team was quick to react and became the first to meet, with the aim of identifying gaps and problems in those cases to address the cause of death through recommendations, including suggestions for changes in the law.

— **These reviews will seek to identify potential problems in the delivery of services to our elderly that may have contributed to their death. This work could result in policy and legal recommendations to improve the overall system of care.** *State Attorney Melissa Nelson*

More information about the team is available at [bit.ly/3nQgueD](https://bit.ly/3nQgueD).

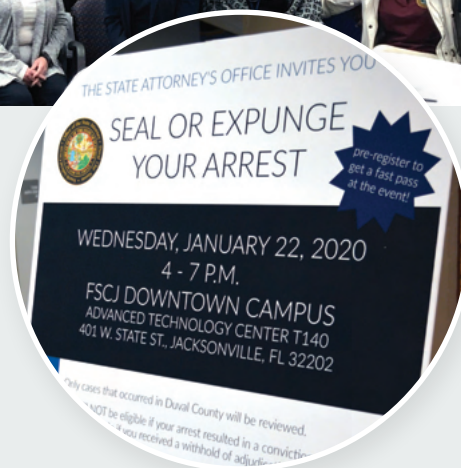




# SEALING & EXPUNGING FAIR



The group of SAO4 and partner organization event volunteers poses together before their successful event.



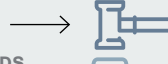
On January 22, 2020, the State Attorney's Office joined several criminal justice and community partners to host its first Sealing and Expunging Fair at Florida State College of Jacksonville's Downtown campus.

The Duval County Clerk of Court, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Three Rivers Legal Services, the office of Johnson & Lufano, Operation New Hope, and others combined to serve more than 400 people, with more than 100 being able to seal or expunge their criminal records.

**400+**  
PEOPLE  
SERVED



**100+** SEALED  
OR EXPUNGED  
CRIMINAL RECORDS



# Community CONNECTIONS

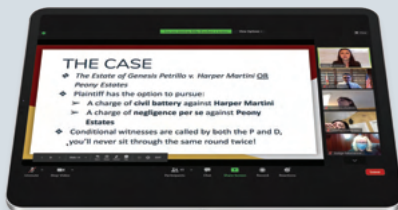
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## Chili Cook Off



Our ASAs were a **“A Fourth to be Reckoned With”** as they showed off their culinary skills in the Jacksonville Bar Young Lawyers Section’s 11th annual Charity Chili-Cook Off in February. Teams from firms and organizations across the legal community compete for bragging rights as well as the chance to raise money for the Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech.



## FSU Mock Trial



In the fall, ASAs Alex Weaver and Vanessa Wheeler-Sanchez volunteered as scoring judges in the Capital City Invitational college mock trial tournament. The FSU Mock Trial organized the tournament, which was conducted entirely via Zoom, and featured **30+ different teams from the across the country**. During the tournament, teams of college students represented parties in a fictitious civil suit involving a poisoning and homicide. Thanks to ASAs Weaver and Wheeler-Sanchez for taking time to give back to their alma mater.

## Girls Can



State Attorney Melissa Nelson and Circuit Court Judge Angela Cox spent the morning of March 6 in Palatka speaking with the young women of Girls Can about their journey to **becoming leaders in the legal field**.



Girls Can is a collaborative partnership between local business and community leaders committed to empowering young women to take charge of their futures.

## Virtual Fall Into Reading



Each fall around Halloween, employees of the SAO4 enjoy **donning costumes and reading to elementary school kids**. With stricter rules due to the pandemic, reading went virtual this year. Several classes at R.V. Daniels and R.L. Brown received visits from the Princess and the Frog, Dorothy and Toto, the Cat in the Hat, and other notable names. It was a fun time for all involved.



## D. W. Perkins Bar Association



State Attorney Melissa Nelson was the guest speaker for the D.W. Perkins Bar Association’s February monthly meeting. She discussed **public safety, smart justice, and community engagement initiatives** and enjoyed catching up with the members.

## Jax Chamber Discussion



State Attorney Melissa Nelson spent a morning in February with Downtown business leaders at the Jacksonville Chamber’s Downtown Council of Jacksonville in the historic Old St. Andrews Church discussing **violent crime, efforts against human trafficking, and other initiatives** the office has undertaken the past several years.





## DCPS Forensic Sciences Competition



Teachers partnered with ASAs, the Jax Beach Police Department, and evidence technicians to coordinate the **first forensic sciences competition Duval County Public Schools has ever seen**, as a way to expose students to the fields they are potentially interested in pursuing.



High school juniors and seniors were selected to participate after completing forensic sciences courses, in which they learned how to map bullet trajectories, take and analyze fingerprints, and test for DNA and blood analysis, among many other skills.

The competition first introduced them to a staged crime scene complete with furniture and fake blood spatter. They collected evidence, consulted with professionals, and had one week to prepare their investigations for presentation at a simulated grand jury hearing. The State Attorney's Office hosted the final stage in our historic federal courtroom, and ASAs helped evaluate the presentations and choose a winning team.

The SAO enjoyed supporting this program in its inaugural year and looks forward to seeing it expand.

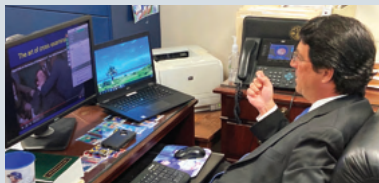


## The Art of Cross-Examination



### Homicide Director Alan Mizrahi

presented virtually to the Jacksonville Bar Association in July on the "Art of Cross-Examination" as part of their 18th Annual Ehrlich Trial Advocacy Seminar. He spoke on his broad experience prosecuting cases of all types in the courtroom for almost two decades, and imparted lessons learned to young attorneys.



## Food Drive for Seniors



Kiara Nixon of the Community Crimes Strategies Unit poses with Thanksgiving baskets as she participates in a giveaway for seniors at the Longbranch Senior Center, located on Jacksonville's Eastside. The event was planned and hosted by members of the Innovative Community Engagement Foundation, Pi Eta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Upsilon Lambda chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., and the City of Jacksonville Senior Services Division. The organizations **gifted a total of 24 baskets** and students from the Duval Virtual Instruction Academy decorated each basket for fall.





STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE FOR FLORIDA'S FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

# 2020 Office Recognition

Members of the office and the office itself were recognized for outstanding efforts during the year.



## 2020 Diversity Award

The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division (YLD) awarded our office the 2020 Diversity Award during its June virtual General Assembly meeting. Nominated by ASAs Ashleigh Brooks (left) and LaTesha Campbell (right), who both



hold chair positions in the YLD, this award was a great honor to our office. Recruiting more voices, experiences, and viewpoints is important to us and allows us to address and solve more problems in our office and, more importantly, our community.





## Outstanding Local Prosecutor's Office Award

Highlighting our existing state and federal partnerships, the Department of Justice recognized State Attorney Melissa Nelson and the State Attorney's Office with its "Outstanding Local Prosecutor's Office Award" for ongoing efforts in Project Safe Neighborhoods' key strategy areas. The award was presented to Nelson by Maria Chapa-Lopez, former U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Florida, in December.



The initiative brings law enforcement of all levels together to reduce violent crime and make neighborhoods safer. The Fourth Circuit's office was one of two in the country to receive the prestigious honor.

In recent years, the office worked with city leaders and law enforcement to bring a Crime Gun Intelligence Center to Jacksonville, which is housed at the State Attorney's Office.



## Pro Patria Award

In December, the SAO was also honored to receive the Pro Patria Award from the Florida Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Committee of the U.S. Department of Defense for the office's support and encouragement of our traditional guard and reserve service members. Rear Adm. Matt O'Keefe (ret.) presented the award to the office during a virtual celebration.



# Celebrating Our Own



## 2019 Employee Awards

Each year, the office hosts an awards ceremony to recognize the exceptional efforts of attorneys, investigators, and support staff from the past year.

For the first time in the ceremony's history, it was held virtually due to the pandemic. When the decision was made to take it virtual, emcee John Kalinowski was charged by the state attorney to "make it fun." Since he and his wife were already scheduled to visit Las Vegas, he seized on the opportunity to celebrate talent, winners, and high achievers. Combined with video recordings from coworkers and supervisors, the 2019 awards ceremony was a high-rolling success.



**EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**  
**Cindy Cribbs**

**DISTINGUISHED SERVICE**  
**Adair Newman**

**STATE ATTORNEY'S AWARD**  
**Shelley Thibodeau**

**WORD OF THE YEAR: "ATTITUDE"**  
**Hector Murcia-Bustos**

**TRIAL OF GREAT PUBLIC SIGNIFICANCE**  
**Alan Mizrahi**

**ROOKIE OF THE YEAR**  
**Brooke Gasson**

**TRIAL ADVOCACY**  
**Jessica Hensley**

**GROUP ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**  
**Felony Intake / NCIC / FFD Team for outstanding service**

- Becky Hurtado
- Pamela Green
- Cynthia Wilber
- Crystal Shea
- Samantha Norment
- Valorie Miller
- Lindsey Alves
- Kelli Morrison
- Allison Joiner

**SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT**  
**Leah Hogg**

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**  
**David Humphrey**

**LEADERSHIP**  
**Devin Lybrand**

**OUTSTANDING INVESTIGATION**  
**Keith Nazworth**

**OUTSTANDING TRIAL SUPPORT**  
**Haley Branscome**

**OUTSTANDING ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT**  
**Deenee Logston**





# Years of Service Awards

**35  
YEARS**

**Sherri Shutt**

**30  
YEARS**

**Donna Cornellier  
Toni Binder-Glase**

**25  
YEARS**

**Dawn Carter  
Debbie Chastain  
Renee Jones  
Jeanette Lee  
Stephen Sprunt**

**20  
YEARS**

**Rhonda Farnham  
Alan Mizrahi  
Catherine Stevenson**

**15  
YEARS**

**Stacey Randolph  
Deenee Logston  
Royeller Joy  
Cassie Clark-Murray  
Lisa Lary  
Nerresa Posey  
Colin Markey**

**10  
YEARS**

**Brian Jefferson  
Ben Dulaj  
Alan Louder  
J.J. Thurne  
Jermaine Whittle  
Beverly Collins  
Christi Petrie  
Brandy Stronko  
Angelique Kelly  
Elizabeth Anderson  
Chris King**

**5  
YEARS**

**Trey Davis  
Lindsay Michael  
Ollie Bowden  
Zachary Webber  
Liz Beck  
Kelli Shobe  
Cate Waugh  
Kelli Morrison  
James (Bubba) Eminisor  
Korey Milo  
Sammy Rodriguez  
Ivan Hicks**





## CELEBRATING OUR OWN (CONTINUED)



## A Shout Out for Our Employees' Accomplishments

**Chan  
Zuckerberg  
Initiative****Coreylyn Brown,  
Division Chief**

Coreylyn Brown was chosen for the **Chan Zuckerberg Initiative's inaugural Prosecution Leaders of Now** cohort. This 11-week distance learning leadership program is hosted by Stanford University Executive Education. The program centers around lessons, assignments, and discussions intended to benefit emerging and early-to mid-career leaders in prosecutors' offices around the nation. Participants gain shared learning and management best practices, and have an opportunity to build a diverse and national professional network.

**JACKSONVILLE  
BUSINESS JOURNAL  
40 UNDER 40****LaTasha Campbell,  
Division Chief**

LaTasha Campbell was selected as a **2020 Jacksonville Business Journal 40 Under 40** honoree. The list highlights 40 of Northeast Florida's brightest, most promising professionals under the age of 40 for their community involvement and accomplishment in their careers. LaTasha was also elected to the Jacksonville Bar Association Young Lawyers Section Board of Governors.

**JENNIE R. EDWARDS**  
is a law student at the  
University of Florida Levin  
College of Law in Gainesville.  
She is a member of the class  
of 2020.**Jennie Edwards, ASA**

Our very own Certified Legal Intern and now-ASA Jennie Edwards co-authored with her father, Tom Edwards, the cover article of the March/April 2020 issue of **The Florida Bar Journal on The Daubert Expert Standard: A Primer for Florida Judges and Lawyers**. Jennie graduated from the UF Levin College of Law and joined the ASA Class of 2020 after two semesters of interning with the SAO.

**JWLA****Katelyn Johnston,  
Division Chief**

Cultivation of leadership and talent wouldn't get very far without terrific mentors or teachers. Katelyn Johnston has a passion for and dedication to education. She is one of the division chiefs who annually instructs and mentors incoming classes of ASAs and interns, and was selected as the **Jacksonville Women Lawyers Association's Mentoring Chair** in September 2020.

**LEADERSHIP  
JACKSONVILLE****Laura Lothman Lambert,  
Juvenile Director**

Laura Lothman Lambert was selected for the **Leadership Jacksonville Class of 2021**, which further prepares community stewards for future leadership.

**JU****Rear Admiral Matt O'Keefe**

ASA and Rear Adm. Matt O'Keefe (ret.) was honored by his undergraduate alma mater, Jacksonville University, as a **2020 Outstanding Military Alumnus of Distinction**. Each year, the Alumni of Distinction are nominated by their peers for their demonstration of significant professional accomplishments, community and philanthropic engagement, and continued support of their alma mater. Although the 2020 ceremony was conducted virtually instead of honoring recipients in person during JU's homecoming week, the recognition and celebration of each award winner is no less momentous.



# SAO4 BRAGGING RIGHTS



## Linzee Ott, Community Engagement Coordinator

Linzee Ott was featured in the cover story of the September issue of the San Marco Neighbors Magazine for her **volunteerism with the San Marco Preservation Society**. The article discussed her role as the youngest president of the SMPS board of directors in the organization's 45-year history, as well as her position at the SAO.



## Shelley Thibodeau, Conviction Integrity Review (CIR) Director

In October, Shelley Thibodeau presented to the **Association of Prosecuting Attorneys** as part of its conviction integrity webinar series. Shelley spoke about the office's unit, procedures, investigations, and lessons learned. She also spoke with attendees about the year-long re-investigation of Clifford Williams and Nathan Myers that resulted in the vacation of the men's sentences in 2019.



## LaTesha Campbell & Vanessa Wheeler-Sanchez, Division Chiefs

LaTesha Campbell and Vanessa Wheeler-Sanchez were invited to participate in the **Florida Bar's Leadership Academy**. The Leadership Academy is a training program designed to help a diverse group of lawyers become stronger leaders within the Bar and the legal community. Pictured are the group's visits to the Florida Supreme Court and House of Representatives.

## Jim McMillan, Forensic Artist, & Shelley Thibodeau, CIR Director

Podcasts about crime and murder mysteries have been enthralling listeners for years, but a handful of podcasts in particular have brought notoriety to the genre. **Criminal is an award-winning podcast** about true crime stories by co-creators Phoebe Judge and Lauren Spohrer. In December 2020, some of the SAO's very own were **featured in Episode 154: The Night of the Party**.

Forensic Artist Jim McMillan and CIR Director Shelley Thibodeau were featured in a *Criminal* episode about the story, post-conviction re-investigation, and exoneration of Clifford Williams and Nathan Myers.

Listeners can hear the interview for themselves at [thisiscriminal.com/episode-154-the-night-of-the-party-12-4-2020](https://thisiscriminal.com/episode-154-the-night-of-the-party-12-4-2020).





The qualities of a good prosecutor are as elusive and as impossible to define as those which mark the gentleman. And those who need to be told would not understand it anyway. A sensitiveness to fair play and sportsmanship is perhaps the best protection against the abuse of power, and the citizens' safety lies in the prosecutor who tempers zeal with human kindness, who seeks truth and not victims, who serves the law and not factional purposes, and who approaches his task with humility. *Justice Robert H. Jackson, former Attorney General of the United States*



Judge London Kite was proud to swear in our new ASAs.



## Assistant State Attorney Class of 2020



The State Attorney's Office welcomed new attorneys as part of its Fall 2020 class, hailing from law schools such as the University of Florida, Florida State University, Stetson University, William & Mary, Howard University, Tulane University, and the University of South Carolina.

They continue to build on the legacy of the office's commitment to recruiting a talented, diverse workforce.





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# Formalizing Practice & Attorney Training

Prosecutors must navigate a complex criminal justice system.

While law school prepares students to be attorneys, it cannot cover all the practical aspects of criminal law and procedure, or precisely emulate the realities of real-world legal practice. Recognizing the ongoing need for direction and guidance of its prosecutors, the SAO4 has developed several user manuals to assist attorneys in various divisions. These texts are aimed at guiding prosecutors through the specific and varied requirements of their work, including professionalism, ethical issues, legal issues, and practical considerations.

## 2020 SAO4 User Manuals:

<div>COUNTY COURT</div> <p>This manual is for beginning attorneys in the office, often just out of law school and beginning their first legal job. It introduces attorneys to the office and the basics of misdemeanor prosecution. The manual covers court procedure for motions and trials, as well as how to evaluate cases for bond conditions, prosecution, and sentencing.</p>	<div>JUVENILE COURT</div> <p>Although juvenile court is a division of the Circuit Court, many of its practices and procedures are unique. This manual covers procedures for hearings and motion practice, as well as trial and disposition, and touches upon specific policies that pertain to juvenile defendants.</p>
<div>CIRCUIT COURT</div> <p>This manual provides guidance to the newest felony prosecutors. The manual highlights many of the procedural differences between practice in County Court and that in Circuit Court. It provides guidance and instruction on courtroom practice and advice on paperwork flow, time management, and the role of a felony prosecutor. The manual serves to hone the prosecutorial judgment and litigation skills of prosecutors in the SAO4.</p>	<div>JUVENILE GUIDEBOOK</div> <p>Many victims, defendants, and their families do not know what to expect when engaging with the juvenile justice system. The SAO4 Juvenile Division, in partnership with the Public Defender's Office, the Center for Children's Rights, and the City of Jacksonville, created a Juvenile Guidebook. These materials explain basic principles and an overview of the juvenile justice system, a discussion of how cases move through the system, specifics on disposition, and what to expect after a case has been closed.</p>





# EQUALITY AND LIBERTY FOUNDATION OF A GOVERNMENT

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP







PROPERTY UNDER LAW IS THE  
GOVERNMENT OF FREE PEOPLE

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

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PURSUE JUSTICE ALWAYS



**Clay County**

—

825 N. Orange Avenue | Green Cove Springs, FL 32043  
**(904) 269-6319**

**Duval County**

—

311 W. Monroe Street | Jacksonville, FL 32202  
**(904) 255-2500**

**Nassau County**

—

76347 Veterans Way, Suite 2105 | Yulee, FL 32097  
**(904) 548-4700**

