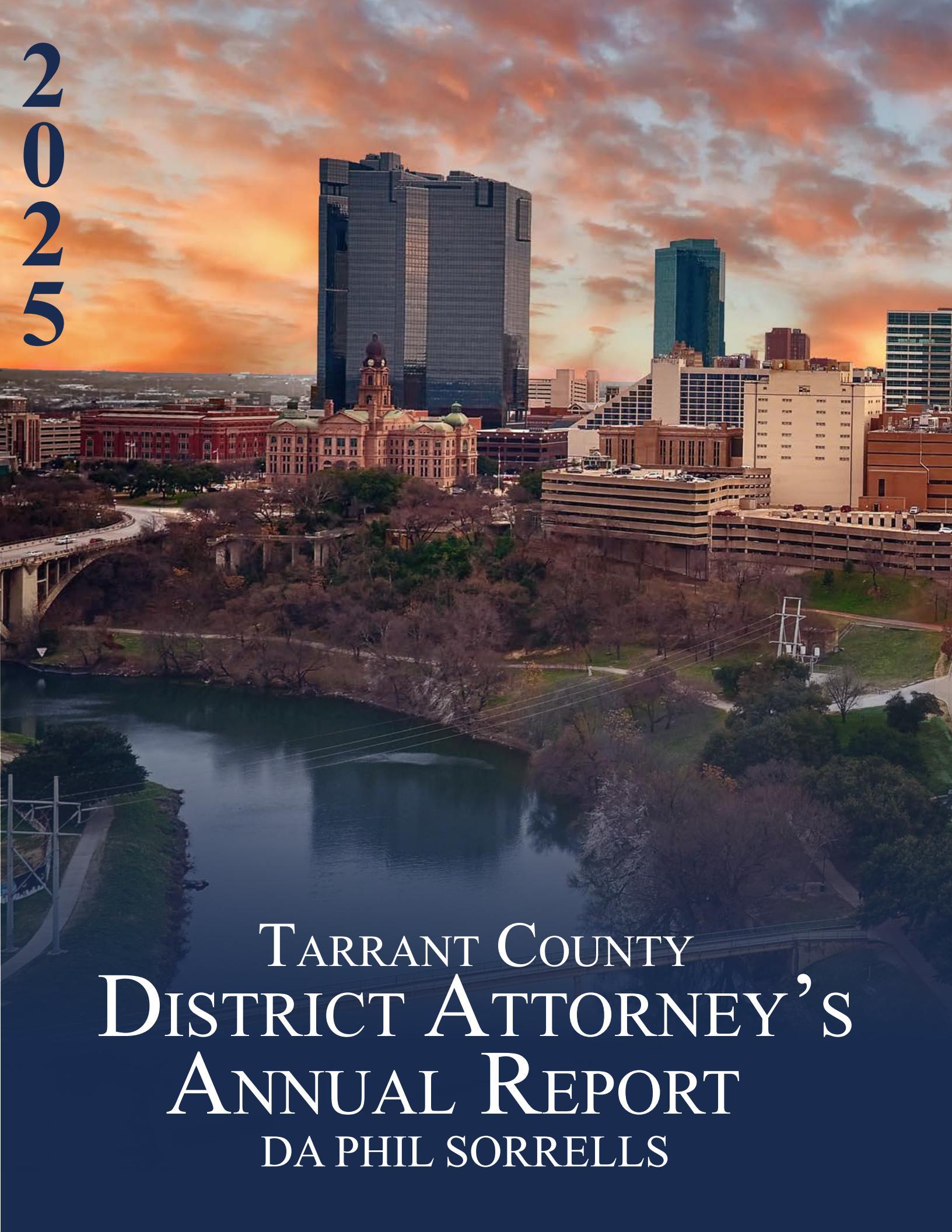


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TARRANT COUNTY  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S  
ANNUAL REPORT  
DA PHIL SORRELLS

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# A MESSAGE FROM DA PHIL SORRELLS



**2025** was a time for justice.

Day in and day out, our prosecutors took on some of the toughest trials, holding offenders accountable while standing up for victims and their families.

Their tireless work resulted in 34 life sentences, the most handed down in a single year since I took office in 2023.

One of those life sentences came in the first case we took to trial under a new Texas law, holding a defendant accountable for murder after supplying fentanyl that took a man's life. Other defendants received life sentences for crimes that shattered lives – sexual assaults of children and women, brutal acts of violence, murders, even the trafficking of women for profit.

Jurors also sentenced Valerian "Will" O'Steen, who murdered a young mother and buried her body in the crawl space beneath his home, to the death penalty. We never ask a jury to consider the ultimate punishment lightly. But in the most horrific cases, justice demands nothing less.

In other significant developments, one of the FBI's Top Ten Most Wanted Fugitives, Cindy Rodriguez, was located in India and returned to Tarrant County. She now faces prosecution for capital murder in the death of her 6-year-old disabled son, Noel.

Also, we continued working to reduce our case backlog. When COVID disrupted the justice system in March 2020, pending cases totaled 29,614. The number rose to 48,106 by August of 2021. In addition to the backlog, my office receives approximately 50,000 new cases each year. As of January 2026, there are now 31,356 pending cases.

In 2025, we stood with survivors and advocated for needed changes in state law.

I am proud to work with so many talented and dedicated attorneys, investigators, and staff.

We fight for justice every single day.

And we are making a difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Sorrells". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Phil" on the top line and "Sorrells" on the bottom line.

# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

## Pending Cases



## Cases Filed

There were a total of 48,647 cases filed.



## Top 5 Crimes of 2025

#1	Possession of Controlled Substances	6,214
#2	DWI	5,428
#3	Theft	5,115
#4	Family Violence	4,563
#5	Possession of Marijuana	2,515

201

Briefs filed in appeals from convictions

## Life In Prison Defendants



1 Death Penalty Defendant

2,623

Public information requests processed



321

Jury Trials

# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

## Cases Disposed



\* 222 were murder and capital murder cases.

**\$2.85 million**

collected from patients who owed money to JPS Health Network.

**306**

collection cases handled against patients who owed money to JPS Health Network.

**\$4.9 million**

Approximate amount collected for Tarrant County from bond forfeitures.

## THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

Here's the team that guides the Tarrant County District Attorney's Office.

Joining District Attorney Phil Sorrells and First Assistant DA Robb Catalano are: Criminal Division Chief Rose Anna Salinas, Civil Division Chief Craig Price, Chief Investigator Don Pilcher, Chief of Staff Jason Peters, and Chief of Operations Ann Durfee.



From left to right: Jason Peters, Rose Anna Salinas, Robb Catalano, Phil Sorrells, Craig Price, Ann Durfee, Don Pilcher.

# PROTECTING SURVIVORS



Each year, prosecutors in our Protective Order Unit of the Civil section work closely with survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking by filing applications for protective orders.

In Tarrant County, these applications are filed in the Family District Courts. The abuser is notified, and a hearing is held. Our prosecutors ask the courts to issue protective orders that prohibit abusers from committing family violence and from going within a specified distance of the applicant's home, place of employment, school, or residence.

The Unit also routinely requests protective orders that prohibit the abuser from possessing a firearm or contacting the applicant or members of the applicant's family or household. Once granted, violation of a protective order is a criminal offense that may result in arrest and criminal prosecution.

In 2025, prosecutors with the Protective Order Unit filed more than 400 protective order applications. The courts granted 371 final protective orders.

If you or someone you know has questions about obtaining a protective order, please complete this questionnaire for consideration for assistance: <https://bit.ly/4nioAL1>



# ELECTRONIC EVIDENCE

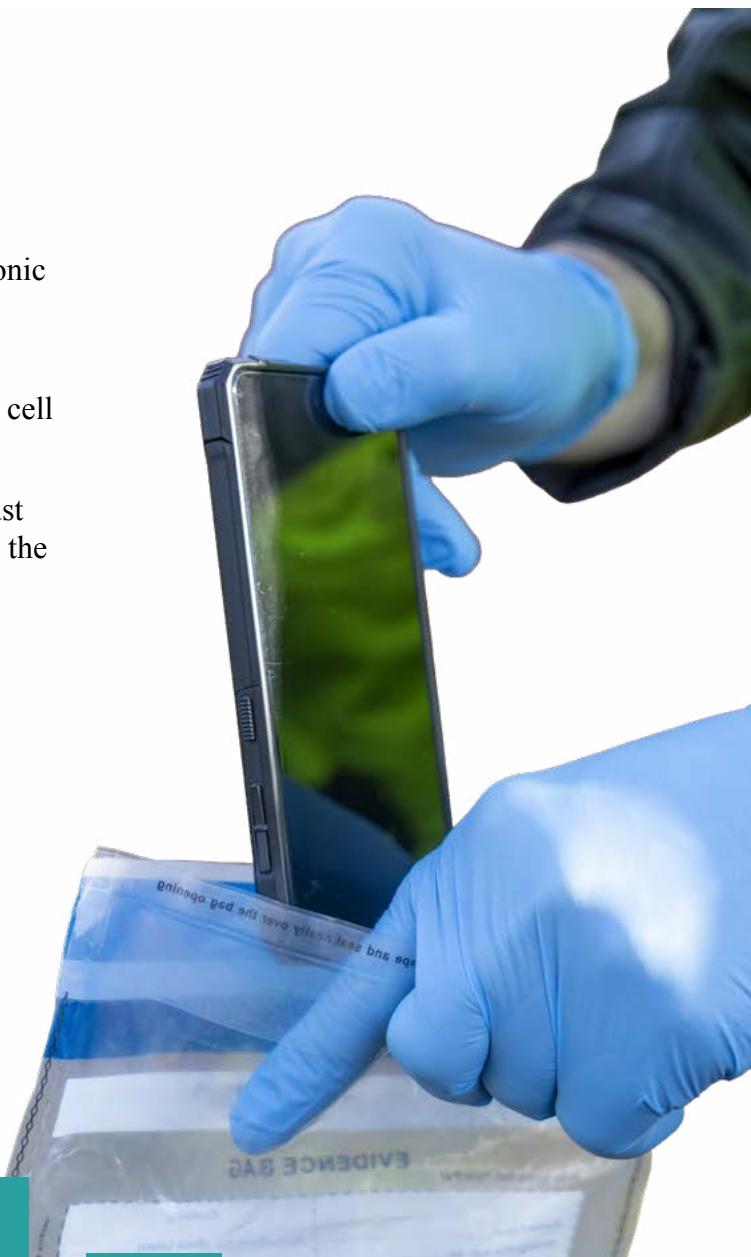
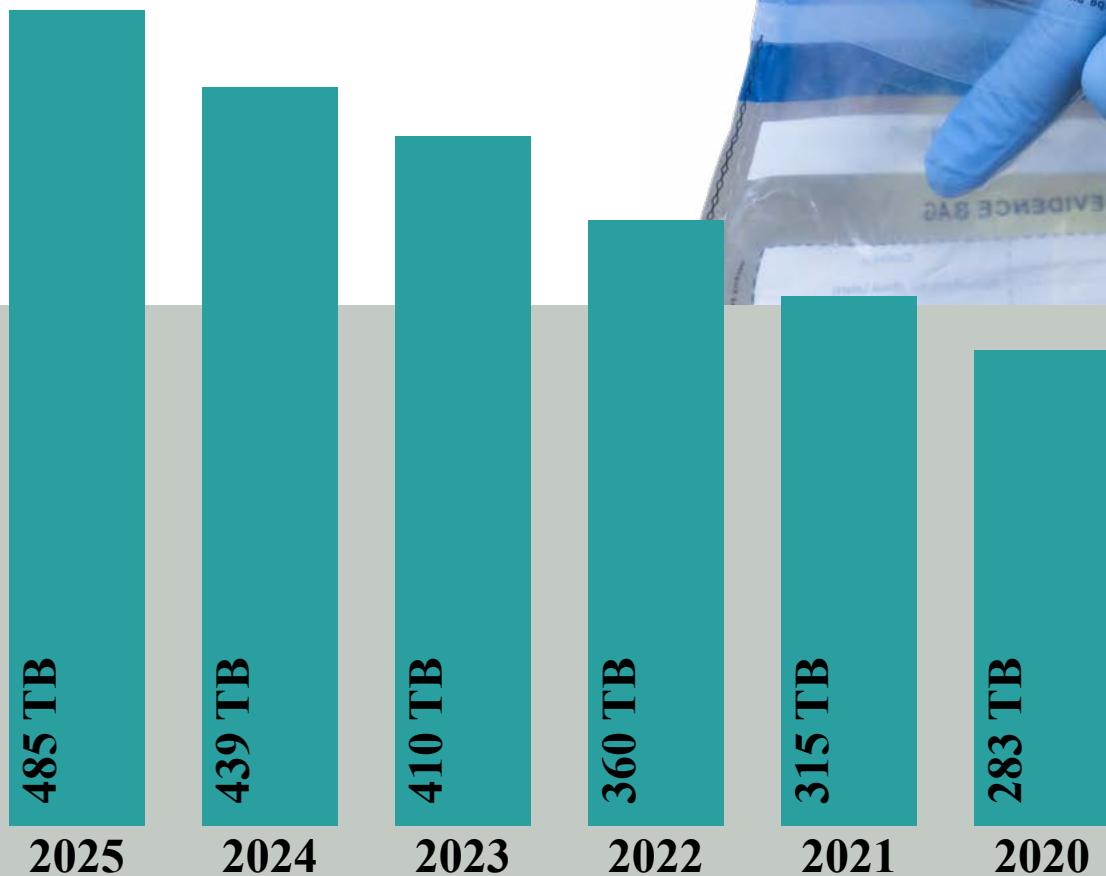
Digital Media Evidence is any kind of information stored or transmitted in electronic form that can be used in court.

Through the years, the volume of this evidence has increased dramatically, driven by widespread use of cell phones, electronic devices, and the Internet.

This evidence includes emails, social media posts and text messages, as well as video from police bodycams, dashcams, cell phones, and surveillance cameras.

As the volume of this digital evidence grows, prosecutors must devote significantly more time to review it. At the same time, the cost of securely storing this data continues to rise.

Here's a look at the Digital Media Evidence submitted to our office in recent years, measured in terabytes.



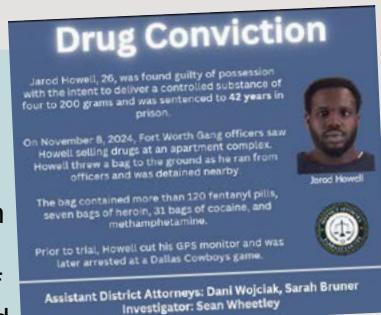
# MOST READ

Here are the five most read Tarrant County District Attorney Facebook posts in 2025.

#1

**368,953 views**

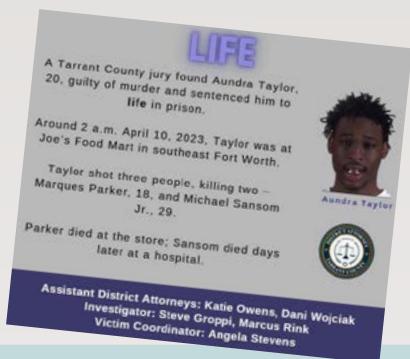
Jarold Howell, 26, was found guilty by a Tarrant County jury of possession with the intent to deliver a controlled substance of four to 200 grams. He had more than 120 fentanyl pills, seven bags of heroin, 31 bags of cocaine, and methamphetamine when he was detained November 8, 2024. He was sentenced to 42 years in prison. August 28.



#2

**308,176 views**

Aundra Taylor, 20, was found guilty by a Tarrant County jury of murder. He shot three people and killed two – Marques Parker, 18, and Michael Sansom Jr., 29 – at Joe's Food Mart on April 10, 2023. He was sentenced to life in prison. May 13.



#3

**288,434 views**

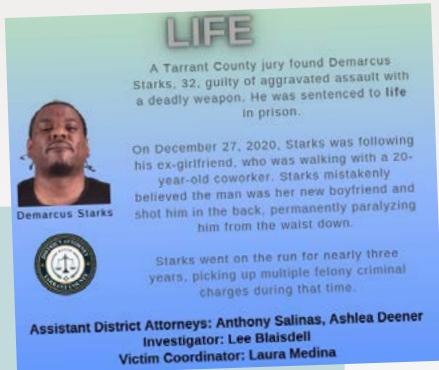
Not On Our Watch! Tarrant County is sending a clear message: crimes against intimate partners mean prison time. We take these cases seriously - so should you. Posted with a list of 10 defendants who were sentenced to decades in prison for Intimate Partner Violence cases. October 17.



#4

**256,544 views**

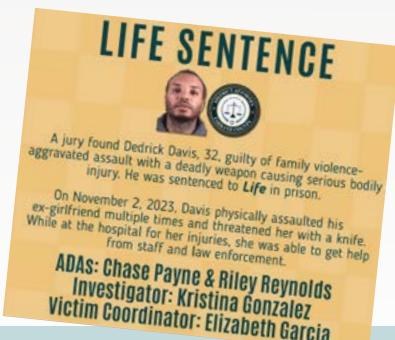
Demarcus Starks, 32, was found guilty by a Tarrant County jury of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. On December 27, 2020, Starks was following his ex-girlfriend who was walking with a 20-year-old coworker. Starks mistakenly believed the man was her new boyfriend and shot him in the back, permanently paralyzing him from the waist down. He was sentenced to life in prison. May 15.



#5

**208,462 views**

Dedrick Davis, 32, was found guilty by a Tarrant County jury of family violence-aggravated assault with a deadly weapon causing serious bodily injury. On November 2, 2023, Davis physically assaulted his ex-girlfriend multiple times and threatened her with a knife. He was sentenced to life in prison. June 13.



# FIGHTING BACK

White Collar Crime. Elder Financial Fraud. Cryptocurrency. Organized Retail Theft.

These are among the growing criminal threats in North Texas – and across the nation.

As criminals adapt to new technologies and methods, prosecutors and investigators must constantly sharpen their skills to identify, investigate, and prosecute these offenses.

That's why, in October, this office hosted a two-day North Texas Fraud Conference at the Hurst Convention Center that drew 135 prosecutors and investigators for advanced training on these evolving crimes.



“The North Texas Fraud Conference is intended to increase law enforcement’s understanding and ability to investigate and prosecute white collar crimes, elder exploitation, and criminal fraud organizations,” said Assistant District Attorney Lori Varnell, Chief of the White Collar Crime and Public Integrity Unit.

“Our goal is to equip detectives and prosecutors with tools to streamline obtaining evidence and getting justice for victims of financial crimes.”

The conference featured leading experts in financial crime investigation, including professionals from our office as well as those from the Colleyville Police Department, Texas Department of Public Safety, and the Texas Organized Retail Crime Association.

Among topics taught: how to identify complex fraud schemes, track cryptocurrency transactions, uncover patterns of elder exploitation, and understand the proof needed for successful prosecution.

“Criminals continue to find new ways to steal from hardworking Texans,” District Attorney Phil Sorrells said. “We remain committed to protecting victims, pursuing justice, and keeping pace with innovation in the fight against financial crime.”

# SENDING A MESSAGE

Our office focuses every day on prosecuting those who hurt others.

We stand with victims and seek justice for them.

Those are the key messages we hoped to share in 2025 with two educational campaigns: **Stand With Survivors** and **Not On My Watch**.



## STAND WITH SURVIVORS

In April, we drew attention to the fact that this month was both Sexual Assault Awareness and Child Abuse Prevention month. We are committed to prosecuting those who commit these crimes and to standing with their victims.

Dozens of our employees participated in the annual Victory Over Violence Walk and Run to support The Women's Center's anti-violence initiatives. It is an honor to work year-round with the Center as we prosecute those who commit domestic violence. (Note: one of our teammates – Esther Goodwin, an investigator in our Juvenile Unit – took home second place in the walk and run!)



## NOT ON MY WATCH

In November, we focused on the pervasiveness of domestic violence during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Year round, we hold people accountable for committing domestic violence by prosecuting these cases and seeking the maximum punishment allowed.

In October, we held up high our Not On My Watch signs – and we shared those images on social media.

“Domestic or family violence will not be tolerated here – not on my watch,” District Attorney Phil Sorrells said.

Elected officials, community leaders, and teams of people throughout the DA’s Office were among those featured in our campaigns.



## JOIN US

We ask everyone in Tarrant County – and beyond – to join us in these campaigns.

Stand with us and do everything you can to reduce family or domestic violence, sexual assaults, and child abuse.

“These are crimes we can, and must, eliminate,” Sorrells said. “We will make Tarrant County a safer place.”



# FINDING SOME PEACE

On April 10, 2017, Tracy Matheson experienced a parent's worst nightmare.

That's when she learned her daughter, Molly Jane, had been strangled, raped, and murdered at her TCU area apartment.

It took several years, but Molly Jane's killer – Reginald Kimbro – pled guilty to killing and raping her and others, including Megan Getrum, who was raped and strangled days after Molly Jane died. He was sentenced to life in prison.

Tracy knew she had to do something.

She created a non-profit organization known as Project Beloved to help other victims.

Among the organization's projects is creating "soft" interview rooms to help victims feel at least a little at ease when they talk with police or prosecutors about what happened to them.

"I wanted to change the conversation, empower survivors to find their voices," she said.

Her organization created the first room in 2019.

On June 20, 2025, they put in place their 142nd room here, at our office.

In one of our conference rooms, she and her team replaced the table and chairs with a colorful rug, comfortable furniture, lamps, side tables, blankets, and a coffee table. Artwork by Megan Getrum now hangs on the walls.

Project Beloved has created or helped with these rooms across the country.

"I'm encouraged to know that this is becoming more common, and that people are recognizing the need to do better," Matheson said. "When we are asking people to come to a place they don't want to be to have a conversation they don't want to have with a person they don't want to talk to, we need to do everything we can to create an environment (where) they can feel safe and they can disclose" what happened to them.



*Thank you, Tracy Matheson, for your work with Project Beloved and for creating a safe space in our office.*

# CATALYTIC CONVERTER CRACKDOWN

This case marked the first of its kind in Tarrant County – and one of the first in Texas.

In November, a Tarrant County jury found Jaylin Jessie, 27, guilty of engaging in organized criminal activity and sentenced him to 35 years in prison.

Jessie is one of the first in Texas to be sentenced under a 2023 law that makes it a felony to engage in organized crime by committing the underlying crime of theft of a catalytic converter.

The law, known as the Deputy Darren Almendarez Act, was inspired by a Harris County Sheriff's Office deputy who was shot and killed in 2022 while trying to stop suspects from stealing a catalytic converter.

In Jessie's case, police received reports from at least eight victims whose catalytic converters were stolen while they were at work.

When police tried to detain Jessie, a high-speed chase ensued. Multiple law enforcement agencies were involved; one officer crashed his vehicle and went to the hospital.

During the punishment phase of the trial, the court heard from multiple victims who previously had been robbed by the defendant, one of them at gunpoint.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Colin Maloney and Dan Cleveland of the White Collar Crimes Unit and the Tarrant Regional Auto Crimes Task Force.



Jaylin Jessie



# SEEKING JUSTICE FOR NOEL

Two years after fleeing Tarrant County with her husband and six children, Cindy Rodriguez – charged with capital murder in connection with the disappearance of her son, Noel – was returned on August 21, 2025.

The 40-year-old Everman woman was taken to the Tarrant County jail, where she remains on a \$10 million bond.

Noel Alvarez, who was born with developmental and physical disabilities, was last seen alive in October 2022. When law enforcement officials visited his family's home to check on his welfare in March 2023, they were told that Noel was living with his biological father in Mexico. That was not true.

Two days later, Rodriguez, her husband, Arshdeep Singh, and six children boarded a flight to India. Noel was not with them.

Police have said Noel, whose body has not been found, is presumed dead.

As weeks and months ticked by, a Tarrant County Grand Jury indicted Rodriguez for capital murder and a warrant was issued for her arrest.

On July 1, District Attorney Phil Sorrells joined FBI and Everman leaders to tell the community that they weren't giving up on finding Noel – and that Rodriguez was on the FBI's Top Ten Most Wanted Fugitive List.

At the time, he noted that: "Fleeing the country doesn't absolve you of guilt. It reinforces it."

Eventually, Indian authorities found Rodriguez. The FBI transferred her back to the United States and into the custody of the Tarrant County Sheriff's Office.



Noel Alvarez

"Our focus now is the successful prosecution of Cindy Rodriguez," Sorrells said. "We owe it to Noel and our community to hold her accountable."

We are thankful for the FBI, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and all the other law enforcement partners that worked diligently to find, apprehend, and return Rodriguez to Tarrant County.

"No matter where somebody runs, we will not stop pursuing justice," Sorrells said. "We owe it to Noel and every vulnerable child in our community to encourage and ensure that the truth will be found out and exposed and that accountability will be delivered."



Cindy Rodriguez



# 95 YEARS

Tarrant County Deputy Brent Brown sat in the courtroom.

There, he watched as Leland Earl Williams – the man who shot him at the Fort Worth Community Credit Union in 2023 – pled guilty to aggravated assault against a public servant. He also watched the sentencing proceedings for 37-year-old Williams.

At one point, Deputy Brown took the stand, choking up when recalling the day he “looked up and saw a gun pointing at me.”

The jury sentenced Williams to 95 years in prison.

“Thank you for listening to my story and for considering the evidence with an open mind,” Deputy Brown told the jury.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Dale Smith and Victoria Lydahl. DA Investigator Caleb Blank and Victim Coordinator Laura Medina also worked on the case.

On November 27, 2023, Deputy Brown was working off duty as a security guard at the credit union on Brentwood Stair Road.

Williams got up from a seat in the lobby of the Credit Union and approached Deputy Brown, who was sitting nearby. Williams fired several shots, striking Deputy Brown at nearly point-blank range.



Deputy Brent Brown

“Deputy Brown, after being shot twice, began firing, saving the lives of countless people,” Smith told the jury.

Williams fled the scene but was later arrested after a brief standoff at a relative’s house.

Deputy Brown was rushed into emergency surgery and underwent months of rehabilitation. He has since recovered and is back on duty.

“This was an unprovoked, highly intentional act against Deputy Brown,” Lydahl told the jury.

District Attorney Phil Sorrells praised the teamwork and dedication of the Fort Worth Police Department and prosecutors.

“This sentence sends a clear message: attacks on our peace officers will not be tolerated,” Sorrells said. “We stand shoulder to shoulder with law enforcement to keep Tarrant County safe.”



Leland Earl Williams

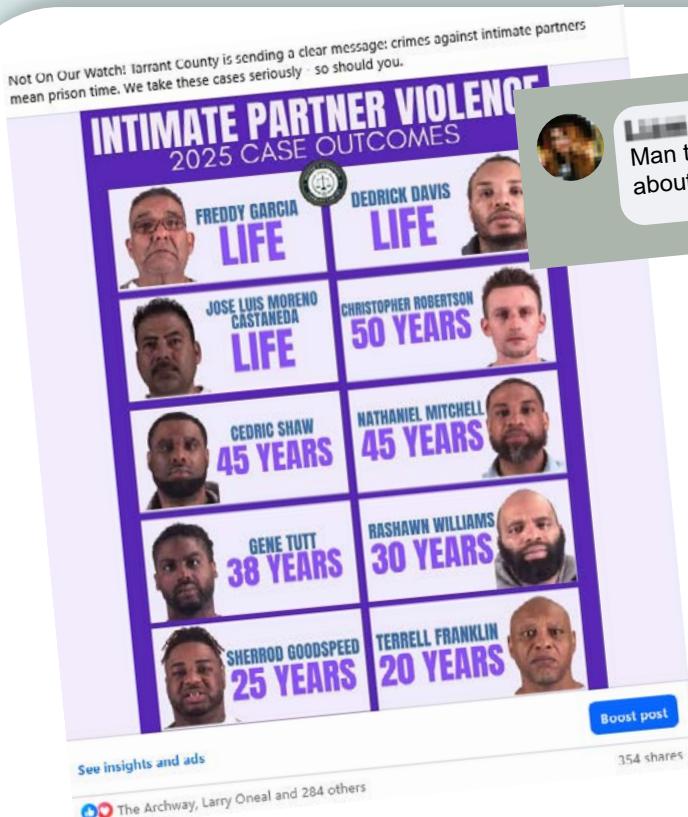
# SOCIAL MEDIA REACTIONS

Word is getting around.

We are prosecuting tough cases. We are asking for lengthy prison terms.

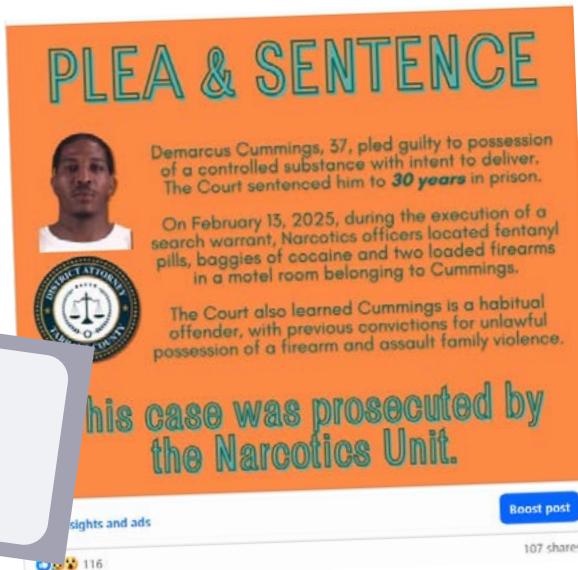
And juries are giving them.

Our communications team keeps the public updated by putting posts on Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn about many of these cases. Here are some of the comments people put on social media when they shared our posts.



Man these numbers is life better think about doing crimes these days

Say mane they giving out jersey numbers!



the new da ain't playing



BETTER STOP PLAYING IN THESE STREETS GO GET A 8-5 or A BUSINESS BECAUSE THEY DEFINITELY NOT PLAYING OUT HERE

## Drug Conviction

Jarod Howell, 26, was found guilty of possession with the intent to deliver a controlled substance of four to 200 grams and was sentenced to **42 years** in prison.

On November 8, 2024, Fort Worth Gang officers saw Howell selling drugs at an apartment complex. Howell threw a bag to the ground as he ran from officers and was detained nearby.

The bag contained more than 120 fentanyl pills, seven bags of heroin, 31 bags of cocaine, and methamphetamine.

Prior to trial, Howell cut his GPS monitor and was later arrested at a Dallas Cowboys game.



Jarod Howell



Assistant District Attorneys: Dani Wojciak, Sarah Bruner  
Investigator: Sean Wheetley

See insights and ads

140



Y'all should know by now that Texas ain't playing with y'all



I hope this is teaching yall to stay out the way

## LIFE

A Tarrant County jury sentenced Johnny Edwards, 38, to **LIFE** in prison for murder.



Johnny Edwards



Early Christmas morning in 2021, Edwards went to an apartment complex in west Fort Worth to visit Deshon Williams, 24. Once there, Edwards shot and killed Williams, who was sitting on the couch.

Edwards went home, changed clothes, and returned to the apartment. He stole marijuana and a PSS from Williams.

Police arrived at the apartment later, around 10 a.m., in response to a shooting call. They found Williams dead on the couch. He had been shot seven times.

Assistant District Attorneys: Lisa Callaghan, Stephanie Simpson  
Investigator: Darran Gabbett  
Victim Coordinator: Elizabeth Garcia

Boost post

141 shares

See insights and ads

104 others



Wtf is going on in Tarrant County!  
These new laws finna go crazy I hate seeing my ppl go down frrr y'all be safe

## Conviction



These people are giving out TIME  
TIME....PLEASE SIT DOWN

A Tarrant County jury sentenced Jaylin Jessie, 21, to 35 years in prison for engaging in organized criminal activity.



Jaylin Jessie



Last year, police received reports from at least eight victims who had their catalytic converters stolen while they were at work.

When police tried to detain Jessie, a high-speed police chase ensued. Multiple police agencies were involved; one officer crashed his vehicle and went to the hospital.

In the punishment phase, the court learned that Jessie has robbed multiple people, one of them at gun point.

Thank you to the Grapevine Police Department for your work on this case and for your commitment to keeping our community safe.

Assistant District Attorneys: Colin Maloney, Dan Cleveland  
Investigators: Ryan Holland, Mark Taylor

See insights and ads

145 others

Boost post



Get out the game my brothas !!! They not showing no mercy!!!!

## Sentenced



Michael Reed

Michael Reed, 28, pled guilty to injury to a child causing serious bodily injury and was sentenced to **20 years** in prison.

On February 18, 2024, Reed's 2-year-old daughter, Nevaeh, consumed fentanyl pills that Reed left unsecured inside his apartment. Instead of immediately calling 911 after finding Nevaeh unconscious, Reed conducted internet research on how to make a child throw up.

Nevaeh died 10 days later at Cook Children's Medical Center. Her death was ruled a homicide due to fentanyl toxicity.

Assistant District Attorneys: Charlie Boulware, Sarah Bruner  
Investigators: Matt Hardy  
Victim Coordinator: Clara Salvatierra

See insights and ads

87 others



Committing a crime in Tarrant county will have u fighting for your life

# “UNFORGIVEABLE”



Lamont Cousins

Nearly five years after Lamont Cousins shot and killed three people – one at a Fort Worth used car dealership and two others in an abandoned building in Palo Pinto County – a Tarrant County jury determined that he would spend the rest of his life in prison.

On May 1, 2025, the jury found Cousins guilty of capital murder in the deaths of 46-year-old Veronica Del Jones, 65-year-old Virginia Lewis, and 55-year-old Clayton Turrentine. Assistant District Attorneys Dale Smith and Lloyd Whelchel represented the State in this case.

“This case is about the execution of three people,” Whelchel told the jury.

## The End of the Road

These murders on December 14, 2020, were over a car deal, Whelchel and Smith noted.

Cousins, 49, shot and killed Lewis at Bill’s Auto Sales off Benbrook Highway. Police conducting a welfare check later found her lying on the floor in a pool of her blood.

Cousins also shot Turrentine, owner of Bill’s Auto Sales, and Jones, a dealership employee, at the dealership. Co-defendant Andrew Vandermeer testified that he tied up the two and drove them, with Cousins in the vehicle giving directions, to an abandoned bait shop in Palo Pinto County.

“They knew this was their last stop because (Cousins) told them: ‘This is the end of the road,’” Smith told the jury.

Cousins took Turrentine into the building and shot him in the back of the head, killing him. He went back to the vehicle and got Jones. Cousins then walked her into the building and shot her in the back of the head, killing her as well.

He left their bodies where they fell, and he and Vandermeer returned to Fort Worth.

These murders followed a car deal that involved Turrentine purchasing a red Dodge from Cousins. Someone bought the vehicle only to learn there was a lien on the car and it was repossessed. Turrentine returned the purchase price of the car to the buyer.

## “Burn in Hell”

A few family members of the victims spoke after Cousins was sentenced to life in prison. They told Cousins how devastating losing their loved ones has been.

“God says to forgive, but this is unforgiveable,” one woman said. “I hope you burn in hell when you get there.”

Vandermeer also faced a capital murder charge in this case. He pled guilty and was sentenced to 45 years in prison.

DA Investigator Danny Nutt and Victim Coordinator Elizabeth Garcia also worked on this case.



ADA Dale Smith

# LIVE LIKE WES

They came from nearby and far away.

They were friends and family of Wes Smith, the TCU student who was shot and killed September 1, 2023, in the West 7th District while helping a friend get a ride home.

Dozens of them crowded into a courtroom on June 26, 2025, to watch Matthew Purdy Jr., 23, admit that he was the one who killed Wes Smith.

They silently watched as Purdy was sentenced to 60 years in prison by the judge, who also sentenced him on nine additional felony charges.

In the early morning hours of September 1, 2023, Smith was outside a bar in the West 7th Street District helping a friend get a ride home. Purdy came up to him and shot him twice. Once Wes fell to the ground, Purdy shot him again in the back of the head to make sure he was dead.

Purdy then pistol-whipped an 18-year-old woman as she ran from the shooting. In a police interview, he said he didn't shoot her because he had run out of bullets. Police soon apprehended Purdy near Farrington Field, about two blocks from where the shooting occurred.

Wes, a 21-year-old junior from Tennessee, was taken to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead.



Wes Smith



Matthew Purdy Jr.

“You didn’t know Wes,” Wes’s mother, Dorree Smith, told Purdy after the court sentencing. “You never met him. But in that moment, you made a devastating, evil choice. You decided you mattered more than he did. And you took Wes’s earthly life.”

She and her husband, Phillip, spoke of what a “beautiful human being” their son was.

He had a quick wit and a great laugh.

He was a leader, an athlete, and an honor student.

He loved his friends and family, had boundless energy, and had a great way of listening to others speak, they said.

“Wes is now in Heaven. You are still on Earth,” Dorree Smith told Purdy. “You have a chance to give your story a different ending. ... I pray you can find a different ending by finding God’s love.”

“Live like Wes,” she said

Assistant District Attorneys Ashlea Deener and Criminal Division Chief Rose Anna Salinas represented the State. DA Investigator Benjamin Lopez and Victim Advocate CeCe Jones also worked on this case.

# BEATEN TO DEATH

*This is not a place for mercy.*

*That is not what we dispense.*

*In this courthouse, we administer justice.*

Those were the words Assistant District Attorney Allenna Bangs spoke to a jury deciding whether Valerian “Will” O’Steen – who killed Marissa Grimes, a 26-year-old mother of two – should receive the death penalty or life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The jury had already found O’Steen, who was a Russian orphan early in his life, guilty of capital murder.

As Grimes’s family waited to learn his punishment, several held hands and closed their eyes.

The courtroom was silent.

When the jury’s death sentence was announced, after about four hours of deliberation, several people in the courtroom – and a few jurors – wiped away tears.

Marissa’s dad, Daryl, told O’Steen that District Attorney Phil Sorrells reviewed this case before trial and “made the right decision, a hard decision” to seek the death penalty.

“You had every opportunity in life,” Daryl Grimes continued. “You threw it all away. ... You had no right to take away my daughter’s life.”

Bangs and ADA Peter Giesecking prosecuted this case. DA Investigator Tim Pinckney and Victim Advocate Clara Salvatierra worked on the case as well.

***“You had no right to take away my daughter’s life.”***



Marissa Grimes and her sons

***“This was cold-blooded murder.”***



ADA Allenna Bangs

## A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP

In January 2022, O'Steen threatened to kill Grimes and refused to let her leave his house for days. Grimes eventually was able to send a text message to her father, which led to police intervention.

O'Steen was arrested on domestic violence charges. As he bonded out of jail, the court ordered him to stay away from Grimes and wear a GPS ankle monitor.

He was mad, prosecutors told the jury. He wanted the charges dropped and the monitor removed from his body. He told people he was going to kill Grimes.

"He's a very dangerous person," Bangs said. "He's manipulative. ... Anyone who encountered Valerian O'Steen is a means to an end."

Marissa Grimes was scared and her family convinced her to move to West Texas. But, by February, Grimes and O'Steen again were talking, texting, and seeing each other.

## A QUICK GOODBYE

Driving a U-Haul packed for her move, she stopped by his home late on February 12, 2022, to say a quick goodbye.

She didn't plan on staying long.

But later that night, Grimes and O'Steen visited one of O'Steen's neighbors, who saw O'Steen threaten her with a gun.

She was not seen alive again.

Grimes's family soon reported her missing.

Days later, her abandoned U-Haul was found about a mile from O'Steen's house.



Valerian "Will" O'Steen

## TORTURED

Police executed a search warrant and eventually found Grimes's decomposing body wrapped in blankets and a tarp in the crawl space under O'Steen's home.

"He dug her a shallow grave and lived above her for 10 days," Bangs told the jury. "Yes, he is a future danger. He absolutely is."

Among her injuries: A broken arm, nose, and ribs. Two black eyes. Multiple lacerations to her face and head. Bruises on her arms, hands, and fingers. Her hair was cut in multiple lengths.

The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office ruled Grimes's death a homicide caused by blunt force trauma to the head.

"She was beaten to death," Giesecking told the jury. "She had been tortured."

One of Marissa's family members summed it up, after the sentence was announced, for O'Steen.

"This was cold-blooded murder," she said. "You are despicable."

# FENTANYL CONVICTION

Jacob Lindsay is the example.

He provided fentanyl and methamphetamine to Brandon Harrison, 26, who died September 18, 2023, after ingesting those drugs.

Less than two years later, on June 4, 2025, Lindsay was convicted by a Tarrant County jury of murder under a new Texas law targeting deadly fentanyl distribution.

He was sentenced to life in prison.

“We are sending a simple message: If you choose to poison our streets, you will be met with the full force of the law – no exceptions, no excuses,” District Attorney Phil Sorrells said. “Drug dealers need to know that Tarrant County is not open for business.”

Lindsay was the first person in Tarrant County to go to trial under the new law that went into effect September 1, 2023. That law now allows murder charges for individuals who supply or deliver fentanyl that causes someone’s death.

The first Tarrant County person sentenced under this law was Kaeden Farish, a 19-year-old Azle man who pled guilty in 2024 to murder after selling fentanyl-laced pills that killed a 17-year-old. He received a 19-year prison sentence.

Sorrells launched a dedicated Narcotics Prosecution Unit in 2023 to handle fentanyl-related and other high-impact drug cases.

Assistant District Attorneys Michael Ferry and Sarah Bruner, both members of the unit, prosecuted Lindsay on behalf of the State. DA Investigator Sean Wheatley and Victim Coordinator Imelda Lopez also worked on this case.

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid approved for medical use but often is illegally manufactured and sold due to its potency and low cost. As little as two milligrams – the size of a few grains of salt – can be fatal.

“If you manufacture or distribute fentanyl that causes the death of another person, we will charge you with murder,” Sorrells said. “We are committed to getting this poison off our streets.”



Jacob Lindsay



***“No exceptions, no excuses.”***

# GETTING LIFE

District Attorney Phil Sorrells continues to seek lengthy sentences for those who commit heinous crimes. In 2025, 34 people were sentenced to life in prison. In addition to Jacob Lindsay and Lamont Cousins, here are their stories.



## JAY SHAWN NIXON-CLARK, 19

Nixon-Clark was found guilty of capital murder for killing two people in Fort Worth. On August 28, 2022, Nixon-Clark and other people he knew drove through a neighborhood in northwest Fort Worth. They parked the car. For three minutes and 19 seconds, they sat and watched a house on Steel Dust Drive where teenagers and children were playing in the garage with the door up. Nixon-Clark and another male got out of the car, carrying guns and wearing masks, and ran to the house. They fired more than a dozen shots, ran back to their car, and drove off. Jamarrien Monroe, 17, and his cousin, Rayshard Javon Scott, 5, were killed. Other family members, including Monroe's 18-month-old son, were injured. Prosecutors Bill Vassar, Melinda Hogan. Investigator Danny Nutt. Victim Coordinators Imelda Lopez, Laura Medina. January 14, 2025.



## FEDERICO AMAYA, 58

Amaya was found guilty of continuous sexual abuse of a child under the age of 14. On January 16, 2022, an 11-year-old girl told her mother that Amaya, a relative, had been sexually abusing her for a year. Amaya told the girl he would "hurt her" if she told anyone about the abuse. Prosecutors Steven Elliott, Erika Staif. Investigator Tiffany Johnson. Victim Coordinator Imelda Lopez. January 24, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA Norma Bazan.



## JOE TINER, 65

Tiner was found guilty of aggravated sexual assault of a child. In 2020, one of Tiner's female relatives told Fort Worth Police detectives that Tiner sexually assaulted her multiple times when she was between the ages of four and 12. The abuse started in 2005. Investigators learned that multiple female relatives also had been sexually abused by Tiner when they were younger. He was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences. Prosecutors Deanna Franzen, Gill Clements. Investigator Scott Giovannelli. Victim Coordinator Candace Burnett. February 4, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA Norma Bazan.



### JOSEPH APARICIO, 31

Aparicio pled guilty to murder. On March 23, 2023, Fort Worth Police found Janeecia Mason's body under the Precinct Line Road bridge, next to the Trinity River. She had been shot twice in the head. Police used surveillance footage, cell phone data, and witness statements to determine that Aparicio killed Mason. Her clothes and blood were found in his bedroom in Haltom City. He also murdered another woman in Denton County in 2022 and will spend life in prison for that crime as well. Prosecutors Bill Vassar, Allenna Bangs. Investigator Matt Hardy. Victim Coordinator Candace Burnett. February 7, 2025.



### CEDRIC WHITAKER, 20

Whitaker was placed on probation for aggravated robbery and, within four months, he sexually assaulted a woman at a hotel. Based on the sexual assault, our office sought to have Whitaker's probation revoked. After hearing evidence about the sexual assault, the Court revoked Whitaker's probation and sentenced him to life in prison. Prosecutors Tad Schmidt, Ross Van de Kop. Investigator Annabelle Amon. Victim Coordinator Laura Medina. February 19, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA Cynthia Gustafson.



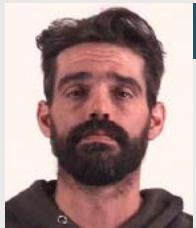
### KALEB NIX, 26

Nix pled guilty to the continuous sexual abuse of a child under the age of 14. Nix was hired by numerous families to babysit their children between 2018 and 2023. Arlington Police received an online tip in 2023 that Nix was in possession of child pornography. Officers investigated and found that Nix committed acts of sexual abuse on 15 of the children he babysat. The age of his victims ranged from one to nine years. Prosecutor Steven Elliott. Investigator Brent Ezelle. Victim Coordinator Carma Anderson. February 21, 2025. Lifetime protective orders were granted on behalf of the victims. ADA William Higgins.



### ALBERT GONZALEZ, 29

Gonzalez was found guilty of capital murder for fatally shooting a game room clerk during a robbery. On March 4, 2021, Gonzalez and an accomplice were dropped off at the 5D Smoke Shop and Game Room on Altamesa Boulevard. Once inside, Gonzalez pulled out a firearm and pointed it at 37-year-old Mahmoud Ghanim of Arlington. Ghanim raised his hands and attempted to push the gun away, but Gonzalez shot him in the torso, killing him. After the murder, Gonzalez and Renay Moreno proceeded to steal money and cell phones from other patrons in the game room. They also rifled through Ghanim's pockets, stealing cash, and took a bag of money from the game room. Afterward, Gonzalez and Moreno fled the scene and had their driver take them back to their hotel, where they divided the stolen money. Prosecutors Chase Payne, Tim Rodgers. Investigator Danny Nutt. Victim Coordinator Laura Medina. February 26, 2025.



### CHRISTOPHER GILES, 39

Giles was found guilty of continuous sexual abuse of a child. In January 2024, a 7-year-old family member of Giles made an outcry of sexual abuse. Giles sexually assaulted the young girl multiple times from the ages of 4 to 7. Law enforcement also found child pornography of the victim on Giles' phone. Giles, a registered sex offender, was previously convicted in Oklahoma of lewd molestation for sexually assaulting his 7-year-old cousin. Prosecutors Marina Thomas, Erika Staif. Investigator Tiffany Johnson. Victim Coordinator Laura Medina. February 26, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA William Higgins.



### RICHARD GUERRA, 42

Guerra was found guilty of continuous sexual abuse of a child and possession of child pornography. Guerra sexually abused a 13-year-old girl multiple times from July 2021 to December 2021. The jury also learned that Guerra was in possession of child pornography of the victim. He previously was convicted of kidnapping in 2010. Prosecutors Madeline Jones, Sarah Sherman. Investigators Jose Fonseca, Patrick Knotts. Victim Coordinator CeCe Jones. February 28, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA Cynthia Gustafson.



### JOSE LUIS MORENO CASTANEDA, 46

Moreno Castaneda was found guilty of murder. About 4 a.m. October 30, 2022, the body of Evila Yanes was found in a parking lot along North Cooper Street in Arlington. She died of blunt force trauma to the head. Yanes, 44, and Moreno Castaneda had a lengthy dating relationship and were seen together on surveillance cameras hours before her body was found. His DNA was found on several items, including a beer bottle, at the crime scene. Moreno Castaneda, who had a history of domestic violence, was on probation for previously assaulting Yanes by dousing her with gasoline. Prosecutors Allenna Bangs, Kate Hinojosa. Investigator Kristina Gonzalez. Victim Coordinators Candace Burnett, Carrie Farley. March 3, 2025.



### KEVIN ESPINAL, 30

Espinal was found guilty of continuous sexual assault of a child and sentenced to two consecutive life sentences. Espinal sexually assaulted several young relatives over the course of many years. He admitted to sending inappropriate photos to one of the victims and admitted to having bad thoughts about young children. The jury also learned Espinal was a registered sex offender, convicted of indecency with a child-sexual contact in 2014. He was deported to Honduras and re-entered the United States illegally and then committed the additional sexual offenses against children. Prosecutors Kyle Russo, Brittane Hamilton. Investigator Jose Fonseca. Victim Coordinator Elizabeth Garcia. March 6, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA William Higgins.



## MARK ANTHONY WASHINGTON, 58

Washington was found guilty of murder. On April 15, 2019, Washington drove from Oklahoma to Arlington to shoot and kill Juriah Fields. Fields, 29, was shot outside his home and died at a hospital. Prosecutors Jeff Stewart, Matthew Jackson. Investigator Caleb Blank. Victim Coordinator Imelda Lopez. March 28, 2025.



## CLARENCE TILLIS, 35

Tillis was found guilty of aggravated sexual assault of a child. In June 2023, Tillis showed a 6-year-old girl a pornographic video. He then made her engage in the sexual acts portrayed in the video. Tillis had a previous conviction for aggravated sexual assault of a child in 2018. That victim was 3-years-old. Prosecutors Marina Thomas, Courtney Mowdy. Investigator Brent Ezelle. Victim Coordinator Candace Burnett. April 10, 2025.

A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA Khayan Williams.



## JEREMY HARGROVE, 44

Hargrove was found guilty of two counts of aggravated sexual assault of a child. He was sentenced to two life sentences. In the early morning hours of February 26, 2022, Hargrove provided drugs and alcohol to an underage child and sexually assaulted her. Prosecutors Madeline Jones, Olivia Stoner. Investigator Patrick Knotts. Victim Coordinator CeCe Jones. April 17, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA Cynthia Gustafson.



## WILLIAM NEVILLES, 49

Nevilles was found guilty of aggravated sexual assault of a child, aggravated kidnapping, and indecency with a child. He was sentenced to four consecutive life sentences. On December 14, 2023, Nevilles kidnapped an 8-year-old girl who was in the toy aisle at a Walmart in Fort Worth. He took her to three separate locations and sexually assaulted her. Prosecutors Steven Elliott, Ashton Moore. Investigator Tiffany Johnson. Victim Coordinator Cristina Rangel. May 1, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA William Higgins.



## JESSE HERRERA, 58

Herrera was found guilty of indecency with a child and sexual assault of a child. He was sentenced to two life sentences. Beginning in 2018, Herrera sexually abused an 11-year-old girl who lived in the same home. The abuse lasted three years. Prosecutors Deanna Franzen, Kimberly Barragon. Investigator Lee Blaisdell. Victim Coordinator Carma Anderson. May 9, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA Khayan Williams.



## AUNDRA TAYLOR, 20

Taylor was found guilty of murder. Around 2 a.m. April 10, 2023, Taylor was at Joe's Food Mart in southeast Fort Worth. Taylor shot three people, killing two – Marques Parker, 18, and Michael Sansom Jr., 29. Parker died at the store; Sansom died days later at a hospital. Prosecutors Katie Owens, Dani Wojciak. Investigator Steve Groppi. Victim Coordinator Angela Stevens. May 13, 2025.



## DEMARCUS STARKS, 32

Starks was found guilty of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. On December 27, 2020, Starks was following his ex-girlfriend, who was walking with a 20-year-old coworker. Starks mistakenly believed the man was her new boyfriend and shot him in the back, permanently paralyzing him from the waist down. Starks went on the run for nearly three years, picking up multiple felony criminal charges during that time. Prosecutors Anthony Salinas, Ashlea Deener. Investigator Lee Blaisdell. Victim Coordinator Laura Medina. May 14, 2025.



## JESUS TERRAZAS, 59

Terrazas was found guilty of continuous sexual abuse of a child. In 2020, an 8-year-old girl made an outcry that Terrazas sexually assaulted her multiple times when she visited family in Arlington. Prosecutors Sydney Brock, Megan Bradshaw. Investigator Tiffany Johnson. Victim Coordinator Angela Stevens. May 16, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA Khayan Williams.



## JOSEPH CAMPBELL, 36

Campbell was found guilty of continuous trafficking of persons. Campbell recruited young girls from all over the country into prostitution, including one under the age of 18. He put the girls on "sugar daddy" websites and ensured that they performed acts of prostitution while he collected the money. He physically and sexually assaulted the victims and threatened some of them with guns. Prosecutors Stephanie Simpson, Kim D'Avignon, Alec Trono. Investigators Raul Rodriguez, Tim Pinckney. Victim Coordinator Carma Anderson. June 2, 2025. Lifetime protective orders were granted on behalf of the victims. ADAs Khayan Williams, Stacie Wright.



### DEDRICK DAVIS, 32

Davis was found guilty of family violence-aggravated assault with a deadly weapon causing serious bodily injury. He was sentenced to three life sentences. On November 2, 2023, Davis physically assaulted his ex-girlfriend multiple times and threatened her with a knife. While at the hospital for her injuries, she was able to get help. Prosecutors Chase Payne, Riley Reynolds. Investigator Kristina Gonzalez. Victim Coordinator Elizabeth Garcia. June 12, 2025.



### SHAWN MCFARLANE, 42

McFarlane was found guilty of aggravated assault against a family member. On June 2, 2023, McFarlane asked a family member for money. When she didn't give it to him, he spent hours beating her in her own home. He slammed her face into the floor, tied her up with zip ties, hit her, and strangled her until she blacked out. The woman had various injuries to her face, multiple rib fractures, and a partially collapsed lung. McFarlane took cash the woman had in her pants pocket as well as her debit card and cell phone. Prosecutors Alec Trono, Emily Dixon. Investigator Josh Neiswender. Victim Coordinator Imelda Lopez. June 26, 2025. A five-year protective order was granted on behalf of the victim in 2023. ADA Cynthia Gustafson.



### ALBERT FLORES, 57

Flores was found guilty of aggravated sexual assault of a child. While on parole for a 2000 indecency with a child offense, Flores sexually assaulted a male relative multiple times, starting when the boy was 8. Flores threatened to hit the victim with a belt if he did not comply. He also threatened to kill the boy's family in front of him if he told anyone. Prosecutors Megan Bradshaw, Steven Elliott. Investigator Matt Hardy. Victim Coordinator CeCe Jones. July 10, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA William Higgins.



### JACOBY ROBERTS, 25

Roberts was found guilty of capital murder. On April 4, 2023, Roberts helped set up a fake drug deal to lure his 25-year-old cousin, Jailon Freeman, outside at an apartment complex in south Fort Worth. Roberts, who believed Freeman owed him money from drug deals the two conducted, shot Freeman in the back of the head. He then grabbed a bag of cocaine and a handgun Freeman had with him and ran from the scene. Prosecutors Matt Rivers, Ashton Moore. Investigator James Desmarais. Victim Advocate CeCe Jones. July 24, 2025.



## FREDDY GARCIA, 57

Garcia was found guilty of sexual assault and assault of a family member with a prior conviction for family violence. On April 9, 2024, Garcia was mad at a woman he was dating. He threatened to kill her and her family members, then he sexually assaulted her. Prosecutors Jasmine Banks, Chase Payne. Investigator Darla Dowell. Victim Coordinators Carrie Farley, Clara Salvatierra. August 7, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA Khayan Williams.



## KAITLYN BAILEY, 27

Bailey pled guilty to murdering her mother and grandmother. She was given two concurrent life sentences. On November 22, 2023, she went to a home in Rendon where her mother, Shari Bailey, 60, and grandmother, Bertha Bailey, 84, were. She demanded money from her mother; Shari refused to give her money. Kaitlyn took Shari's gun and shot her with it. She then shot her grandmother. Prosecutors Lloyd Whelchel, Jeff Stewart. Investigator Caleb Blank. Victim Coordinator CeCe Jones. August 29, 2025.



## TRANELL PLEASANT, 36

Pleasant was found guilty of murder. On February 8, 2021, during a verbal argument, Pleasant shot and killed his 42-year-old uncle, Shelton Harris. During the punishment phase, jurors learned Pleasant is a habitual offender who has been in prison multiple times for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and assault against family members. Prosecutors Madeline Jones, James Zaleta. Investigator Patrick Knotts. Victim Coordinator CeCe Jones. September 11, 2025.



## HUNG "BILLY" NGUYEN, 54

Nguyen pled guilty to murder. On March 9, 2018, Nguyen fatally stabbed his ex-girlfriend, 38-year-old Chi Pham, and then set her Grand Prairie home on fire. He left and drove to where he and Pham worked. There, he attacked former coworkers. Prosecutors Chase Payne, Allenna Bangs. Investigator Ben Lopez. Victim Coordinator Clara Salvatierra. September 17, 2025.



### JOHNNY EDWARDS, 38

Edwards was found guilty of murder. Early Christmas morning in 2021, Edwards went to an apartment complex in west Fort Worth to visit Deshon Williams, 24. Once there, Edwards shot and killed Williams. Edwards went home, changed clothes, and returned to the apartment. He stole marijuana and a PS5 from Williams. Police arrived at the apartment later, around 10 a.m., in response to a shooting call. They found Williams – shot seven times – dead on the couch. Prosecutors Lisa Callaghan, Stephanie Simpson. Investigator Darran Gabbert. Victim Coordinator Elizabeth Garcia. September 26, 2025.



### JUSTIN SHAH, 37

Shah was found guilty of two counts of aggravated sexual assault. He was sentenced to two life sentences in prison. On April 10, 2022, Shah and friends were at a nightclub in the Stockyards. He met an 18-year-old high school student who worked there; they exchanged telephone numbers. In the middle of the night, Shah texted the student repeatedly, pressuring her to visit the Airbnb where he was staying. When she arrived, Shah and others sexually assaulted her. The Court ordered this sentence to run consecutively to a life sentence Shah already is serving for a home invasion in McLennan County. Prosecutors Melinda Hogan, Bill Vassar. Investigator Tim Pinckney. Victim Coordinator Laura Medina. October 6, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA Norma Bazan.



### BRIEN JAKUBEC, 40

Jakubec was found guilty of burglary of a habitation, aggravated sexual assault, aggravated kidnapping, and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. On February 25, 2024, Jakubec broke into a home carrying a weapon and tied up a young couple, demanding that they give him money, drugs, and valuables. He sexually assaulted the woman; the male victim eventually escaped the room to get help. Jakubec also committed a carjacking in Dallas with another young female. Prosecutors Libby Kinsey, David Elder. Investigator Annabelle Amon. Victim Coordinator Cristina Rangel. November 3, 2025.



### MOISES DE PAZ ROBLES, 57

De Paz Robles was found guilty of continuous sexual abuse of a child under the age of 14. In November 2024, a 12-year-old girl told her school counselor that De Paz Robles, a relative, had been sexually assaulting her for years. She said the abuse started when she was about 5 years old. Prosecutors Katherine Messina, Victoria Lydahl. Investigator Clint Leach. Victim Coordinator Laura Medina. November 5, 2025. A lifetime protective order was granted on behalf of the victim. ADA Khayan Williams.

# EXECUTED

In 2025, one person convicted of a Tarrant County crime was executed – Steven Lawayne Nelson.

Nearly 14 years after Nelson beat and suffocated to death Pastor Clinton Dobson of the NorthPointe Baptist Church in Arlington, he was executed on February 5, 2025.

It was 2011 when Nelson killed Dobson and beat beyond recognition Judy Elliott, the church secretary. He stole Elliott's car and other items including a laptop and credit cards. He sold the laptop and used the credit cards to buy clothes and jewelry. Nelson said his friends killed Dobson. But blood spatter on his shoes was a DNA match for Dobson and Elliott. Nelson's fingerprints were found at the church, and distinctive white metal studs from the belt Nelson was wearing when he was arrested were found on and around Dobson's body.



Steven Lawayne Nelson

In 2012, a Tarrant County jury convicted Nelson of capital murder and sentenced him to death.

Nelson's last words did not mention Dobson or Elliott. "It is what it is," he said. "I'm not scared. I'm at peace. ... Let's ride, Warden."

Nelson was the first inmate from Tarrant County executed since Stephen Barbee – who in 2005 killed his pregnant former girlfriend, Lisa Underwood, and her 7-year-old son Jayden – was put to death on November 16, 2022.

## UPCOMING EXECUTIONS

Two Tarrant County men sentenced to the death penalty have execution dates set in 2026.



**March 11** – Cedric Ricks, 51, will be executed for stabbing to death his girlfriend, Roxann Sanchez, and her 8-year-old son, Anthony Figueroa.



**May 14** – Edward Busby, 53, will be executed for robbing and suffocating Laura Lee Crane, a 77-year-old retired TCU professor.

# IN OUR COMMUNITY

District Attorney Phil Sorrells and others in this office speak at various gatherings throughout the community and state. Here is a look at some of our community involvement.



DA Sorrells joined other county officials in speaking at the State of the County luncheon. He noted that more life sentences were handed down in 2025 than in either 2023 or 2024.



Several of our prosecutors helped as judges in a high school criminal mock trial competition. Thank you, Sydney Brock, Emily Dixon, Emily Ledford, Matt Hinojosa, Katie Owens, and D.J. Estes.

# IN OUR COMMUNITY

ADA Kim D'Avignon spoke at the Monster Mash, highlighting the vital partnership between our office and The Women's Center in prosecuting sexually based offenses.



Our Elder Financial Fraud team – DA Investigators Kyle Truly and Dara Couch and ADA Nathan Martin – works hard to let people know about scams that target their pocketbooks. They displayed their new signs at the Empowering Seniors Expo in October.



Our Victim Assistance Coordinators held an event for National Crime Victims' Rights Week to praise crime victims for being brave enough to navigate their way through the criminal justice system. They posed for this photo with DA Sorrells and First Assistant DA Robb Catalano, along with the wreath displayed at the event.

# IN OUR COMMUNITY



Deputy Chief Allenna Bangs and Assistant DAs Lauren Lawrence and Lori Varnell testified before Texas legislative committees about bail reform, protecting children and the elderly from fentanyl, and stopping child pornography.

ADA Matt Rivers was included in "Bad Sports: When Fans Turn Violent," part of CNN's "The Whole Story with Anderson Cooper," in September. He prosecuted a case in which Marvin Rodriguez, a tailgater at a Dallas Cowboys home game in October 2015, shot and killed Richard Sells, a fellow tailgater, after the Cowboys lost to the New England Patriots.

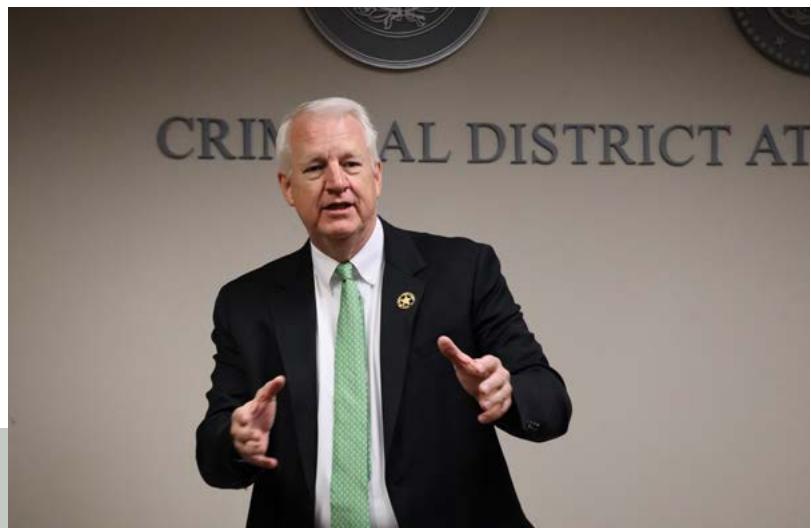


# IN OUR COMMUNITY

First Assistant DA Catalano and DA Sorrells took photos with two members of the Swiss Guard who visited the DA's Office. These Swiss Guards – Alain and Renato – help protect the Pope, his home, and the Vatican City.



ADA Ashlea Deener spoke to the media after Matthew Purdy Jr. was sentenced to 60 years in prison for murdering TCU student Wes Smith.



First Assistant DA Catalano welcomed attendees to our 2025 Citizen Prosecutor Academy, highlighting our office's accomplishments. DA Sorrells spoke to the class and presented diplomas to graduates at the end of the course.

# IN OUR COMMUNITY



ADA Sydney Brock was invited to speak to AP English classes at Paschal High School after a PHS teacher served on her voir dire panel in May. She explained the art of persuasion and how words matter during jury selection.

ADA Stuart Neal explained that juvenile justice is very different from the adult system to soon-to-be detectives at the Tarrant County College Law Enforcement Academy.



DA Sorrells joined Tarrant County officials in the Tarrant County Toys for Tots Toy Drive that collected more than 700 toys. Tax Assessor-Collector Rick Barnes, County Judge Tim O'Hare, County Clerk Mary Louise Nicholson, District Clerk Tom Wilder, Sheriff Bill Waybourn, and DA Sorrells posed for a photo together.

# IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Alliance for Children is a vital partner of our office. We are always proud to support their annual fundraiser “Let’s Play Bingo.”



ADA Chase Payne and Deputy Chief Allenna Bangs helped celebrate SafeHaven of Tarrant County for changing its name to The Archway. The group, a key partner of ours, remains dedicated to helping those facing domestic violence. FWPD Victim Advocate Shelby Hopson, JPS RN Marianne Contreras, and Archway CEO Kathryn Jacob joined in the photo.

DA Sorrells went to Kroger to film a warning about gift card scams. Thieves often steal or tamper with the magnetic strip or barcode on gift cards while they are still on the shelf. DA Sorrells offered tips for consumers to keep their gift cards safe.



# RECOGNITION



Amy Allin was appointed by Governor Greg Abbott in February to the 297th Judicial District Court in Tarrant County. She worked in this office as an Assistant District Attorney for eight years, prosecuting hundreds of cases and serving as a felony court chief. The Texas Senate approved her appointment; DA Phil Sorrells swore her into office. Allin replaced Judge David Hagerman, who retired from the position. Her term will expire December 31, 2026.

Unbound Now recognized DA Sorrells with its Three Key Award, honoring him for ensuring that his office prosecutes human trafficking cases and seeks justice for Tarrant County victims and their families. “I’m humbled and honored to be recognized by an outstanding organization that works every day to eliminate human trafficking in our community,” said Sorrells, who created this office’s Human Trafficking Unit in 2023. Unbound Now is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting survivors and mobilizing resources to fight human trafficking.



# RECOGNITION

Assistant District Attorney Lori Varnell was awarded the 2025 Colleen Colton Award from Guardianship Services Inc., a non-profit that helps at-risk adults in Tarrant County. She was honored for her support of GSI's mission and her dedication to protecting vulnerable people in Tarrant County. "Her tireless advocacy and commitment to justice have made a profound difference in the lives of those we serve," according to a GSI statement.



District Attorney Investigator Jose "Joe" Carrizal was honored with the Homeland Security Investigations Task Force Officer of the Year Award. Carrizal has been a key player in the investigation and apprehension of some of the most violent criminals in Tarrant County in recent years. "Joe Carrizal embodies the highest standards of public service and partnership. His reliability and professionalism have made him an essential part of the HSI mission," a Homeland Security Investigations press release stated.

## fortworth MAGAZINE TOP ATTORNEYS

Five of our prosecutors were named to the prestigious Top Attorneys in Tarrant County list by Fort Worth Magazine in 2025.



Norma Bazan



Kyle Morris



Zane Reid



Matt Rivers



Stacie Wright

# CITIZEN PROSECUTOR ACADEMY



Fall 2025 Class

Do you want to learn how the criminal justice system works in Tarrant County?

Join our office's Citizen Prosecutor Academy – a program we offer twice a year, once in the Spring and once in the Fall.

Participants learn about every step of prosecution and gain an insider's perspective on how cases move through the system. Assistant District Attorneys and Investigators lead the sessions, and participants also get the opportunity to tour the Tarrant County Corrections Center.

Recent graduates said they would recommend our CPA class to others. Here's some of their feedback:

“The jail is much cleaner than I expected.”

“I’m so glad I was part of the CPA! I feel like a more informed citizen now.”

“I wanted to learn a lot, and I did!”

The Spring class begins March 5. Classes meet on Thursdays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and there is no cost to attend. Another class will be offered in the Fall.

For information about the program, call 817-884-1400 or visit [cda.tarrantcounty.com](http://cda.tarrantcounty.com) and click on the Community tab. Applications may be submitted online.

[Online Application](#)

# IN MEMORY



Allison Attles Bowen, our Victim Services director, unexpectedly passed away in February. In her nine years with our office, Allison played an integral role in seeking justice.

She was dedicated to supporting victims in Tarrant County and her work touched the lives of so many. We are forever grateful for the impact Allison had on this office and our community.

She is greatly missed.

## SPEAKERS ON THE ROAD

District Attorney prosecutors, investigators, and staff speak throughout the community regarding a variety of topics.

They are highly sought after to talk about topics such as scams targeting senior citizens, the fentanyl crisis, Intimate Partner Violence, the death penalty, human trafficking, child and adult sexual assaults, and more.

If you want to request a speaker from our office, go online to our website at [cda.tarrantcounty.com](http://cda.tarrantcounty.com). Click on Community and fill out the Speakers On The Road request form. Or call our office at 817-884-1400.



### Editorial

The 2025 Annual Report was written and compiled by Anna Tinsley Williams, communications officer of the Tarrant County DA's Office. To contact her, send an email to [atwilliams@tarrantcountytexas.gov](mailto:atwilliams@tarrantcountytexas.gov).

Tarrant County Graphics Assistant Dakota Wyatt designed the 2025 Annual Report.

# THE TARRANT COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

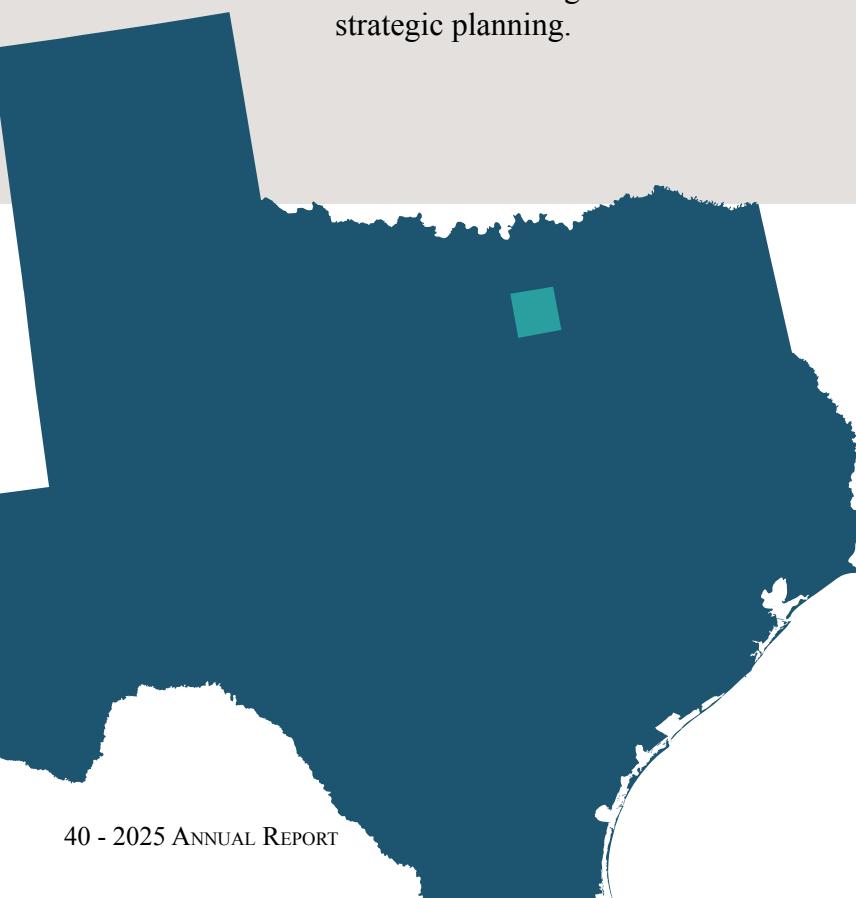


## ROBB CATALANO

serves as the First Assistant District Attorney, providing overall management of the office and assisting with strategic planning.

## PHIL SORRELLS

was sworn in as Tarrant County's 15th elected District Attorney on January 1, 2023. He oversees this office, considered the county's largest "law firm," which handles criminal and civil matters.



## TARRANT COUNTY

is the **14<sup>th</sup>** largest county in the country and the third largest in Texas.

**41**

municipal police  
departments

**76**

law enforcement  
agencies

All these agencies file criminal cases with this office.

## CRIMINAL DIVISION

The largest division in our office. Around 200 licensed attorneys take cases to the grand jury as well as to 11 felony and 10 misdemeanor courts. Each year, we handle about 45,000 criminal cases. **Rose Anna Salinas** is the Chief of the Criminal Division, assisted by four Deputy Chiefs: **Alenna Bangs, Tim Rodgers, Dale Smith, and Bill Vassar**. **Bruce Beasley** is Chief of the Misdemeanor Division; **Matthew Jackson** is the Deputy Chief.

## CIVIL DIVISION

Serves as general counsel for Tarrant County and its elected and appointed officials, including the Commissioners Court, sheriff, tax assessor collector, and district and county clerks. **Craig Price** is Chief of the Civil Division; **Katherine E. Owens** is the Deputy Chief.

## INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION

Staffed by investigators, certified Texas peace officers, who assist prosecutors by evaluating and helping prepare cases for trial. **Don Pilcher** is the Chief of this division. **Marvin “Mo” Brown** and **Chris LaChance** are Assistant Chief Investigators.

## CHIEF OF STAFF DIVISION

Compiled of non-lawyer, non-investigator employees who serve as our legal administrative staff. Among the array of services this division oversees for the office are internal information technology needs, the development of the District Attorney’s annual report, Citizens Prosecutor Academy, and Speakers on the Road. This division includes Victim Services, Communications, Research/Statistics/Technology, Forensic Litigation and Digital Media Evidence Analysts, and Support Staff units. **Jason Peters** is Chief of Staff.

## OPERATIONS DIVISION

Provides executive oversight and strategic planning of all business, financial, and human resource operations including policy and procedure, federal and state audits, budgets, grants, contracts, procurement, asset inventory, invoicing, restitution, asset forfeiture disbursements, witness travel, hiring and position management, and performance and training initiatives. This division includes the Business Office, Deferred Prosecution Program, Case Financials, and Executive Support units. **Ann Durfee** is Chief of Operations.

