

# TARRANT COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S DISTRICT

SERVING TARRANT, DENTON, JOHNSON & PARKER COUNTIES

## 2013 ANNUAL REPORT





TARRANT COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S DISTRICT  
CURRENT ACCREDITATIONS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS (N.A.M.E.)

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIME LABORATORY DIRECTORS/  
LAB ACCREDITATION BOARD (ASCLD/LAB)

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION (ACGME)

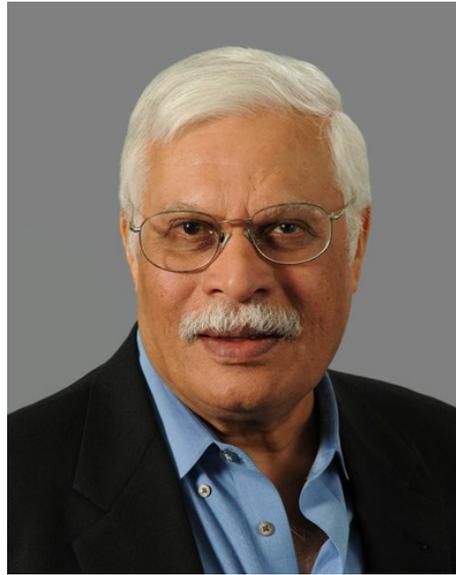
**TARRANT COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER  
AND FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORIES**

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[www.tarrantcounty.com/emedicalexaminer](http://www.tarrantcounty.com/emedicalexaminer)

# FROM THE OFFICE OF THE TARRANT COUNTY CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER



## Our Commitment and Philosophy . . .

*Whenever we are called upon to assist, even if it is outside the defined jurisdiction, out of the scope of our duties, or otherwise removed from our responsibilities under the law, it is our general policy to help the individual reach the appropriate person, agency or organization who can assist.*

## Our Mission Statement . . .

*The primary purpose of the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office is to assist the public and law enforcement agencies to determine the cause of death due to unnatural causes, medically unattended or death due to violence, using state of the art laboratory and forensic science facilities.*

Sincerely,

Dr. Nizam Peerwani  
Chief Medical Examiner

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## **PREFACE**

The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office was originally established in 1965 to serve Tarrant County alone but today it also serves Denton, Johnson and Parker counties with a total district population exceeding 2.8 million. This area is experiencing a dramatic growth, and the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office is committed to continue providing the highest quality of service to the loved ones of the deceased and to the legal system.

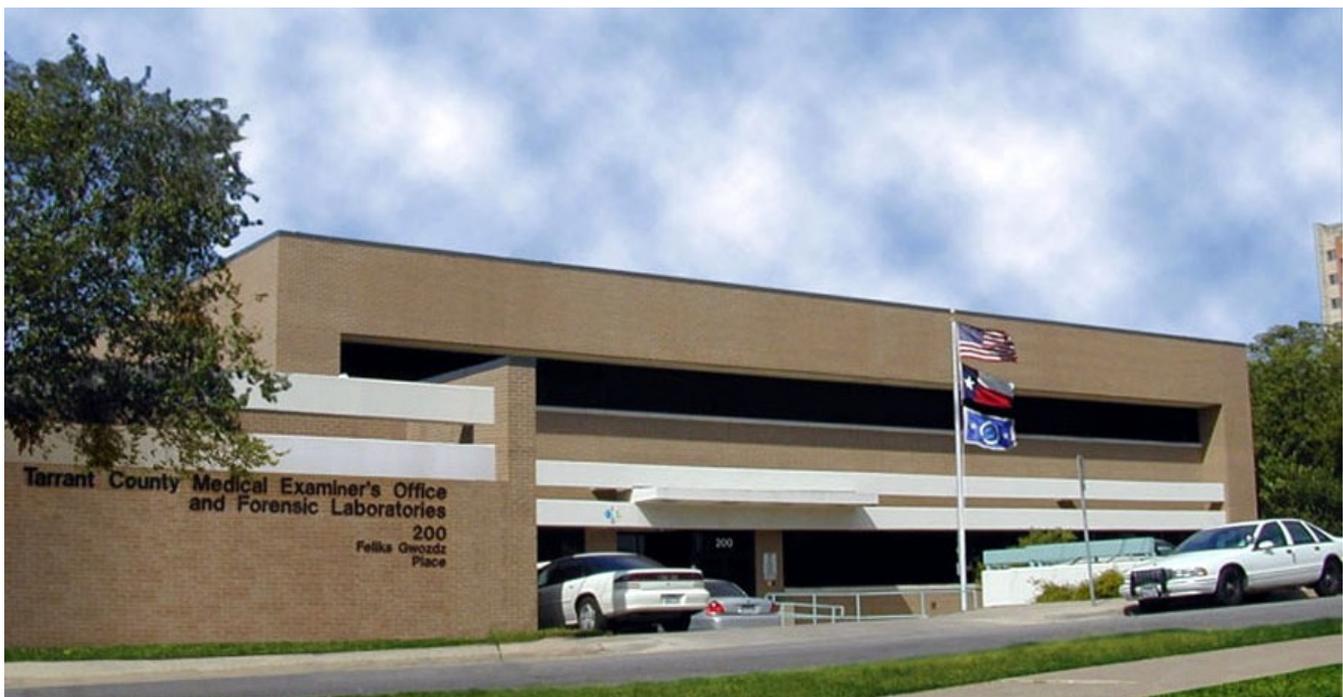
Understanding the need to have knowledge in ever-growing subjects of anatomy, physiology, chemistry, and biology, and applying this knowledge to the science of determination of the cause of death has become a routine requirement for the staff at the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office. A combination of staff with outstanding qualifications, sophisticated state-of-the-art equipment, strict compliance with statutes and regulations and accreditation by the National Association of Medical Examiners and the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors Laboratory Accreditation Board make the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office one of the premier medical examiner offices in the nation. In addition to a staff of five highly trained, board certified forensic pathologists, the office boasts a 24 hour investigative staff and a full complement of support services, including Human Identification, Toxicology, Criminalistics, and Forensic Photography laboratories.

The wealth of information available at the office, coupled with an interest to share and educate, prompts the staff to provide educational opportunities such as the Tuesday morning forensic rounds, the annual "Current Trends In Forensic Science" conference, a twelve month forensic pathology fellowship, monthly autopsy classes, periodic training sessions with Physicians for Human Rights and training at the International Forensic Science Center to provide advanced forensic training to scholars from abroad. Members of the staff are often invited to provide services, give lectures, and provide consultation nationally and internationally.

As you review this report, we hope we have imparted an appreciation for the depth of our commitment to excellent quality and service. Every day presents new challenges which this Office strives to meet. We are always seeking to develop and implement new services and procedures to better serve you and the community.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

- 1965 Tarrant County Commissioners Court establishes the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office. T.C. Terrell, M.D. is named Chief Medical Examiner.
- 1969 Feliks Gwozdz, M.D. is named Chief Medical Examiner.
- 1979 After Dr. Gwozdz's unexpected death, Nizam Peerwani, M.D. is appointed Chief Medical Examiner.
- 1980 First County-wide central morgue is established on the campus of Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (Now University of North Texas Health Science Center).
- 1982 Toxicology and histology laboratories are added; shortly after, forensic dentistry is added to the office in order to assist in human identification.
- 1986 Parker County officially joins the Medical Examiner's Office, creating the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District.
- 1989 Denton County joins the Medical Examiner's District.
- The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District moves into a new state of the art facility at 200 Feliks Gwozdz Place, renamed in honor of Dr. Gwozdz. In addition to modern up to date toxicology and histology laboratories, the new facility also includes a full service crime laboratory offering forensic biology, trace analysis, latent fingerprint and firearm/tool mark examinations.
- 1993 The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District provides the death scene investigation and medical examiner services for McLennan County in the aftermath of the Branch Davidian incident at Mt. Carmel, Texas.
- 2003 The position of Forensic Anthropologist, formerly a part-time position within the office, becomes a full-time position, making the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District the only Medical Examiner's Office in Texas with a full-time forensic anthropologist.
- 2007 The Human Identity Section is established, consisting of the Forensic Odontologist, Forensic Anthropologist and one Latent Fingerprint Examiner.
- 2008 Johnson County joins the Medical Examiner's District.
- 2011 Construction is completed on new building expansion.



## 2013 EMPLOYEE SUMMARY

### NEW HIRES:

February: D. Chris Heartsill - Quality Control Manager

March: ShaVonda Epps - Latent Print Examiner  
Kyle Finney - Forensic Death Investigator

May: Christopher White - Autopsy Technician

June: Jamie McKinney - Investigative Clerk

July: Yoshiyuki Kikuchi, D.O. - Forensic Fellow

September: Richard Fries, D.O. - Deputy Medical Examiner

### RETIRED:

January: Gloria Hamilton retired after serving 21 years as a Forensic Death Investigator.



# Tarrant County Medical Examiner



Cathy Adolph



Linda Anderson



Dana Austin



Jamie Becker



John Briggs



Brittany Carnley



Charles Clow



Andrea Corder



Rob Corley



Christina Coucke-Garza



Glynn Dill



ShaVonda Epps



Cynthia Esparza



Kyle Finney



Tiffany Flowers



Michael Floyd



Mark Fondren



Richard Fries



Tasha Greenberg



James Greenwell



Esther Gutierrez



Vicki Hall



John Harris



D. Chris Heartsill



Burshauna Hill



Susan Howe



Robert Johnson



Deatra Keele



Marsy Key



Anne Koettel



Paul Krieg



Marc Krouse



Beryl Landry



Carol Lawson



Connie Lewis



Jun Lumadilla



Jimmy McDonald



Jamie McKinney



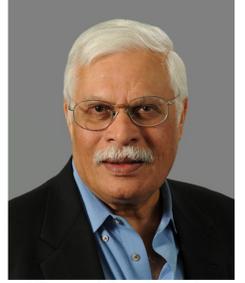
Roger Metcalf



Michelle O'Neal



Connie Patton



Nizam Peerwani



Tracye Poirier



Michael Pollard



Ronnie Redic



Amy Renfro



Larry Reynolds



Susan Roe



Ron Singer



Sarah Skiles



Christie Smith



Mike Smith



Larry Steffler



Heather Torres



Jennifer Valentine



Carolyn Van Winkle



Tracy Vancil



Bill Walker



LeRon Warren



Cheryl Wheeler



Christopher White



Steve White



Tarr Jae Wilson



Traci Wilson



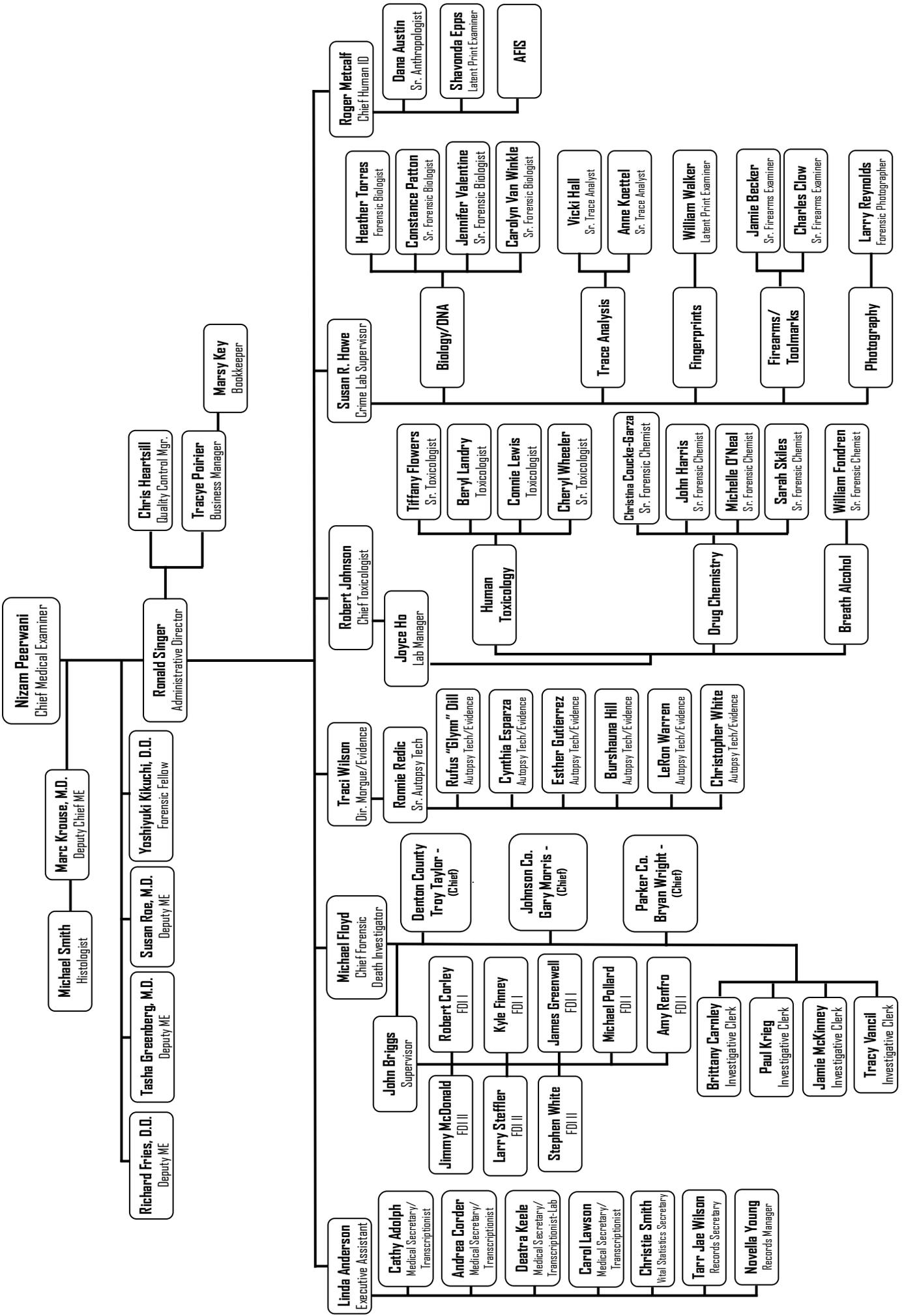
Novella Young



Yoshiyuki Kikuchi

# TARRANT COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE AND FORENSIC LABORATORIES

(12-31-2013)



# **Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District Staff**

## **Medical Examiners**

Nizam Peerwani, M.D.	Chief Medical Examiner
Marc Krouse, M.D.	Deputy Chief Medical Examiner
Tasha Z. Greenberg, M.D.	Deputy Medical Examiner
Susan J. Roe, M.D.	Deputy Medical Examiner
Richard C. Fries, D.O.	Deputy Medical Examiner
Yoshiyuki Kikuchi, D.O.	Forensic Fellow

## **Administration**

Ronald L. Singer, M.S.	Technical Administrative Director
Daniel C. Heartsill, B.S.	Quality Control Manager

## **Business Office**

Tracye Poirier, M.B.A.	Business Manager
Marsy Key	Bookkeeper

## **Forensic Death Investigation**

### **Tarrant County**

Michael Floyd, B.S.	Chief Forensic Death Investigator
John Briggs	Supervisory Investigator
Jimmy McDonald	Forensic Death Investigator II
Larry Steffler	Forensic Death Investigator II
Stephen White	Forensic Death Investigator II
Robert Corley	Forensic Death Investigator I
Kyle Finney, B.A.	Forensic Death Investigator I
James Greenwell	Forensic Death Investigator I
Michael Pollard, B.A.S.	Forensic Death Investigator I
Amy Renfro, B.S.	Forensic Death Investigator I
Brittany Carnley	Investigative Clerk
Paul Krieg	Investigative Clerk
Jamie McKinney	Investigative Clerk
Tracy Vancil, B.S.	Investigative Clerk

### **Denton County**

Troy Taylor, B.S.	Chief Forensic Death Investigator
Bill Mills, Jr., B.S.	Forensic Death Investigator
Robert Murphy	Forensic Death Investigator
Julie Carriker, R.N.	Forensic Death Investigator
Terry Martin, B.A.	Forensic Death Investigator
Janan Kline	Executive Assistant

## **Johnson County**

Gary Morris	Chief Forensic Death Investigator
Liesl Hoover	Secretary/Forensic Death Investigator
Jamie Smith	Forensic Death Investigator
Cassie Clewis	Forensic Death Investigator
Heather Brasier	Forensic Death Investigator

## **Parker County**

Bryan Wright	Chief Forensic Death Investigator
Jim Nichols	Forensic Death Investigator
Rachel Doyle	Forensic Death Investigator
Kevin Lanham	Forensic Death Investigator

## **Forensic Chemistry and Toxicology Laboratory**

Robert Johnson, Ph.D.	Chief Toxicologist
Joyce Ho, B.S.	Toxicology Lab Manager
Tiffany Flowers, M.S.	Senior Forensic Toxicologist
Cheryl Wheeler, B.S.	Senior Forensic Toxicologist
Beryl Landry, B.S.	Forensic Toxicologist
Connie Lewis, B.S.	Forensic Toxicologist
Christina Coucke-Garza, M.S.	Senior Forensic Chemist
Mark Fondren, M.S.	Senior Forensic Chemist
John Harris, M.S.	Senior Forensic Chemist
Michelle O'Neal, B.S.	Senior Forensic Chemist
Sarah Skiles, B.S.	Senior Forensic Chemist

## **Criminalistics Laboratory**

Susan Howe, D.V.M., Ph.D.	Crime Lab Supervisor
Heather Torres, M.S.	Forensic Biologist
Constance Patton, B.S.	Senior Forensic Biologist
Jennifer Valentine, M.S.	Senior Forensic Biologist
Carolyn Van Winkle, M.S.	Senior Forensic Biologist
Anne Koettel, M.S.	Senior Trace Analyst
Vicki Hall, M.S.	Senior Trace Analyst
William Walker	Latent Fingerprint Examiner
Jamie Becker, B.S.	Sr. Criminalist-Firearms and Tool Marks
Charles M. Clow, M.A.	Sr. Criminalist-Firearms and Tool Marks
Larry Reynolds	Forensic Photographer

## **Histology**

Mike Smith, B.S.	Forensic Histotechnician
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## **Human Identification Laboratory**

Roger Metcalf, D.D.S.  
Dana Austin, Ph.D.  
ShaVonda Epps

Chief of Identification Services  
Senior Forensic Anthropologist  
Latent Fingerprint Examiner

## **Morgue/Evidence Services**

Traci Wilson  
Ronnie Redic  
Glynn Dill  
Cynthia Esparza  
Esther Gutierrez  
Burshauna Hill  
LeRon Warren  
Christopher White

Director of Morgue/Evidence Services  
Senior Autopsy Technician  
Autopsy Tech/Evidence  
Autopsy Tech/Evidence  
Autopsy Tech/Evidence  
Autopsy Tech/Evidence  
Autopsy Tech/Evidence  
Autopsy Tech/Evidence

## **Secretarial Services**

Linda Anderson  
Cathy Adolph  
Andrea Corder  
Deatra Keele  
Carol Lawson  
Novella Young  
Tarr Jae Wilson  
Christie Smith

Executive Assistant/PIO  
Medical Secretary/Transcriptionist  
Medical Secretary/Transcriptionist  
Medical Secretary/Transcriptionist-Lab  
Medical Secretary/Transcriptionist  
Records Manager  
Records Secretary  
Vital Statistics Secretary

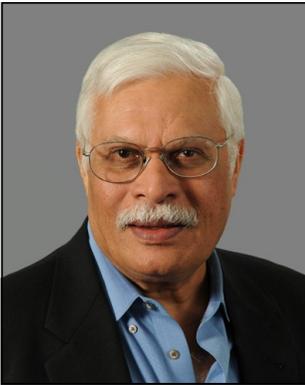
## **Building Superintendent**

Jun Lumadilla



## **MEDICAL EXAMINER STAFF**

### **NIZAM PEERWANI, M.D. - CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER**



Dr. Peerwani is a graduate of the American University of Beirut (M.D. in 1976). He completed his residency in pathology at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, and is board certified in anatomic, clinical and forensic pathology. Currently he is the Chief Medical Examiner for Tarrant, Denton, Johnson and Parker counties in the state of Texas and has held this position since July 1979. He is an advocate of child safety and served on the Texas Child Fatality Review Committee as an expert in Forensic Medicine. Dr. Peerwani is also an advocate of Human Rights and serves as an expert consultant for Physicians for Human Rights with completed assignments in Rwanda, Bosnia, Indonesia, Cyprus, Afghanistan, Israel and Bahrain investigating genocide and human rights violations under the auspices of the United Nations Tribunal. Appointed by Governor Rick Perry in 2009, Dr. Peerwani currently serves

on the Texas Forensic Science Commission.

### **MARC KROUSE, M.D. - DEPUTY CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER**



Dr. Krouse graduated from Texas A&M University with a B.S. degree (1974) in zoology, and from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School with his M.D. (1977). He completed his pathology residency at Baylor University Medical Center and is board certified in anatomic, clinical and forensic pathology. Dr. Krouse began his career here as a Deputy Medical Examiner (1978 - 1985) and is currently serving as the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner (1985 - present). Dr. Krouse is a member of the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) and served two terms on their Board of Directors, as well as on various committees through the years. He is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Automotive Medicine, and also serves on the Tarrant County Disaster Response Program which

assists in planning responses to acts of terrorism, as well as other natural disasters and accidents.

### **SUSAN J. ROE, M.D. - DEPUTY MEDICAL EXAMINER**



Dr. Roe graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington with a B.S. in Nursing (1977) and from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Medical School with an M.D. (1983). Post graduate training in anatomic pathology, clinical pathology and forensic pathology at Indiana University, Hennepin County Medical Center, and Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office was completed in 1988. Dr. Roe is board certified in anatomic, clinical and forensic pathology. She worked as a Forensic Pathologist at the Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office, Ramsey County Medical Examiner's Office and Minnesota Regional Medical Examiner's Office from 1988 through 2011. In addition she was a Bush Foundation Medical Fellow, Class of 2003 and worked at the Jesse E. Edwards Registry of Cardiovascular Disease from 2005 through 2011. Dr. Roe joined the Medical Examiner staff in

December 2011 as a Deputy Medical Examiner.

**TASHA GREENBURG, M.D. - DEPUTY MEDICAL EXAMINER**

Dr. Greenberg earned her B.S. in kinesiology from the University of California - Los Angeles in 1989 after which she attended graduate school at Northwestern University in Chicago, Illinois, where she was majoring in neuroscience prior to her matriculation to medical school. After graduating from the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas (1996), Dr. Greenberg completed a residency in pathology; her first year of study was at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona after which she returned to Baylor for the remaining four years, with the last year concentrated on pediatric pathology at Texas Children's Hospital. She completed a fellowship in forensic pathology under the tutelage of Edmund Donoghue, M.D. at the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office in Chicago, Illinois. She worked in the Medical Examiner's Office in Baltimore, Maryland for over 6 years, and during her tenure there was active in child fatality review at the local and state levels. Dr. Greenberg also conducted lectures and training for local universities and the M.E. office's homicide course, speaking primarily on pediatric forensics. In April 2008, Dr. Greenberg accepted the position of medical director of the autopsy service for the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School at Parkland Medical Center in Dallas, Texas and in September 2012 she was appointed a deputy medical examiner for the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District.



**RICHARD C. FRIES, D.O. - DEPUTY MEDICAL EXAMINER**

Graduating with honors from the University of Texas Dallas with a B.S. in Biology (2004), Dr. Fries went on to receive his D.O. from the University of North Texas Health Science Center – Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2008. Dr. Fries then completed his residency in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology at the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System, Medical College of Virginia Hospitals in Richmond, VA. In July 2012 Dr. Fries accepted a fellowship in Forensic Pathology at the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office in Fort Worth, TX. After completing this one year program Dr. Fries took and successfully passed the board exam in Forensic Pathology. Dr. Fries joined the staff of the Medical Examiner's Office as a Deputy Medical Examiner in July, 2013. Dr. Fries is a member of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) and the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME).



**YOSHIYUKI KIKUCHI, D.O. - FORENSIC FELLOW**

Dr. Yoshi Kikuchi received a D.O. degree from Des Moines University, Des Moines, IA in 2008. After completing a residency in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology and fellowship in Cytopathology at Scott and White Memorial Hospital/Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine, he joined the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office in July 2013 as a Fellow in Forensic Pathology. Dr. Kikuchi is Board certified in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology, and Cytopathology, and is a member of United States & Canadian Academy of Pathology (USCAP) and the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS).



## ADMINISTRATION

### **RONALD SINGER, M.S. - TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR**

Ronald Singer received a B.S. degree from Tulane University and an M.S. degree from Loyola University of New Orleans. A forensic scientist since 1972, he has served as President of the International Association of Forensic Sciences, is a Distinguished Fellow and Past President of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, a Distinguished Member and Past President of the Association of Firearm and Toolmark Examiners, an Emeritus Member and Past Secretary of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors, and is a member of numerous other forensic associations and committees. He has been an invited speaker on forensic issues throughout the U.S., Hungary, Bosnia, England, Portugal, Turkey, the Maldives and Sri Lanka. Mr. Singer is a recipient of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences Criminalistics Section Outstanding Service Award, the Association of Firearm and Toolmark Examiners Member of the Year Award, the Gold Medal of the Mediterranean Academy of Forensic Sciences and the Distinguished Fellow Award from the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.



### **TRACYE POIRIER, M.B.A. - BUSINESS MANAGER**

Tracye Poirier received her B.S. degree in Chemistry from the University of Texas at Arlington. She came to work here in 2000 as a Senior Forensic Toxicologist. She also served as a Senior Forensic Chemist before assuming her current role as the Business Manager. Her background in the sciences provides her with unique insight into managing a Medical Examiner office. Ms. Poirier earned her M.B.A. degree with an emphasis in Strategic Leadership in April 2010 from the University of Dallas. Ms. Poirier is a member of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and the Southwestern Association of Toxicologists.



### **D. CHRIS HEARTSILL, B.S. - QUALITY CONTROL MANAGER**

Chris Heartsill received his B.S. degree in Chemistry from East Central University in 1991. Chris has been working in analytical chemistry for over 20 years with more than 19 years forensic toxicology experience including the areas of human performance forensic toxicology and postmortem forensic toxicology. Prior to coming to Tarrant County in 2013, he served as an analytical chemist, toxicologist, quality manager, and breath testing technical supervisor. He is currently certified by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology as a Forensic Toxicology Specialist. Chris is an active member of the Society of Forensic Toxicologists, Southwestern Association of Toxicologists, Scientific Working Group for Toxicology, the Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers and is actively involved in the accreditation of forensic laboratories through volunteer activities with the American Society of Laboratory Directors – Laboratory Accreditation Board.



### **LINDA F. ANDERSON - EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT/PIO**

Accepting employment as a medical secretary in 1994, Ms. Anderson is currently the Executive Assistant for the Chief Medical Examiner and she supervises the clerical department. She is responsible for scheduling pathologists for morgue duty, directs scheduling of physicians for court appearances and professional engagements, trains secretarial staff, and interacts with families and the general public. In addition to these responsibilities she acts as the Public Information Officer for the office. Ms. Anderson's previous employment history includes office manager/procurement technician for Harris Methodist Tissue Services and Court Clerk with the City of Fort Worth Municipal Court.



## **HUMAN IDENTIFICATION SERVICES**

### **ROGER METCALF, D.D.S., J.D. – CHIEF OF HUMAN IDENTIFICATION SERVICES**

Roger Metcalf is a graduate of Baylor University and Baylor College of Dentistry. He completed a Fellowship in Forensic Odontology at the Center for Education and Research in Forensics at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio Dental School under Dr. David Sinn. He received his J.D. degree from Texas Wesleyan University School of Law in 2009. Dr. Metcalf has been a member of the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Mass Fatality Dental Identification Team since it was established in 1980, and participated in identification of victims from the Delta 191 and 1141 crashes at DFW Airport, and from the Mt. Carmel Incident in Waco, TX. Since joining the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District in 2004, Dr. Metcalf has supervised the forensic identification of more than 300 unidentified bodies per year.



## **CRIMINALISTICS LABORATORY**

### **SUSAN R. HOWE, D.V.M., PH.D. - CRIME LABORATORY DIRECTOR**

Dr. Howe received a B.S. and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of Illinois, and a Ph.D. in Toxicology from Texas A & M University. A forensic scientist since 1996, she is an active member of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, the Society of Forensic Toxicologists, and the Southwestern Association of Toxicologists. Dr. Howe is board certified in Forensic Toxicology by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology, and has published a number of scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals in the field of molecular toxicology.



## **FORENSIC CHEMISTRY AND TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY**

### **ROBERT JOHNSON, PH.D. - CHIEF FORENSIC TOXICOLOGIST**

Dr. Johnson graduated from The University of Oklahoma with a Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry in 2004. Certified as a forensic toxicologist by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology, he joined the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office in 2011. Additionally, Dr. Johnson is active in several professional societies including the Society of Forensic Toxicologists, the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and the Southwestern Association of Toxicologists. He has published over 50 scientific articles in his career all of which deal specifically with forensic toxicology.



## **MORGUE/EVIDENCE SERVICES**

### **TRACI WILSON - CHIEF OF MORGUE/LABORATORY SERVICES**

Traci Wilson began her employment with the Tarrant County Examiner's Office as a Forensic Autopsy Technician in 1995. Prior to moving to Fort Worth she had worked as a Forensic Pathologist Assistant in Bossier City, LA. Ms. Wilson attended Northeast Louisiana University Monroe (ULM) where she majored in Business Administration/Business Law. In 2009 Ms. Wilson assumed the duties of Chief of Morgue/Laboratory Services, and has since worked hard to implement new policies to streamline record keeping and evidence handling.



## FORENSIC DEATH INVESTIGATION

### **TARRANT COUNTY:**

#### **MICHAEL FLOYD, B.S. - CHIEF FORENSIC DEATH INVESTIGATOR**

Michael Floyd began working for the TCME District in 1990 as a Medical Investigator assigned to Parker County and he transferred to Tarrant County in 1993. In 1997 he was promoted to Senior Forensic Investigator, became the Supervisory Investigator in 2009, and was appointed the Chief Forensic Investigator in 2010. Prior to his employment at TCME Michael was a Texas-certified EMT-Paramedic for 16 years. Michael also holds a TCLEOSE Master Peace Officer certificate and Instructor license, and has been a commissioned peace officer since 1981. In 1984 he earned an Associate Degree from Weatherford College and in 1996 a B.S. degree from Texas Wesleyan University. Michael is a Diplomate of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators.



### **DENTON COUNTY:**

#### **TROY TAYLOR, B.S. - CHIEF FORENSIC DEATH INVESTIGATOR**

Mr. Taylor started his career in 1990 at the Denton County Medical Examiner's Office. After multi-year tenures in Denton and Tarrant County he transferred back to the Denton office in 2003. Troy teaches medical examiner law, wound patterning, and decompositional changes for intermediate crime scene classes as well as basic peace officer certification classes. He has attended medico-legal death investigation training and psychological profiling schools. Mr. Taylor was promoted to Chief Forensic Death Investigator of Denton County in 2007.



### **JOHNSON COUNTY:**

#### **GARY MORRIS - CHIEF FORENSIC DEATH INVESTIGATOR**

Gary Morris began his service with the Johnson County Medical Examiner's Office as a Reserve Investigator in 2006. Mr. Morris served in several positions, advancing to his current position as the Chief Forensic Death Investigator for the Johnson County office, a position he has held since 2011. He has attended Forensic Death Investigation training in Fort Worth, St. Louis, Arizona and New York.



### **PARKER COUNTY:**

#### **BRYAN WRIGHT - CHIEF FORENSIC DEATH INVESTIGATOR**

Bryan Wright began working with the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District shortly after Parker County became the first member of the district system in 1986, and worked as a Medical Investigator for 13 years. During that time, Bryan was also a peace officer with the Weatherford Police Department, retiring honorably as a Lieutenant in 2009, earning a Master Peace Officer certification among other awards and honors, and completing 60 college hours. During that time he also worked with and administrated the Cross Timbers Narcotics Task Force, comprised of 18 member law enforcement agencies. Upon retiring, Bryan was sought out and hired by the Parker County Sheriff's Office due to his extensive experience and background, and has a cumulative 30 years of peace officer experience.



**TARRANT COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S DISTRICT  
GENERAL STATISTICAL SUMMARY  
2013**

	<u>Number</u>
<b>Reported Deaths:</b>	<b>9,399</b>
Jurisdiction Terminated:	6,969
Jurisdiction accepted:	2,430
Scenes investigated:	1,303
Bodies brought to the facility:	2,430
 <b>Medical Procedures:</b>	 <b>2,430</b>
External:	1,203 (50% of deaths certified)
Partial Autopsies:	392 (16% of deaths certified)
Complete Autopsies:	835 (34% of deaths certified)
 <b>Manner of Death:</b>	
Deaths certified as Natural:	1,187 (38% of deaths certified)
Deaths certified as Accident:	680 (21% of deaths certified)
	(Non-motor vehicle: 438 - 64%)
	(Motor vehicle: 242 - 36%)
Deaths certified as Suicide:	324 (10% of deaths certified)
Deaths certified as Homicide:	139 (4% of deaths certified)
Deaths certified as Undetermined:	85 (3% of deaths certified)
Deaths certified as Non-Human Remains:	15 (1% of deaths certified)
 <b>Unidentified Bodies:</b>	
Total Identified:	463
Identified by fingerprints:	378
Identified by anthropology:	21
Identified by odontology:	15
Identified visually:	19
Identified by DNA:	16
Identified by other means:	7
Pending:	7



2013 TARRANT COUNTY DEATHS		
MANNER OF DEATH	CASES	PERCENTAGE
NATURAL	900	13%
ACCIDENT	513	8%
SUICIDE	222	3%
HOMICIDE	127	2%
UNDETERMINED	68	1%
NON-HUMAN REMAINS	13	<1%
JURISDICTION TERMINATED	4932	73%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6775</b>	<b>100%</b>

2013 DENTON COUNTY DEATHS		
MANNER OF DEATH	CASES	PERCENTAGE
NATURAL	173	10%
ACCIDENT	108	6%
SUICIDE	63	4%
HOMICIDE	7	<1%
UNDETERMINED	8	<1%
NON-HUMAN REMAINS	1	<1%
JURISDICTION TERMINATED	1317	79%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1677</b>	<b>100%</b>



2013 JOHNSON COUNTY DEATHS		
MANNER OF DEATH	CASES	PERCENTAGE
NATURAL	60	12%
ACCIDENT	31	6%
SUICIDE	27	5%
HOMICIDE	2	<1%
UNDETERMINED	6	1%
NON-HUMAN REMAINS	1	<1%
JURISDICTION TERMINATED	370	75%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>100%</b>

2013 PARKER COUNTY DEATHS		
MANNER OF DEATH	CASES	PERCENTAGE
NATURAL	54	12%
ACCIDENT	28	6%
SUICIDE	12	3%
HOMICIDE	3	1%
UNDETERMINED	3	1%
NON-HUMAN REMAINS	0	0%
JURISDICTION TERMINATED	350	77%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100%</b>



## FIVE YEAR COMPARISON

### TARRANT COUNTY

Manner of Death	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Natural	900	818	915	843	804
Accidental	513	506	518	464	517
Suicide	222	222	190	200	163
Homicide	127	104	138	140	94
Undetermined	68	64	57	47	43
Non-Human Remains	13	9	16	11	12
Jurisdiction Terminated	4932	4644	4519	4541	4421
<b>Total</b>	<b>6775</b>	<b>6366</b>	<b>6354</b>	<b>6245</b>	<b>6055</b>

### DENTON COUNTY

Manner of Death	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Natural	173	136	159	140	175
Accidental	108	103	95	90	86
Suicide	63	66	66	58	64
Homicide	7	9	11	15	13
Undetermined	8	7	11	14	11
Non-Human Remains	1	3	4	4	2
Jurisdiction Terminated	1317	1206	1140	1079	989
<b>Total</b>	<b>1677</b>	<b>1530</b>	<b>1486</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>1339</b>

### JOHNSON COUNTY

Manner of Death	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Natural	60	73	57	60	45
Accidental	31	28	26	29	24
Suicide	27	13	12	29	16
Homicide	2	7	4	1	0
Undetermined	6	4	3	1	4
Non-Human Remains	1	3	0	2	1
Jurisdiction Terminated	370	354	323	317	315
<b>Total</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>405</b>

### PARKER COUNTY

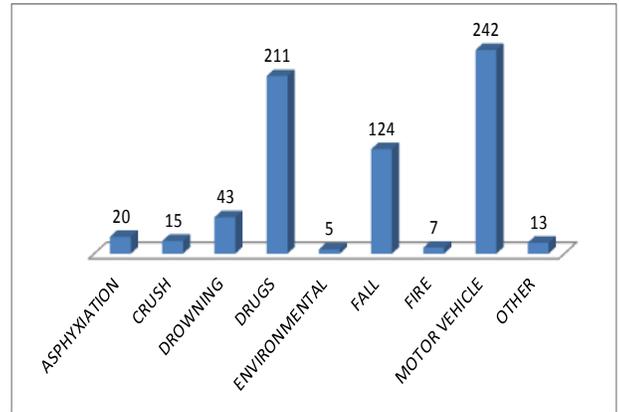
Manner of Death	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Natural	54	46	72	50	42
Accidental	28	36	29	32	38
Suicide	12	15	25	18	10
Homicide	3	5	0	1	2
Undetermined	3	2	2	1	2
Non-Human Remains	0	0	3	0	2
Jurisdiction Terminated	350	310	312	296	279
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>375</b>

# ACCIDENTS, HOMICIDES AND SUICIDES BY METHOD

## ACCIDENTS BY METHOD

TARRANT DENTON JOHNSON PARKER TOTAL

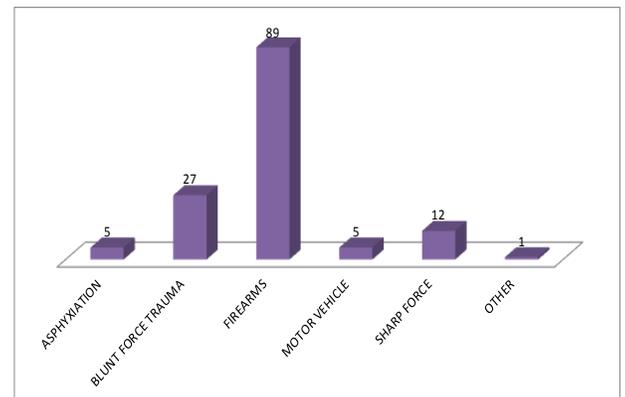
	TARRANT	DENTON	JOHNSON	PARKER	TOTAL
ASPHYXIATION	14	4	0	2	20
CRUSH/STRUCK	12	1	2	0	15
DROWNING	27	12	3	1	43
DRUGS	155	39	8	9	211
ENVIRONMENTAL	5	0	0	0	5
FALL	108	15	1	0	124
FIRE	2	2	1	2	7
MOTOR VEHICLE	181	34	14	13	242
OTHER	9	1	2	1	13
					<b>680</b>



## HOMICIDES BY METHOD

TARRANT DENTON JOHNSON PARKER TOTAL

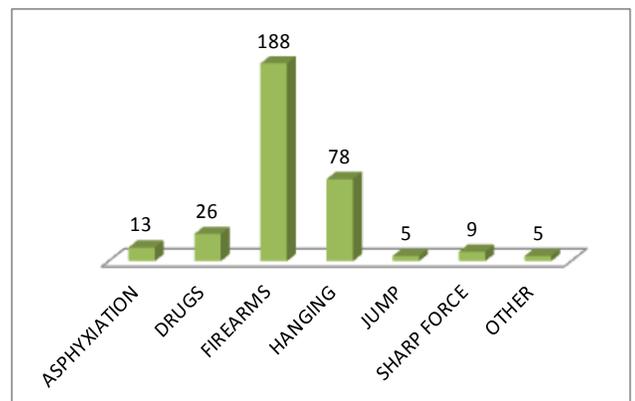
	TARRANT	DENTON	JOHNSON	PARKER	TOTAL
ASPHYXIATION	5	0	0	0	5
BLUNT FORCE TRAUMA	24	1	1	1	27
FIREARMS	82	5	0	2	89
MOTOR VEHICLE	5	0	0	0	5
SHARP FORCE	11	1	0	0	12
OTHER	0	0	1	0	1
					<b>139</b>



## SUICIDES BY METHOD

TARRANT DENTON JOHNSON PARKER TOTAL

	TARRANT	DENTON	JOHNSON	PARKER	TOTAL
ASPHYXIATION	11	0	2	0	13
DRUGS	22	2	2	0	26
FIREARMS	120	43	18	7	188
HANGING	53	15	5	5	78
JUMP	5	0	0	0	5
SHARP FORCE	8	1	0	0	9
OTHER	3	2	0	0	5
					<b>324</b>



## FORENSIC DEATH INVESTIGATION

One of the primary purposes of the medical examiner's office is to conduct inquests or investigations into the cause and manner of deaths occurring within Tarrant, Denton, Johnson and Parker Counties. The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District staffs an around-the-clock investigative division responsible for initiating a formal response to all reportable cases.



Investigators within the district made inquiries into approximately **9400** deaths in 2013. Forensic investigators are trained in a multi-disciplinary capacity and possess unique education and abilities, including knowledge of criminal investigation techniques, relevant aspects of forensic medicine, crime scene processing skills, and maintenance of case integrity. Additionally, each investigator must be capable of conducting effective interviews, locating and notifying next-of-kin, and interacting with law enforcement personnel.

Once a jurisdictional death is reported, the investigator attends the scene or hospital where the death occurred. After conducting the initial investigation, the investigator prepares a detailed case report

containing biographical data on the decedent, a narrative of the events leading up to the time of death or discovery of the decedent, and a summation of all investigative analyses and leads. In addition, investigators coordinate with hospitals, physicians, law enforcement agencies, employers, families, and other pertinent sources to gather information that might be of value to the determination of the cause and manner of death.

In addition to the standard case investigation protocol the Investigations department completed:



- **675** follow up requests in 2013. This represents a 650% increase over 2011 and a 245% increase over 2012.
- **767** protocol and property letters were prepared and mailed to next-of-kin.
- **752** body releases from the morgue.
- **639** property releases made to next-of-kin.
- **27,221** miles driven in Tarrant County on case related business.



# HUMAN IDENTIFICATION LABORATORY

Identification of unidentified remains is a primary function of the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office. In order to more efficiently accomplish this task, the office has created the Human Identification Laboratory. Headed by a full time forensic odontologist, the laboratory staff also includes a full time forensic anthropologist, and utilizes the talents of the fingerprint examiners assigned to the crime laboratory. Unidentified remains are systematically examined using fingerprints, dental records, anthropological studies and DNA technology and making use of local, state and national data bases in an effort to provide identity and closure to the deceased and their families.



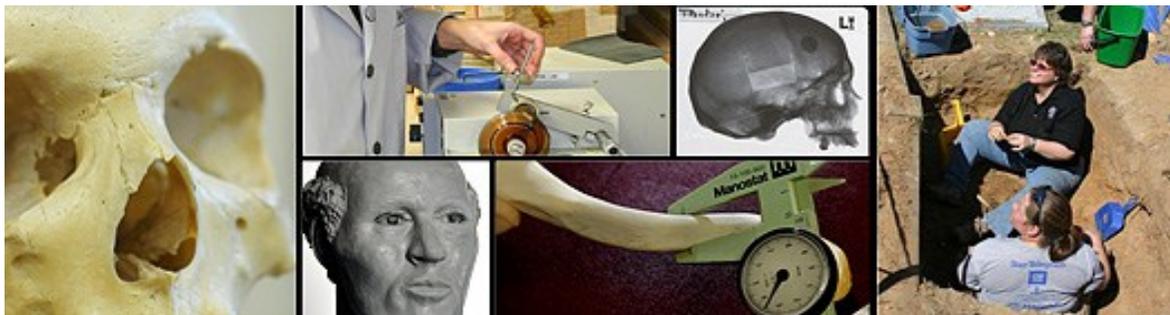
## FORENSIC ODONTOLOGY

Forensic dentists deal with a range of medicolegal problems. Identification of the human remains of natural disasters, terrorist activities, and missing and unknown persons is a central activity. The postmortem dental examination of human remains usually involves charting dental and cranial features, radiographic (x-ray) documentation of these features, and forensic report writing regarding these findings. Dental identification plays a particularly important role in the identification of victims of catastrophic events where there are massive numbers of casualties such as airplane crashes (Pan Am flight 103 and American Airlines flight 587), fires, floods, earthquakes, or terrorist attacks (Oklahoma City Federal Building and the World Trade Center).



## FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Bones comprise the structural framework of the human body. Due to their properties, bones decompose more slowly than many other tissues and organs; thus, they are often capable of providing clues that assist examiners in determining the cause and manner of death. Skeletal remains can provide information such as the race, stature, weight, age, and gender of the decedent. Evidence of trauma or natural disease may also be identified. X-ray comparisons can help establish scientifically the identity of a body. Samples of DNA can also be obtained from bone; thus, in cases where decomposition is advanced significantly, DNA analysis can still be of value. Tarrant County has the only comprehensive forensic anthropology laboratory attached to a medical examiner's office in Texas.



## THE MORGUE



The main center of activity of any medical examiner's facility is the morgue area. Dedicated in 1989, the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office morgue area employs a design which centralizes all morgue activity, isolating it from the other activities of the building. There are two holding areas, each capable of holding fifty bodies. One of the areas is dedicated to incoming cases only, while the other holds bodies awaiting release. The main morgue consists of four workstations, each of which is designed to be

conducive to a dynamic work environment in which examinations can be carried out with maximum efficiency. The morgue area also contains a separate major case morgue and a teaching morgue capable of seating 45 students. In addition a 2 station isolation/biohazard morgue was included in the new construction.

Classroom instruction is an integral component of any medical education program. The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office participated in the academic and practical training of students from the entire North Texas area by offering once a



month autopsy classes during 2013.



The morgue is staffed by autopsy technicians (deiners) who assist the pathologists with forensic examinations. Each autopsy technician is responsible for obtaining photographs, radiographs (X-rays), fingerprints, and biological samples from the decedent before autopsy. Because the identification of

foreign bodies in or on a decedent is vitally important to a comprehensive examination, the medical examiner's office relies on radiological techniques as a tool. Designed to facilitate easy access to radiographic equipment without moving the body from the transport gurney, the radiology lab incorporates a C-arm fluoroscope, a fixed flat plate device, and articulated dental radiography equipment.



## EVIDENCE HANDLING

In order to preserve evidentiary integrity, each piece of evidence collected by or submitted to the medical examiner's office for processing must be coupled with a detailed chain-of-custody log. To ensure the chain-of-custody is maintained correctly, and that all evidence is handled, cared for, and stored properly, forensic technicians with expertise in evidentiary preservation are utilized.

# FORENSIC CHEMISTRY AND TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY

## FORENSIC CHEMISTRY

Forensic chemists analyze drugs submitted by other agencies. Drug types received commonly range from clandestine chemical substances to therapeutic or prescribed medications. Cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and amphetamines, all drugs of abuse, represent the most common products received for chemical assay. Daily, law enforcement agencies within the medical examiner's district are faced with the challenge of identifying drugs found subsequent to an arrest or search warrant execution.



## INTOXILYZER PROGRAM

An intoxilyzer instrument provides an objective, scientific means of testing someone who is suspected by police to have been driving under the influence of alcohol by measuring a sample of the suspect's breath for determinable levels of alcohol concentration. Grant funds supplied by the Texas Department of Transportation were used to establish the ME office's intoxilyzer program in 1994. Under the program, forensic chemists establish intoxilyzer test sites, calibrate and maintain equipment, and train intoxilyzer operators, which benefits local police agencies.



## FORENSIC TOXICOLOGY

Forensic toxicological services were established at the medical examiner's office in 1983. Subsequently, the toxicology laboratory has expanded to include mass spectrometry, gas chromatography, and high-pressure liquid chromatography analysis. The toxicology laboratory provides drug testing to assist the medical examiners in determining the cause and manner of death by isolating, identifying, and determining the level of chemicals in specimens. Additionally, the forensic toxicology laboratory participates regularly in established analytical proficiency testing and quality assurance programs.



**2013**

## CHEMISTRY CASES RECEIVED

	2013 CASES	2012 CASES	2011 CASES	2010 CASES	2009 CASES
JAN	72	191	149	153	215
FEB	83	218	171	115	198
MAR	165	139	219	175	197
APR	182	140	139	169	167
MAY	226	151	118	183	192
JUN	102	168	156	230	247
JUL	223	155	254	178	224
AUG	160	147	171	170	160
SEP	134	88	181	177	183
OCT	244	139	125	148	159
NOV	82	66	210	181	120
DEC	221	141	195	141	244
TOTALS	1894	1743	2088	2020	2306

In addition to issuing **1894** reports, the Chemistry section was able to reduce their average turn around time per case from **27** days to **22** days.



## 2013 TOXICOLOGY CASES

	TARRANT	DENTON	JOHNSON	PARKER	OTHER ME CASES	OTHER CASES	2013 TOTALS	2012 TOTALS	2011 TOTALS
<b>JAN</b>	81	23	10	5	52	145	<b>316</b>	239	247
<b>FEB</b>	66	10	4	4	44	90	<b>218</b>	267	198
<b>MAR</b>	101	15	5	4	46	132	<b>303</b>	229	245
<b>APR</b>	71	17	8	4	40	115	<b>255</b>	214	215
<b>MAY</b>	84	22	6	3	72	42	<b>229</b>	2601	265
<b>JUN</b>	83	20	2	5	43	71	<b>224</b>	261	279
<b>JUL</b>	101	14	10	7	52	37	<b>221</b>	279	259
<b>AUG</b>	93	20	8	3	58	48	<b>230</b>	268	243
<b>SEP</b>	89	34	10	6	66	58	<b>263</b>	254	235
<b>OCT</b>	76	25	4	6	53	43	<b>207</b>	280	243
<b>NOV</b>	96	20	7	3	54	55	<b>235</b>	270	246
<b>DEC</b>	87	23	9	9	54	69	<b>251</b>	230	284
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1028</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>2952</b>	<b>3052</b>	<b>2959</b>

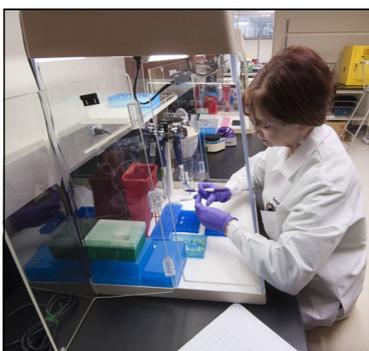
As can be seen in this data, in 2013 there were 1,413 jurisdictional ME cases, 634 non-jurisdictional ME cases, and 905 cases analyzed for outside agencies. It should be noted that although the number of outside cases dropped from 1,208 in 2012 to 905 in 2013 (303 fewer cases), the number of Toxicology reports issued only dropped by 100 cases. This translates to much more work being done by the laboratory. DWI cases are relatively easy and generally involve alcohol analysis only. Medical Examiner cases are much more involved, include comprehensive analysis for all drugs, and therefore take more time. The number of these cases increased from 1,844 in 2012 to 2,047 in 2013, an increase of 203 cases. This increase is reflected in the number of batches completed and the number of samples analyzed within the laboratory. For batches and samples respectively, we had 1,697 and 39,387 in 2012; in 2013 we completed 1,734 and 40,187. This increase in full toxicology cases caused the average turnaround time to go up approximately 1 day per case.



# CRIMINALISTICS LABORATORIES

Since 1989, the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District has operated a full-service crime laboratory, serving the needs of the medical examiner's office, district attorney's offices, and law enforcement agencies in North Central Texas and throughout the United States. Equipped with modern analytical instrumentation, the various sections of the crime laboratory combine scientific technology with an experienced professional staff. Specialized sections of the crime laboratory identify, analyze, and report on various forms of evidence such as DNA, blood spatter, trace materials, chemical compounds, firearms, tool marks and latent fingerprints.

## FORENSIC BIOLOGY



DNA analysis provides the ability to restrict potential populations of persons to which a biological sample might belong to a much smaller subset of suspects. Such a determination is useful in identifying the source and, subsequently, connecting that source to a particular death or crime scene.



In addition, the DNA laboratory is a designated CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) laboratory. CODIS is the FBI's DNA data base that ultimately links all 50 states and 18 countries to provide a means of comparing forensic case work profiles. The data base search may result in linking unsolved cases to a single perpetrator and can provide significant investigative leads.

### 2013 FORENSIC BIOLOGY WORK OUTPUT

- ◆ Reports issued on cases - 568
- ◆ ME Cases worked - 34
- ◆ Non-ME Cases worked - 534

## TRACE EVIDENCE



Trace evidence is that material which, because of its size or weight, can be easily transferred from one individual or object to another. Gunshot residue, hair, glass, paint, and fibers are among the more common materials collected and submitted for examination. Trace analysis utilizes advanced technology and instrumentation such as the scanning electron microscope coupled with an energy dispersive x-ray analysis spectrometer to obtain chemical profiles of materials in an attempt to relate materials to each other or to a common source. The trace analyst, as other criminalists, must be knowledgeable of relevant and scientifically sound analytical, investigative methodologies.



Trace analysis utilizes advanced technology and instrumentation such as the scanning electron microscope coupled with an energy dispersive x-ray analysis spectrometer to obtain chemical profiles of materials in an attempt to relate materials to each other or to a common source. The trace analyst, as other criminalists, must be knowledgeable of relevant and scientifically sound analytical, investigative methodologies.

### 2013 TRACE EVIDENCE WORK OUTPUT

- ◆ Reports issued on cases - 185
- ◆ ME Cases Worked - 114
- ◆ Non-ME Cases worked - 71

## FIREARMS AND TOOL MARKS



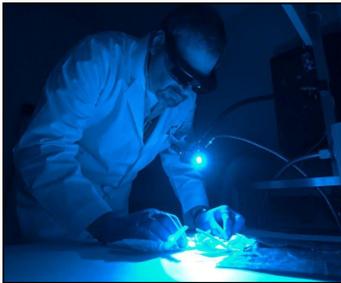
Examination and analyses of firearms, projectiles, ballistics, and markings imparted by any form of tool, fall within the purview of the firearms and tool marks laboratory. Firearms submitted are examined for inherent characteristics, unique identifiers, and safety related factors, and can be test fired to obtain reference material that can subsequently be compared to submitted evidence. Range of fire determinations can be carried out on a 40-foot indoor range.

### 2013 FIREARMS/TOOLMARKS WORK OUTPUT

- ◆ Reports issued on cases - 52
- ◆ ME Cases worked - 30
- ◆ Non-ME Cases worked - 22



## LATENT FINGERPRINTS



Latent fingerprint examination is a fundamental tool of the medical examiner's office, with latent prints being utilized as a scientific form of identification on unidentified bodies that come into the medical examiner's office. Fingerprints can also be retrieved from submitted evidence and used to assist in identifying a criminal suspect. Applying the newest technology, the latent print examiner achieves remarkable results in lifting prints from various substrates.

### 2013 LATENT PRINTS WORK OUTPUT

- ◆ Reports issued on cases - 24
- ◆ ME Cases worked - 10
- ◆ Non-ME Cases worked - 14



## FORENSIC PHOTOGRAPHY

A fully equipped forensic photography laboratory was added to the crime laboratory in 1994. By 2005, the laboratory had replaced all film processing with digital photography. In addition to more traditional photography, the lab is capable of making photographs utilizing ultraviolet and infrared techniques. Image enhancement can also be performed. Pictures, enlargements, and other services are provided to the medical examiner, to the courts, and to individuals for educational or research-based presentations.

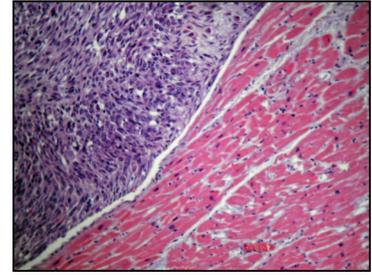


### 2013 FORENSIC PHOTOGRAPHY WORK OUTPUT

- ◆ Provided 114,667 services on 1980 cases
- ◆ Provided 3,811 other services (reproductions, enlargements)

## **FORENSIC HISTOLOGY**

Many cause of death determinations rely upon the examination of a decedent's tissues and organs. Special stains and fixation methods are employed to assist the physician in identifying disease processes and certain tissue changes that occur in response to trauma, lifestyle habits, or other variables.



### **2013 FORENSIC HISTOLOGY WORK OUTPUT**

- ◆ **Provided 37,063 services on 2,064 cases**

## **BUSINESS OFFICE**

The Business Office was established to meet the increasing complexities of the day to day management of the business aspects of the Medical Examiner's office. The Business Manager, assisted by the Bookkeeper, comprise the business office, which provides support in the financial aspects of the office including budget preparation and reporting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, personnel matters and other related fiscal issues. The Transportation of Human Remains contract is supervised by the Business Manager. In addition the Business Office is responsible for maintaining inventory of all supplies, computer hardware, office equipment and scientific instruments, and ensuring all service warranties are current.



### **2013 BUSINESS OFFICE WORK OUTPUT**

- ◆ **Created 2440 billing invoices**
- ◆ **Created 636 purchase requisitions**
- ◆ **Deposited cash receipts for accounts receivable**
- ◆ **Rotated 32 decedents to various funeral homes for County Burial Program**

## **BUILDING SUPERINTENDENT**

The building superintendent is responsible for all of the general maintenance of the building, including minor repairs and preventive maintenance. He also oversees vendors and contractors and ensures work is properly done, and supervises work release individuals assigned to perform janitorial, grounds and other duties. His role is especially vital in maintaining all of the ventilation and air conditioning needs specific to a facility like the Medical Examiner's Office, with its inherent biohazards and the investment in precision scientific instruments that cannot tolerate temperature changes.

## **SECRETARIAL SERVICES**

Secretaries for the medical examiner's office provide a diverse complement of administrative support services for the daily operation of business. In addition to performing the usual secretarial tasks, each medical secretary assists in the management of records, complex transcription services, and interaction with bereaved families, law enforcement agencies, hospitals and funeral homes. Included in their responsibilities is the issuance of death certificates, cremation letters and amended death certificates as well as scheduling pathologists for court appearances.

### **2013 SECRETARIAL SERVICES WORK OUTPUT**

- ◆ **Transcribed 3,076 autopsy reports**
- ◆ **Issued 5,720 cremation permits**
- ◆ **Issued 2,429 death certificates**
- ◆ **Issued 1502 Death certificate amendments**
- ◆ **Completed over 3,700 Records requests**



Pictured above are Deatra Keele, Christie Smith, Carol Lawson, Linda Anderson, Andrea Corder, Cathy Adolph and Tarr Jae Wilson.

## CHILD FATALITY REVIEW TEAM

Child deaths attributable to illness, birth defect, delivery difficulty, neoplastic disease, and other natural causes account for approximately one out of four child fatalities locally. Although these deaths can be devastating, the larger community is impacted perhaps more by deaths occurring unnaturally. The greatest risk of death from abuse or neglect occurs among the youngest children who, because of their age, have an absolute dependence on their caretakers.

Although there are more than 4,000 child deaths annually in Texas, no single agency tracks all aspects of every death reported. Of particular interest are those deaths that are preventable. In 1995, the Texas Legislature amended Chapter 264 of the Family Code to include language outlining the establishment and continuance of a state child fatality review team committee, local child fatality review teams, and formation of a statewide analytical evaluation of all collected and reported child death information. The ultimate goal of the project is to identify trends and reduce the number of preventable childhood deaths. There are approximately 50 representatives appointed to the Tarrant County CFRT from the following agencies:

- ◆ Tarrant County District Attorney Office
- ◆ Local Law Enforcement
- ◆ Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (CPS)
- ◆ Cook Children’s Medical Center
- ◆ Alliance for Children - Tarrant County
- ◆ Tarrant County Public Health
- ◆ Shaken Baby Alliance

	2013		2012		2011		2010	
<b>Total Child Deaths*</b>	<b>106</b>		<b>104</b>		<b>99</b>		<b>122</b>	
Natural Causes	25	24%	30	29%	31	32%	35	29%
Accident	34	32%	28	27%	24	24%	38	31%
Homicide	14	13%	13	13%	14	14%	20	16%
Suicide	09	8%	10	10%	8	8%	5	4%
Undetermined	24	23%	23	22%	22	22%	24	20%

\* Total Child Deaths refers to deaths occurring within the TCME district that were reviewed by this committee.

# EDUCATION

## **FORENSIC EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Opportunities for education in the forensic sciences are extended to local law enforcement, medical, and higher education agencies through the medical examiner's office, including the opportunity to observe a forensic autopsy. In 2013 some of the local agencies served through this educational program included the Fort Worth and Arlington Police and Fire Academies, District Attorney Offices, Weatherford College Nursing School, and both the pre-med and biology honor sciences at Texas Wesleyan University and other colleges.



## **TUESDAY MORNING FORENSIC ROUNDS**

Forensic Rounds meets every Tuesday (except in July and December) at 8:00 am in the 3rd floor annex conference room. A large variety of topics are presented by either the ME staff or an invited speaker. In addition to medical examiner staff the audience includes law enforcement personnel, attorneys, medical personnel, and medical students.



## **ANNUAL CURRENT TRENDS IN FORENSIC SCIENCE CONFERENCE**



Current Trends is a conference organized by the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office that is open to anyone in the medical, law enforcement, judicial or medicolegal professions, or anyone interested in the forensic sciences. As the title suggests, the conference seeks to present topics that are current or new developments in the various forensic disciplines. An award is presented each year to a person who has been nominated by their peers as being someone who exhibits excellence in the field of forensics. The Zachariah Award of Excellence was named after our former Technical Administrator, Dr. Nannepaga Zachariah, who passed away in January 2009.

## **INTERNATIONAL FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTER**



The International Forensic Science Center is a part of the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office and was started during 2006. The purpose of this is to provide education available at the medical examiner's office to forensic scholars and students from abroad. These sessions typically last for two weeks during which the medical examiner staff arranges lectures and practical sessions. A working relationship was established between Texas Wesleyan University and the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office to facilitate this education at the international level. TWU has provided housing for our foreign students on several occasions.



## **FORENSIC PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP**

The Forensic Pathology Fellowship was started in 2004 and at the current time is fully accredited by the ACGME. The Fellow works with the medical examiners and scientific staff and receives twelve full months of exposure at the medical examiner's office. When the program is completed, the fellow will graduate and become eligible to sit for their board examination in forensic pathology and then to pursue a career as a forensic pathologist.

## **STUDENT VOLUNTEERS/INTERNS**

Any student over the age of 18 who wants to get exposure to the medical examiner's activities can apply for a volunteer position. There are restrictions as to what areas a student may have access to, so the individual student's needs and goals must be evaluated to see if there is a compatible opportunity available at the time. Safety and liability issues must also be considered. Appropriate background checks and immunizations may be required before beginning an assignment.

