



ON THE RECORD

NEWS from Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney Mark Lindquist

On The Record
November/December
2010

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Three Convicted in Cop Killer Clemmons Case

On December 6, a jury convicted Eddie Davis, Douglas Davis and Letrecia Nelson of seven charges, including Rendering Criminal Assistance in the First Degree, Unlawful Possession of a Firearm and Possession of a Stolen Firearm. Rickey Hinton was found not guilty of Rendering Criminal Assistance. All were charged with assisting Maurice Clemmons after he murdered four Lakewood Police officers last year.



"Our goal in the Clemmons cases has always been to hold everyone involved accountable, and to get the maximum amount of justice we could under the facts and the law," **Prosecutor Mark Lindquist** said. Deputy Prosecutors **Steve Penner** and **Kevin McCann** prosecuted the defendants. Special jury verdicts will enable the State to seek exceptional sentences of up to 15 years in prison for Nelson and 20 years in prison for the Davises when they are sentenced on January 14, 2011. Trial for Darcus Allen, the getaway driver, is set for March 1, 2011. Prosecutor Lindquist has until the end of the year to make a decision on the death penalty for Allen.

Lakewood Sgt. Mark Renninger and officers Ronald Owens, Greg Richards and Tina Griswold were gunned down by Clemmons at a Forza coffee shop on November 29, 2009. Clemmons remained at large for more than 70 hours after the shooting before he was killed by a Seattle Police officer.

More Success in Hilltop Crip Cases



DPA Jim Schacht in court.

The Gang Unit continues to prosecute defendants in the Hilltop Crips conspiracy case. Of the original 36 men charged, 23 have pleaded guilty and nine have been convicted as charged at trial.

In October, a jury found Derrick Johnson guilty for the drive-by shooting and attempted murder of an East Tacoma man in 2008. DPA **Greg Greer** prosecuted Johnson, who was sentenced to more than 39 years in prison. DPA **Jim Schacht** prosecuted Kenneth Hawkins for the strong-arm robbery of a man in South Tacoma last year. Hawkins and two co-defendants attacked the victim outside a bar, took his wallet and car keys and fled in his car. Hawkins was sentenced more than 14 years in prison.

There are 10 defendants currently pending sentencing. Two trials involving three defendants remain set. The combined total of sentences already imposed for 22 defendants is 3,397 months, or 275 years, in prison.

Aggravated Murder Charge Against Savage

On August 24, Prosecutor Mark Lindquist charged Tyler Wolfgang Savage, 18, with Aggravated Murder in the First Degree for the rape and killing of 16-year-old Kimberly "Kimmie" Daily of Puyallup.

Charging documents allege that on August 17, Savage, a neighborhood acquaintance, lured Kimberly Daily to a dense, brushy area near his house. Kimberly, whose father described as developmentally delayed with physical disabilities, was riding her bike to a friend's house when she disappeared. A week-long search of the area ensued.

On August 23, Savage led detectives to her body. He admitted to strangling and having sexual contact with Kimberly. Savage is being held without bail in the Pierce County Jail. His trial is scheduled for September 2011.



Prosecutor Mark Lindquist speaks to reporters outside the court house.

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PA CASE FILES

MELANI LOTU, 22, was sentenced to more than 14 years in prison for the beating death of her 13-month-old son in 2008. DPA **Sven Nelson** prosecuted Lotu, who pleaded guilty to Murder in the Second Degree.

Three Charged in Death of Lisa Melancon



Flowers adorn a Tacoma Code Enforcement truck at Lisa Melancon's memorial service. (Photo courtesy of Tacoma Weekly.)

Prosecutor Mark Lindquist charged Olujimi Blakeney, Herman Jackson and Manuel Castillo with Murder in the First Degree and Drive-By Shooting for the July 22 death of 41-year-old Tacoma resident Lisa Melancon.

According to charging documents, the three men drove to a house in Melancon's neighborhood to confront a couple who had been involved in an angry text message dialogue with Castillo's girlfriend. A physical fight ensued on the sidewalk. Blakeney fired a handgun into the air and the fight broke up.

The defendants fled in Jackson's car. While driving away, Blakeney, who was sitting in the front seat, fired shots in the direction of the victim's home. Melancon, who was

standing on her front porch and was not involved in the altercation, suffered a gun shot wound to the head and died at the scene. More than 1,000 people gathered at the Tacoma Dome to honor Melancon, a well known Tacoma code enforcement officer. She was remembered for her compassion, dedication and commitment to improving our community.

Blakeney and Jackson, the alleged getaway driver, are also charged with Unlawful Possession of a Firearm. Jackson and Castillo are being held on \$2 million and \$1 million bail, respectively. A bench warrant has been issued for Blakeney.

Law Students Make the Grade

Each year law students from Seattle University (SU) and the University of Washington (UW) are hired to work as legal interns in the criminal and civil divisions of the office. The high volume of cases in the Misdemeanor Division requires students to quickly learn the basics and assume most of the responsibilities of a full-fledged DPA. This baptism by fire approach is challenging but gives students hands on experience in the court room.



SU student **Canek Gordillo** on the record in District Court.

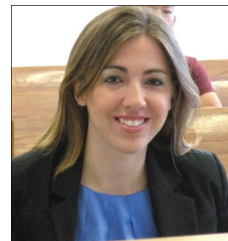
SU student and Robbery/Assault Unit intern **Scott Harlass** recently experienced the heat of battle while conducting direct examination on a witness in a drive-by shooting/unlawful possession of a firearm case. Harlass said his internship has taught him more about the practice of law than any casebook he's read.

Appeals Unit intern **Amanda Kunzi**, also a SU student, agrees. "I hit the ground running, receiving my first case within the first few hours at the office. When I leave this position I will have prosecuted criminal cases, argued appeals in Superior Court, submitted briefs and argued in front of Division II Court of Appeals and assisted with a death penalty appeal."

The collegial office atmosphere fosters the mentorship of law students, many of whom are hired on as attorneys after graduating law school and passing the bar exam. Although just a first year student at SU, **Adam Long**, volunteer summer extern in the Civil Division, was able to see much of his work play out in Superior Court. "From day one, I was given truly interesting and challenging assignments. Everyone at the office was so gracious and thankful for the assistance that it made it a fun and rewarding environment."



SU student intern **Pejman Saadatzaheh** delivers his closing statement in a harassment case while Misdemeanor DPA and former intern **John Cummings** observes.



"I can't imagine many internships can match the extensive opportunities this internship provides." - **Amanda Kunzi**

PA CASE FILES

LAURA JONSTON, 21, was sentenced to 20 years in prison for Murder in the Second Degree. Jonston stabbed her 60-year-old mother to death after an argument last year. DPA **Jared Ausserer** successfully argued for the high end sentence.

CHRISTOPHER HINDERMANN, 39, was sentenced to more than eight years in prison on drug and animal fighting charges. Hindermann and an accomplice manufactured meth and ran a marijuana growing operation at a residence in Graham. Deputies found several roosters on the property and Hindermann admitted holding cockfighting events there. DPA **Jesse Williams** prosecuted the case.

COLETTE ST PIERRE, 46, was convicted of Assault in the Fourth Degree for the unprovoked attack on a woman in 2009. After a three day trial with 12 witnesses (long for Misdemeanor cases), the jury deliberated for only 20 minutes before rendering a guilty verdict. DPA **Erin Orbits** prosecuted St Pierre.

Community Involvement



On July 14, 18 local youth visited the Prosecutor's Office as part of a leadership camp. The Washington Karate Association, Lakewood Dojo, sponsored the camp for students ages 10-18 years. DPAs **Jason Ruyf**, **Bryce Nelson**, **Scott Peters**, **Diane Clarkson** and **Sabrina Ahrens** showed the students around the court house after a Q & A session with **Prosecutor Mark Lindquist**.

A crowd of 75 turned out for a pre-game bratwurst tailgate party at the Tacoma Rainiers game on August 27. It was the best "Wurst" day yet and netted almost \$700 for [Lawyers Helping Hungry Children](#), a local non-profit organization dedicated to ending childhood hunger. Lawyers from the U.S. Attorney's Office and Attorney General's Office, including **Julian Bray**, second from left in the photo, are also involved in the effort. DPAs **Kevin McCann**, **John Sheeran**, and **Mary Robnett** sponsored the fundraiser.



DPA **Tom Moore** was honored with a life-time achievement award from the Department of Fish and Wildlife for prosecuting poachers and buyers of illegally caught fish and animals. Chief **Bruce Bjork**, at right in the photo, along with Sgt. **Ted Jackson** and Detective **Paul Buerger**, presented Moore with the award. Moore retired in December after 22 years of service to the Prosecutor's Office.

Melody Crick Peters, DPA in the Appeals Unit, was selected as the Outstanding District Justice for 2009-10 by the Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity International at the organization's convention in Tampa, FL. Peters is the justice for District I, which includes chapters in WA, ID, OR, MT, AK, Alberta and BC.



Employees and family members gathered in Wright Park on August 20 for the annual Picnic in the Park. Volunteer chefs, including DPAs **Scott Peters** and **Kevin McCann** and Chief Criminal Investigator **Keith Barnes** (left to right in photo) grilled hamburgers and hotdogs for a crowd of 75. Legal assistant **Melissa Cook**, co-chair of the "Pep Squad", an in-house committee responsible for raising money and planning employee activities, organized the event.

The PCPAO's Domestic Violence Unit held a Law Enforcement Appreciation Day barbeque on September 2 at the Crystal Judson Family Justice Center (FJC). Sheriff's deputies vied for prizes in games of musical chairs and "pin the badge on the deputy." **Diane Clarkson**, former supervisor of the DV Unit, started the annual event about four years ago. This year's celebration was organized by **Stephanie Wren**, victim advocate in the Prosecutor's Office. FJC Director **Susan Adams** and Assistant Director **Craig Roberts** are pictured at right.



Speaking Engagements

Mark Lindquist enjoys attending and speaking at community events. If you would like to invite Mark or a representative from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office to speak to your group, please [contact us](#).

PA CASE FILES

HENRY NHEM, 19, was sentenced to 26 years in prison for Murder in the Second Degree. Nhem was with fellow "Original Loco Boyz" (O.L.B.) gang members when he fired into a crowd at the South Park recreation center. One bullet struck Philip Johnson, a Hilltop Crip gang member, who died at the scene. DPA **Greg Greer** prosecuted Nhem.

PHILLIP OTTO, 18, pleaded guilty to first degree murder and attempted first degree murder for two 2008 marijuana-related robberies that left one man dead and two others wounded. He was sentenced to 45 years in prison. DPAs **Phil Sorensen** and **Michelle Hyer** prosecuted Otto.

JEFFREY KOVNER, 34, pleaded guilty to Rape in the First Degree for the sexual assault of a relative. The 4-year-old victim sustained injuries so severe she required hospitalization. Kovner faces a mandatory 25 years to life in prison when sentenced in January. DPA **Lori Kooiman** prosecuted Kovner.