



THE PROSECUTOR

A NEWSLETTER FROM

MAT HECK, JR.

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Spring, 2006

FIRST ASSISTANT PROSECUTING ATTORNEY DEB ARMANINI RECEIVES ARTEMIS CENTER PEACEKEEPER AWARD

First Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Debra B. Armanini was recently presented with the 2005 Peacekeeper Award from the Artemis Center for Alternatives to Domestic Violence. The Peacekeeper Award is presented by Artemis to the law enforcement official who has been most instrumental in combating domestic violence.



First Assistant Prosecutor
Debra B. Armanini

Artemis noted that "Ms. Armanini . . . is a long-time advocate for justice for domestic violence victims. She chairs the Montgomery County Criminal Justice Council Subcommittee on Domestic Violence and serves on the Montgomery County Coordinated Community Response Committee, where key leaders collaborate to proactively identify best practices . . . to address domestic violence issues.

Mrs. Armanini is also involved in an integrated justice effort through the Montgomery County Criminal Justice Council, which is working to put all domestic violence and criminal history information into one database for access for law enforcement and justice agencies."

Judge Dennis J. Langer, speaking for the Montgomery County Common Pleas Court, said that "no one is more worthy of the Peacekeeper Award."

Mat Heck said of his second-in-command, "I am pleased that the community recognizes Deb's dedication and commitment to the criminal justice system, and particularly, to victims of domestic violence."

Mrs. Armanini, pictured at the left, has served as an Assistant Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney for 23 years, and as First Assistant for 10 years.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR to come celebrate with us at the 16th annual Violence Prevention Contest Awards Ceremony on **May 17, 2006 at noon** at Courthouse Square. Schoolchildren from all around Montgomery County entered this year's contest, and the top prize winners and their work will be recognized at the ceremony.

CARE HOUSE RECEIVES ACCREDITATION

CARE House, our local Child Advocacy Center, received full re-accreditation in January by the National Children's Alliance. In fact, the January re-evaluation report had no recommendations for improvement, and one reviewer described CARE House as a "model for other Child Advocacy Centers."

CARE House was established in 1999 at 741 Valley Street, across from Children's Medical Center. CARE stands for Collaboration, Advocacy, Response and Education.

The mission of CARE House is to provide a multidisciplinary team response to child abuse for the purpose of protecting and supporting children and their non-offending family members, holding offenders accountable, and educating the community. CARE House is a leader in the multidisciplinary team approach to addressing and preventing child abuse.

CARE House is a partnership of The Children's Medical Center, Dayton Police Department, Montgomery County Children

Services, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, and, of course, the Montgomery County Prosecutor's Office.

These agencies work together to implement a prompt, comprehensive response to child victims of abuse and neglect. Additionally, they provide the child victims and their family with needed services to protect the child from further harm.

ATTENTION CREDIT UNION MEMBERS: Account Numbers Being Stolen Via Email

Our Consumer Fraud Division has recently become aware of a nationwide scam where thieves attempt to obtain your credit union account number through email. Victims typically receive an email from someone purporting to be the "National Credit Union Administration," requesting that the victim "link" over to their site and update their account information. Everything about this scam looks official—the email, the graphics in it, even the link. Victims link over, give their account information, and then the crooks are home free—with the victims' money. We have not received any complaints about this happening in the Dayton area, but prevention is the key! The lesson: do not update your account information anywhere online except on your specific credit union's official website, or better yet, go there in person.

If you suspect fraudulent activity in any of your business transactions, our Consumer Fraud Division is here to field your questions—simply call 937-225-4747. Another resource is the Better Business Bureau at 937-222-5825.

MOST CRIMES CONTINUED TO INCREASE IN 2005

Indictments are in for most cases initiated in 2005. There were some troubling numbers, but a few bright spots as well. Since 2001, the number of indictments by the Montgomery County Grand Jury for robberies and burglaries are up 32%, sex crimes are up 30%, drug offenses are up 46.5% and weapon offenses are up 57.8%. But, the number of assaults are down 3%, kidnappings are down 26.5%, and arsons fell by 53% over the same time frame. Overall, the number of investigations by police agencies presented to our office for consideration of prosecution is up 33% in the last five years.

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

On Tuesday, March 28th, Prosecutor Heck was a key speaker at a community forum held at Children's Medical Center and sponsored by **Fight Crime: Invest in Kids**, a non-profit agency. The purpose of the forum was to show that law enforcement leaders, health care professionals and civil leaders know from the research and their own experience that in-home parent coaching programs work to prevent crime. In addition to Prosecutor Heck, other speakers included Montgomery County Sheriff Dave Vore, CARE House Director Libby Nicholson, nurse Jennifer Jones from Dayton's Nurse Family Partnership, and Phil Parker, President of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce.

It was reported that in an average 24 hours, nine children in Montgomery County will be abused or neglected. This is not just a Montgomery County problem—in all of Ohio, statistics show that 125 children will be abused or neglected in that same 24 hours. In 2004, more than 47,000 of Ohio's children were reported abused or neglected, including nearly 3,500 from Montgomery County.

There is a clear link between being abused or neglected as a child, and the risk that child faces as an adult. While most children who are abused or neglected grow up to be honest, law abiding citizens, nearly one-third end up being arrested for a violent crime as an adult.

The report **Fight Crime: Invest in Kids** released at the forum shows that, of the more than 47,000 children abused statewide in 2004, it is likely some 1,900 will grow up to be violent criminals as adults, principally because of their abuse and neglect as children. This translates to an estimated 140 of those children here in Montgomery County being violent criminals as a direct result of their abuse. Child abuse and neglect too often begets a cycle of abuse and neglect. The abused becomes the abuser.

Last year, the bipartisan *Education Begins At Home Act* was introduced in the United States Senate and in the U.S. House of Representatives. This legislation would provide funding to states for a range of in-home parent coaching model programs.

Heck said, "Today, I'm pleased to say we know what helps. We know that preventing child abuse and neglect eventually results in lower future crimes. Helping at-risk parents manage the stress and responsibilities of new parenthood has been proven to reduce child abuse and neglect, cut crime, and save taxpayer dollars."

To learn more about **Fight Crime: Invest in Kids** or the *Education Begins At Home Act*, visit <http://www.fightcrime.org>.

\$3.2 MILLION SETTLEMENT REACHED IN RIVERSCAPE FOUNTAIN LAWSUIT

On April 7, 2006, during the second week of the jury trial, the RiverScape fountain lawsuit was settled with the defendant, San Francisco based EDAW landscape architecture firm. The settlement terms include a cash payment to Montgomery County of \$3,000,000 and the dismissal of another \$200,000 owed by Montgomery County.

Montgomery County filed a lawsuit on November 6, 2003 against EDAW due to the fact that the designed fountains failed to meet the specific design and performance elements that were critical to the success of RiverScape.

The settlement will reimburse the taxpayers for repairs to the fountains and all litigation expenses incurred by the County.

Congratulations to John Cumming and the other Assistant Prosecutors and staff of the Civil Division for their assistance and efforts in this matter.

Prosecutor Briefs

Paige Perry joined the office as a legal secretary in the Criminal Case Management Division of the office. She was formerly employed with the Florida State Attorney's Office, 20th Judicial Circuit.

Rakesia Howard joined the staff of the Victim/Witness Division as a victim advocate. Rakesia is a graduate of Central State University with a BA in Communications.

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