



Columbus City Attorney

Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. eNewsletter

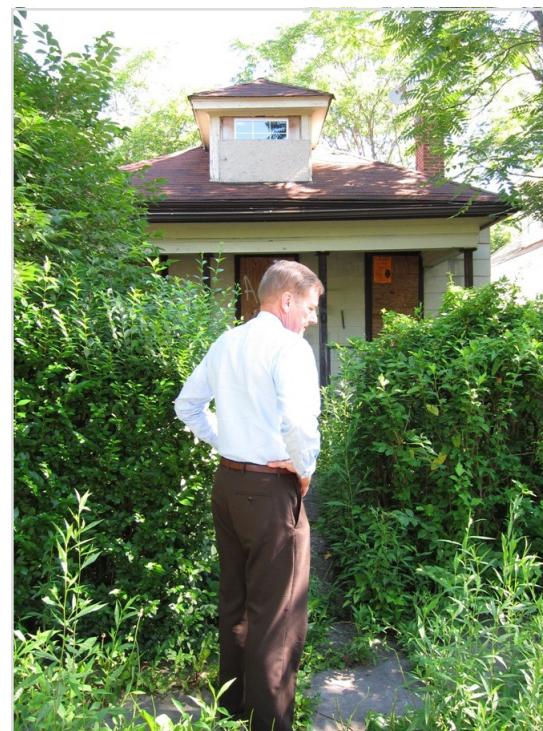
A Word from City Attorney Pfeiffer

One of the most important aspects of being City Attorney is employing highly qualified, dedicated people and trusting them to do their jobs. This approach has proven effective, as I'm always proud to be able to highlight our staff's accomplishments and accolades in our e-newsletters. In this issue, you will learn about one of our team members and her special assignment working with the U.S. Department of Justice in the Republic of Georgia, a former Soviet country looking to remodel its judicial system.

I give all my employees a straightforward directive: be honest; work hard; and *get things done*. I ask them to identify a problem, think critically about the solution, and then get the job done. This is important, especially for a multi-faceted law practice such as the City Attorney's office, where we tackle diverse legal issues from real estate transactions to civil litigation to prosecuting criminals.

Speaking of getting things done, I'm also pleased to announce that coming soon will be our new television program, *Just the Facts*, which is being produced in conjunction with C-TV (formerly GTC-3). The pilot episode will focus on how the global financial crisis and questionable lending practices have led to a near epidemic of vacant and abandoned properties in some of our core neighborhoods. The causes of blight are complex and the legal remedies are often protracted and complicated, but we haven't given up, and—more importantly—neither have the responsible homeowners who are holding on in the some of Columbus' hardest hit neighborhoods.

Check [C-TV](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to get updates when the show will air.



A scene from *Just the Facts* on Myrtle Ave. in the North Linden neighborhood of Columbus. Photo courtesy of Ryan Schick.

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July 2011

**In This Issue:**

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Working to End the Cycle of Domestic Violence

In order to help break the cycle of domestic violence, the Columbus City Attorney's office operates the Domestic Violence and Stalking Unit, a group of specially trained prosecutors and victim advocates who work together with numerous community organizations to provide a centralized resource and support system for victims of domestic violence and stalking related crimes. Last year, the unit provided advocacy services for 6021 victims and prosecuted 5221 cases.

In City Attorney Pfeiffer's estimation, there are no more important cases handled by the City Attorney's office since statistics show that the indelible impact of domestic violence continues from generation to generation, as children from violent homes are more likely to become abusers themselves.

According to Anne Murray, director of the Domestic Violence and Stalking Unit, statistics show domestic violence victims wait until the fifth to seventh incident on average before contacting authorities. Once that call for help is finally made the network of support sets in motion. Murray and her staff meet daily with victims as well as partners such as CHOICES for Victims of Domestic Violence, Franklin County Children's Services, Capital Law School, the County Prosecutor's office, the Sheriff's office, and Columbus police to determine the best strategies to prosecute cases and provide education, support, counseling, crisis intervention and overall assistance to the victims.

Whenever possible, the City Attorney's office employs the concept of vertical prosecution and advocacy with victims of domestic violence, where the same prosecutor and the same advocate will work with the victim throughout the entire legal process to help provide stability, continuity, and a level of trust for those who have suffered trauma and are often reluctant to prosecute the abuser.

While all prosecutors in the City Attorney's office handle domestic violence cases, the Domestic Violence Unit's four specially trained prosecutors are assigned to handle only domestic violence and stalking related cases. These specialized prosecutors tackle cases that include repeat offenders, egregious acts of violence, and victims who are high risk (including children, the elderly, and disabled individuals). They handled 68 percent of the domestic violence-related cases prosecuted in 2010 (3564 out of 5221).

Along with the prosecutors, the unit has several courtroom advocates and stalking investigators who work in tandem with various community liaisons to provide a variety of services to domestic violence and stalking victims.

Did you Know?

By statute, the City Attorney's office can only prosecute criminal misdemeanor offenses, whereas felony charges are handled by the County Prosecutor.

Ohio Revised Code

Definite jail terms for misdemeanors:

- (1) For a misdemeanor of the first degree, not more than one hundred eighty days;
- (2) For a misdemeanor of the second degree, not more than ninety days;
- (3) For a misdemeanor of the third degree, not more than sixty days;
- (4) For a misdemeanor of the fourth degree, not more than thirty days.
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In cooperation with community organizations such as CHOICES, Southeast Inc., Capital Law School's Family Advocacy Program, the Columbus Coalition Against Family Violence, BRAVO, SARCO, and DWAVE, the City Attorney's office helps secure criminal protection orders while also linking victims to resources to help find a safe place to stay, pay bills, file divorce proceedings, and obtain civil protection orders.

Menacing by stalking occurs when a person commits two or more incidents that knowingly cause the victim to believe the offender will cause them physical harm or mental distress. Stalking can involve a number of different acts—including repeated following or watching; unwanted gifts, calls or emails; internet postings; contact with friends, family or employers or coworkers—and can seriously disrupt a victim's life and peace of mind. Stalking is a first degree misdemeanor or a fifth degree felony depending on the facts of the case or if the stalker has a previous stalking conviction (see ORC [§2903.211](#)). The City Attorney's office included stalking within the Domestic Violence Unit in 1988, to investigate menacing by stalking complaints, assist in evidence collection, and support stalking victims. Additionally, the Stalking Unit can assist victims in obtaining anti-stalking civil protection orders.

Protection Orders can be powerful tools in combating domestic violence or stalking. Criminal protection orders are emergency orders issued only when certain criminal charges are filed and expire when the criminal case is over. Civil protection orders do not require criminal charges to have been filed but the petitioner must prove certain behavior has occurred. Civil protection orders may remain in place up to five years. Protection Orders are free and victims do not need to have attorneys to petition for them. However, the Domestic Violence Unit recommends all victims of domestic violence and stalking consider their unique situation and safety plan before seeking and/or obtaining a protection order.

For a more comprehensive guide on protection orders, community resources, and other information on domestic violence, click [here](#).

In 2010...

The Domestic Violence & Stalking Unit provided victim advocacy services for 6021 victims and arraignment advocacy services for an additional 785 victims of non-domestic violence. 538 protection orders were issued and 5221 cases of domestic violence and related charges were prosecuted.

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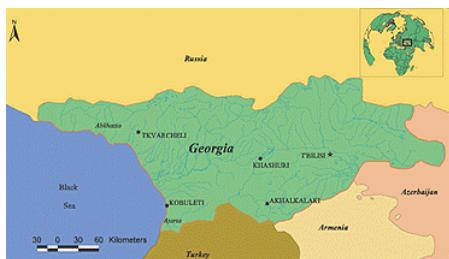
Columbus City Attorney's Office Having Global Reach

Based on her expertise and years of experience as a domestic violence prosecutor and director of the City Attorney's Domestic Violence and Stalking Unit, Anne Murray spent a week in June helping a former Soviet country set up their first victim/witness program.

She traveled to the Republic of Georgia with Franklin County Assistant Prosecutor Dan Hawkins, head of their Abuse Unit, and Assistant U.S. Attorney David DeVillers as part of a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) initiative that helps foreign countries establish criminal-justice systems based on international standards.

While the significant undertaking of revamping an entire judicial system and getting both the authorities and the public to transition away from entrenched institutional practices will take years, Anne and Dan were assigned to assist the Georgian Ministry of Justice in training several head prosecutors and coordinators on special techniques in working with victims and witnesses.

These individuals, in turn, will help train the country's other prosecutors.



Georgia, with a population of over 4.5 million people, sits at the nexus of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, with Russia on its northern border, Turkey, Armenia, and Azerbaijan to the south and east, and the Black Sea to the west. Georgia has been an independent nation since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and has steadily progressed towards a more democratic system of government. However, changing the legal system—along with the remnants of corruption and deeply ingrained cultural mores—still presents a challenge.

Georgia had an inquisitorial legal system, where prosecutors wielded most of the authority, judges played a relatively passive role, defense attorneys had virtually no ability to perform cross-examinations, and there was no access to jury trials.

After a 12-hour flight, Anne arrived in Tbilisi, the Georgian capital city of nearly 1.5 million people, at 3:20 p.m. on a Saturday afternoon (7:20 a.m. our time, after flying all night).

After spending the next day sightseeing in Old Town Tbilisi and on the Dry Bridge, a famous flea market area where locals sell art, old jewelry, tableware and medals, Anne was part of an expert panel helping six of Georgia's lead prosecutors analyze the framework of the Ministry of Justice's new victim/witness project. They started out first by discussing the implementation and challenges of victim/witness assistance programs in the United States. With that foundation, they went on to help adapt Georgian guidelines for victim/



Anne Murray (standing) gives her presentation to some of the top prosecutors in the Republic of Georgia at the Ministry of Justice.

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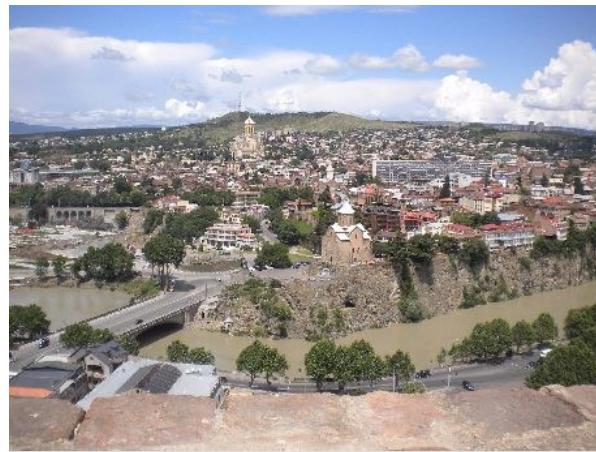


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A view of Tbilisi, the capital and largest city of the Republic of Georgia. Tbilisi was built on the banks of the Kura (or Mt'kvari) River.

Global Reach ...continued from page 4

witness coordinators and prosecutors, and develop curricular and teaching materials for the new specialists who will soon be preparing to deal with a host of issues when assisting victims and witnesses.

Anne and the other participants then spent two days training the Georgian prosecutors and trainers on communication skills. Anne specifically focused on working with victims of domestic violence and reluctant witnesses. As she expressed to her Georgian counterparts, it is imperative for prosecutors to understand

the complex nature of the cycle of violence—how a pattern of rising tension, violence, then contrition emerges and often results in victim denial of the incident during the prosecution. Prosecutors need the requisite skills not only to build their legal case against the perpetrator but to support traumatized victims with knowledge, sympathy, and referral information that goes beyond formal legal proceedings.

Since Georgia currently does not have many non-profit service providers to assist victims like the U.S. does, Anne also elaborated on the importance of identifying outside resources and writing grant proposals to help provide further assistance to victims.

In the United States, a witness has a privilege not to have to testify against a close family member. The privilege does not apply, however, in cases of domestic violence. This is crucial in prosecuting a domestic violence or an abuse case. Georgian law currently does not have an exception to the privilege against testifying against a close family member and the difficulty remains in convincing a victim that it is necessary to testify against a family member when it goes counter to their customs and culture.



Entrance to the Ministry of Justice, where the training sessions took place. Photo courtesy of Anne Murray.

Thus, the training of victim advocates is just as important as it is for the prosecutors. On her final day in Tbilisi, Anne helped train the victim witness coordinators. While it was the last day of Anne's assignment, it was the second day of an intensive, month-long training course for the coordinators. As a follow-up, five of these victim advocates will be traveling to Columbus later this year to shadow the

advocates in the City Attorney's and County Prosecutor's office, and to participate in the Attorney General's weeklong BASICS training for victim advocates.

For more photos of Anne's assignment to the Republic of Georgia, visit our [Facebook](#) page.

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Matthew C. Giaimo
Case Number:
DOB: 6-3-90 (Age 21) **2008 ERB 071266**
Height: 5'11" **Weight:** 130 **Charge(s):**
Hair: Brown **Eyes:** Brown **2309.27 - Graffitism**

Help us continue the success of our fugitive apprehension program! The two individuals listed below are wanted on voyeurism charges. If you have any information concerning either of them, please contact Bill Hedrick at 614.645.8874 or brhedrick@columbus.gov



Mark A. North II (aka Tony North) **Case Numbers:** 2010 CRB 24903 and 2010 CRB 26662
DOB: 6/2/80 (Age 31) **Charges:** Voyeurism (one count); Public Indecency (two counts); Criminal Trespass
Height: 5'8" **Weight:** 185 **(one count)**
Hair: Brown **Eyes:** Blue
Last known address: 547 Riverview Dr. Apt. B4 | Columbus, Ohio 43202



Fernando Pazo Collazo **Case Number:** 2010 CRB 18467
DOB: 9/6/73 (Age 37) **Charge:** 2907.08 (D) - Voyeurism
Height: 6'1" **Weight:** 240 **Hair:** Brown **Eyes:** Brown
Last known address: 5361 Plumway Court | Columbus, Ohio 43228

If you are one of the listed individuals, you are strongly encouraged to turn yourself in or contact an attorney.

The Columbus Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service can be reached at 614.221.0754 and the Franklin County Public Defender's Office can be reached at 614.719.8599.

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