



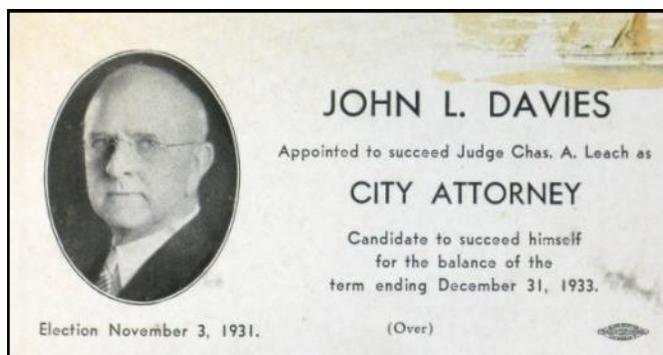
# Columbus City Attorney **Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr.**

## eNewsletter

Volume 6, Issue 2

### A Word from City Attorney Pfeiffer

It's hard to believe that we are starting to put the finishing touches on another year, especially as I finish my 14th year as Columbus City Attorney. For those who enjoy a bit of history, as I do, our longest serving City Attorney was John L. Davies, born in 1868, who served from 1929-1945.



*From the Columbus City Auditor archives, John L. Davies (1868-1955) served as City Attorney from 1929-1945.*

In this month of reflection and giving thanks, it may sound like a cliché, but I am truly thankful and grateful for the staff we have in our office, as they continue to prove to be dedicated professionals who ably represent the city and work to protect the public interest.

Chief Prosecutor Lara Baker-Morrish recently was appointed to the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission, representing municipal prosecutors throughout the state as a voting member of the commission after previously serving on the commission's advisory committee.

Assistant City Attorney Katarina Karac was featured in this [New York Times report](#) about "rent-to-own" home contracts, as our office is starting to see more and more of these arrangements and the potential problems that can result. Later in this newsletter you can also learn more about how Katarina and our other [Zone Initiative](#) attorneys are trying to help address the opiate epidemic from a different angle.

Assistant City Attorney Bill Sperlazza, who oversees the legal process for Columbus' annual liquor permit renewal objections, reported that, so far, we are a perfect 6-0 in having our objections upheld in cases where we have received a ruling from the [Ohio Division of Liquor Control](#). Bill expects similar results for cases still pending and attributes our success to community input, the good work by law enforcement and an improved, more demanding, selection process.

Finally, I want to commend Real Estate Division Attorney Tony Roseboro for his community involvement. Tony and his fellow founding members of [PAST Productions Columbus](#) received the [Greater Columbus Arts Council's](#) "2016 Columbus Makes Art Excellence Award" for their creation of the [August Wilson Festival](#) in collaboration with the [Short North Stage](#).

November 2016



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## Area Commission Chair's Invitation 'Flips the Script'

Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. is used to inviting folks to ride along with him on one of his patented "moseys." It's something he has been doing for decades and recently brought into the digital age with his video documentary series: "[Moseying with Rick Pfeiffer: Exploring Columbus Neighborhoods.](#)"

But the tables were turned in the latest installment, as Libby Wetherholt, chair of the Clintonville Area Commission, asked City Attorney Pfeiffer to join *her* for a mosey through the Walhalla Ravine.

What resulted is a [two-part Clintonville episode](#) that welcomes viewers to join City Attorney Pfeiffer, a Clintonville resident for most of his life, on a nostalgic tour that features some of the unique people, places, and businesses that help make this part of Columbus "more a state of mind than a city."

"All it takes to mosey is a curious mind and a genuine interest in getting to know more about the people and places around you," according to City Attorney Pfeiffer. "If nothing else, I hope our videos show that sometimes you can broaden your horizons right in your own backyard."

From reminiscing about his childhood days attending Glenmont, Crestview, and Dominion schools, to offering rapid fire history lessons, interviewing small business owners and random citizens, to trekking into the pastoral retreats of Clintonville's ravines, City Attorney Pfeiffer's latest mosey covers a lot of ground both literally and figuratively.

"I really appreciate Libby reaching out and inviting us to highlight some of the tremendous assets that the Clintonville community has to offer," Pfeiffer said.

[Part One](#) and [Part Two](#) of the Clintonville mosey can be viewed online. DVD copies also are available upon request.

Prior episodes have highlighted:

[Franklinton](#)

[Parsons Avenue Corridor](#)

[Cleveland Avenue Corridor](#)

[Far East Side](#)

[Hayden Run Corridor](#)

Next up is the Hilltop, where filming is already underway.

**"I discovered Rick's Moseying videos on his website and it occurred to me that spotlighting Walhalla Ravine, as well as ALL of Clintonville, would be a great way of publicizing our wonderful area of town."**

**Clintonville Area  
Commission Chair  
Libby Wetherholt**



*Clintonville Area Commission Chair Libby Wetherholt in the Walhalla Ravine, talking about how it was named. Click on the above scene to begin watching the new two-part episode in City Attorney Pfeiffer's neighborhood documentary series.*

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## Taking a “Civil” Approach to Combat Crime

A west side apartment complex known as a “one-stop shop” for the purchase, sale, and use of heavy narcotics; a drug den located within a half-mile radius of three schools in the Linden area that became the epicenter of a host of heroin overdoses in late September; a rental property that had so much drug trafficking at the site that two individuals purportedly worked there as “doormen.”

These are just a few of several recent examples where evidence gathered in criminal investigations by the Columbus Police Division was used in tandem by the Columbus City Attorney’s [Zone Initiative](#) team to file civil litigation to shut down and board up the properties. Deriving its name from the organization of the city into five police zones, the Zone Initiative has an assistant city attorney assigned to each zone to work closely with law enforcement, the Division of Fire, Code Enforcement, the Health Department, community groups, and residents to identify and address public nuisances that blight neighborhoods.



*Court ordered board up of an apartment complex operating as a “one-stop shop” for drugs.*

“In conjunction with parallel criminal investigations, our nuisance abatement cases are part of an ongoing effort to target drug havens that plague our neighborhoods,” said Assistant City Attorney Kristen Dickerson.

The nuisance abatement lawsuits, seeking preliminary and permanent injunctive relief—as well as emergency temporary restraining orders in some of the most exigent circumstances—must prove that the owners of the premises “knew of, participated in, or acquiesced to the activity which constituted the nuisance” as prescribed by [Chapter 3767](#) of the Ohio Revised Code.

“While we have been building our cases over time, the recent overdose epidemic shows how critical it is to do everything within our power, through both civil and criminal proceedings, to get drugs off our streets,” said Assistant City Attorney Katarina Karac.

In the case of the aforementioned west side apartment complex, narcotics detectives followed up on a community complaint and made covert purchases of crack-cocaine and heroin on two separate days. A subsequent search warrant identified the following inside the premises: suboxone strips and Narcan (used for the emergency treatment of opioid overdoses); marijuana; heroin; crack-cocaine; a .40 caliber semi-automatic hand-gun reported stolen from Delaware, Ohio; and an assortment of ammunition. Police sent a certified letter to the owners notifying them of the nuisance drug activity occurring at their property. The certified mail receipt was signed by one of them.

The following day, narcotics detectives participated in a covert purchase of 13.2 grams of crack-cocaine at the premises. Five days later, another covert purchase of crack-cocaine took place. Another search warrant was executed and turned up: suboxone and Lidocaine (an anesthetic known to be used to “cut” heroin); heroin; crack-cocaine; marijuana; pills; large amounts of cash; a .9mm semi-automatic hand-gun; magazines, live rounds, and other miscellaneous ammunition.

While executing the second search warrant, narcotics detectives met on-site with the owners, who again signed a letter acknowledging that nuisance drug activity was occurring at their property. The court subsequently granted the city’s request for the civil injunction and ordered the premises to be evacuated and boarded up.

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## Teaming Up with Investigative Reporter to Catch Animal Abusers

[WSYX ABC6 on Your Side](#) investigative reporter Tom Sussi teamed up with the Columbus City Attorney's office to track down four convicted animal abusers and hold them to account for not paying their debt to society. The four individuals had a combined six outstanding arrest warrants and 27 counts of animal cruelty-related crimes between them.

Their other previous crimes included domestic violence, assault, breaking and entering, aggravated menacing, receiving stolen property, violation of a protection order, OVI, disorderly conduct, possession of controlled substances, driving under suspension, illegal dog confinement, and more than 50 previous counts of animal cruelty.

"Once convicted, individuals are expected to pay their debt to society," said City Attorney Pfeiffer. "Unfortunately, these four violated the terms and conditions of their probation and warrants for their arrest were issued."



*Reporter Tom Sussi trying to track down the whereabouts of wanted animal abusers.*

With Sussi working directly with City Attorney Chief of Staff and First Assistant City Prosecutor Bill R. Hedrick, two out of the four fugitives—Jesse Lee Bailey and Paul Ell, Jr.—were quickly adjudicated once they realized their days on the run were coming to an end.

But Christa Badgley and Richard Helmbright have thus far evaded arrest and are still wanted.

Badgley, formerly of the city's south side, was convicted of abandoning 10 sick cats and two sick dogs in incomprehensible filth in a trailer home piled high with trash and debris and infested with lice and fleas. As part of her plea, she was required to pay \$2800 in restitution to the [Capital Area Humane Society](#). She also has another warrant for her arrest for violating a protection order.

Humane agents discovered a horrific scene at Helmbright's house in 2011, leading to his conviction on multiple charges of animal cruelty. Animal bodies were found stuffed in trash bags and containers inside the house, as well as 26 dead animals lined up outside the house and another 40 dead bodies hidden inside two sheds located on the property. After originally being sentenced, Helmbright was prohibited from owning any other animals.

"We appreciate the unique partnership between our office and Mr. Sussi to help bring these offenders to justice and force them to pay for what they did to their animal victims," said First Assistant City Prosecutor Bill R. Hedrick.



*Chief of Staff Bill Hedrick discussing cases with reporter Tom Sussi.*

More information on Badgley and Helmbright and their list of charges can be found on the City Attorney's web site ([www.columbuscityattorney.org](http://www.columbuscityattorney.org)). Anyone with information on their whereabouts is asked to contact Mr. Hedrick at 614.645.8874 or [brhedrick@columbus.gov](mailto:brhedrick@columbus.gov).



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## News and Notes

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City Attorney Pfeiffer joined board members and officials at an open house for the [National Youth Advocate Program](#) Center for Adolescents and Families in September. A special thank you to NYAP Director of Business & Government Strategies (and a former law clerk of ours) Reyahd Kazmi for the invitation.



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Thank you to paralegal Simone Burley (pictured left) for providing photos from this year's African American Male Wellness Walk. City Attorney Pfeiffer is seen below with Assistant City Prosecutors Jarrod Skinner and Garrison Carr.



Mary Culver, one of our Domestic Violence and Stalking Unit legal advocates, organized a month-long observance at the courthouse to help recognize October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Mary is seen here with Chief of Staff Bill Hedrick, who helped pitch in.

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Anne Murray, Director of our Domestic Violence and Stalking Unit, spoke at the [YWCA Columbus](#) Leadership Luncheon as part of a series of activities during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Anne was introduced at the luncheon by Chief City Prosecutor Lara Baker-Morrish.

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We were pleased to host [Columbus Alternative High School](#) student Ahmad Anderson for a week as part of the [Law and Leadership Institute](#) program. Ahmad is pictured here with Chief Prosecutor Lara Baker-Morrish and Chief of Staff Bill Hedrick.



Our staff enjoyed attending National Night Out events all across the city in August. Here is Chief of Staff Hedrick with Justin Boggs at the 12th Annual South Central Hilltop National Night Out Festival.



Also pictured is Zone Initiative Attorney Katarina Karac at the Maize Manner Blockwatch National Night Out event with Columbus Police Community Liaison Officer Chris Riley and neighborhood resident Tony.

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Our office's reputation for hosting student observers has spread state-wide, as we were pleased to host Thomas Hegarty III, an 8th grader from Chippewa Middle School in Doylestown, Ohio. Thomas, who is interested in becoming a prosecutor, is pictured here with Chief of Staff Bill Hedrick and attorney Pete Scranton, from Student Legal Services at The Ohio State University, who arranged the visit.

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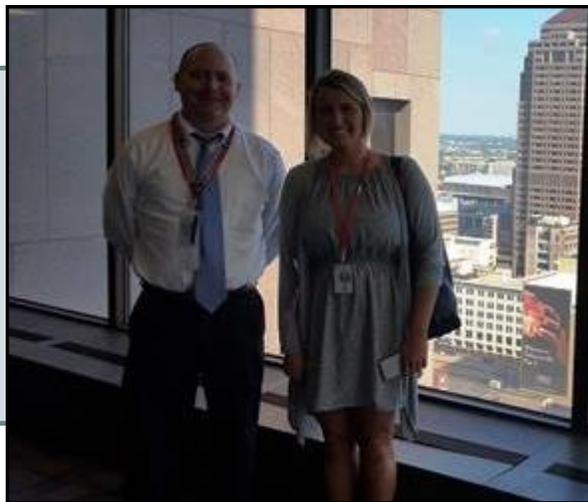
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Dave Fox, Alexandra Sciore (pictured), and Gil Leffler of our Domestic Violence and Stalking Unit were invited to provide training for the [Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities](#). The training focused on cyber-crime and cyber-bullying. Gil was pleased to report that the training was very well received and the training coordinator indicated they would like to have our staff back for future training sessions.



Our S.O.A.R. program high school interns were inspired after meeting Councilmember (and former Assistant City Attorney) Jaiza Page.

City Attorney Pfeiffer welcomed a political science class from [Northland High School](#) to the court house. Joining them was Assistant City Prosecutor Glenn Willer, a Northland grad, who coaches their Mock Trial Debate Team.



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## Meet the Staff

As his career has evolved from a courtroom prosecutor to Chief of Staff and First Assistant City Prosecutor for the Columbus City Attorney's office, Bill Hedrick has never forgotten his humble beginnings growing up in the rural, southern Indiana town of Washington.

Bill was the first in his family to attend college when he initially pursued an associate degree from Vincennes University; but he didn't stop there. He earned a Master of Library Science from Indiana University and a Master of Arts in American History from Purdue University before graduating from the Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University.

Bill soon became a prosecutor who always tried to provide a voice for victims, especially while defending some of the most vulnerable members of our community, from victims of cyberstalking to animals subjected to abuse and neglect. He was the first supervisor of the telecommunication harassment unit, which evolved into the office's stalking unit. He also actively recruited Somali and Spanish speaking employees in the City Attorney's office to better assist crime victims from the immigrant community.

Bill also served as board president of the [Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization](#), which advocates for crime victims within the LGBT community.

During his time as an environmental prosecutor, Bill became well-known for his focus on quality-of-life issues that impact Columbus neighborhoods. He prosecuted a notorious slumlord in a case that garnered national media attention due to the unique ruling that ordered the offender to leave the comforts of his suburban mansion and live in one of his dilapidated rental units until all his properties were brought up to code.

As Bill transitioned away from the daily prosecution of cases to concentrate on his administrative duties, he was able to explore innovative ways to impact public safety on a broader scale. Thousands of arrest warrants are issued in the greater Columbus area each year, adding to a list that once topped over 100,000 that were outstanding. Bill decided to tackle this immense challenge head-on and quickly recognized the potential in creating a system that could aid law enforcement by blending digital, traditional, and social media channels to share and obtain information on individuals with outstanding warrants.

What evolved is a comprehensive and multifaceted system that combined the goals of bringing offenders to justice, reducing the amount of active warrants on the books, and better educating the public about the criminal justice system. For his efforts, Bill has been hailed a "hero" by [Vanity Fair](#), nominated for a U.S. Department of Justice National Crime Victims Service Award, named 2014 Prosecutor of the Year by the Ohio Justice League, and earned a 2013 Mayor's Award of Excellence for Outstanding Service.

Not bad for the kid growing up in Washington, IN who wanted to find a way to help others.



### Bill Hedrick

**Title:** *Chief of Staff/First Assistant City Prosecutor*

**Education:** *The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, J.D.; Purdue University, M.A. in American History; Indiana University, Master of Library Science; Purdue University, B.A. in Education; Vincennes University, A.S.*



## Citizen Action

A Central Ohio resident who seemingly launched a one-man demolition derby through the streets of Columbus, causing three hit-and-run accidents in 30 minutes, recently was named “Fugitive of the Week” by the Columbus City Attorney’s office.

Twenty-four-year-old Dustin Allen Williamson of the city’s north side is wanted on three arrest warrants after he failed to appear at his trial to answer charges related to his hit-skip spree. Authorities are uncertain why Williamson skipped out on his trial after the judge initially granted his attorney’s request for two earlier continuances. But skipping out seems to be a pattern first established by Williamson on the morning of February 23, 2016 when he rear-ended his first victim near the intersection of W. Hudson and N. High St. and raced away “at a high rate of speed.”



Minutes after fleeing the scene of the first accident, Williamson hit another car a few blocks away at the intersection of N. 4th and Clinton St. and sped off again. The second victim was able to take a cellphone picture of the temporary license tag of the vehicle Williamson was driving. While officers were investigating the first two crashes, a third dispatch call indicated that a vehicle with matching temporary tags to the victim’s cellphone photo had been involved in a one-car accident at W. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. and North Star Rd. in Grandview.

According to reports, Williamson had no choice but to flee his third accident on foot, as he crashed his vehicle into a utility pole, breaking the pole in two and smashing the front bumper of his car “halfway back to the windshield.”

Williamson was located inside a nearby *Subway* restaurant and appeared dismissive of the wreckage he had wrought by his out-of-control driving.

“Accidents happen, but you can’t turn the streets of Columbus into a scene from *Cannonball Run* and then expect to run away from the responsibility of appearing in court,” said First Assistant City Prosecutor Bill R. Hedrick.

Williamson faces eight total criminal charges, including three counts of driving with a learner’s permit that had expired seven years ago.

Anyone with information on Dustin Allen Williamson is asked to contact First Assistant City Prosecutor Bill R. Hedrick at 614.645.8874 or [brhedrick@columbus.gov](mailto:brhedrick@columbus.gov). *Per state law, the Columbus City Attorney’s office prosecutes misdemeanor crimes, not felonies.*

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