



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

eNewsletter

Volume 5, Issue 1

A Word from City Attorney Pfeiffer

As we begin what I hope will be a safe and prosperous New Year for all, it is important to take a moment to reflect upon the past while also looking forward to what lies ahead. And that is exactly the theme of this e-newsletter.

Working closely with the Police and Fire Divisions, the State Fire Marshal, the Health Department, code enforcement and others, our office helped shut down four crime-infested hotels and demolished another last year. We hope to continue more of the same in 2015.

Last year we also launched two new ventures with our neighborhood documentary series and our partnership with the Columbus Coalition for the Homeless and the *Street Speech* social justice newspaper. You'll be able to read about the latest updates on both fronts, including how our partnering with the Coalition helped a victim of crime who happened to be a *Street Speech* vendor fighting hard to overcome homelessness.

Regular readers of our missives also know how much I appreciate the opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of our staff and other community members. In that vein, it is especially rewarding when an unsung hero working in the proverbial trenches of the criminal justice system, such as Senior Assistant City Prosecutor Cyndy Peterson—who you can read about in our "Meet the Staff" profile—is honored.

I also want to congratulate Franklin County Common Pleas Court Judge William H. Woods, who invited me to help participate in his swearing-in ceremony recently.

And finally, a very special congratulations to our very own Assistant City Attorney Jaiza Page, who was appointed to City Council on January 12, 2015. It should be a good omen that she was appointed the same evening the Buckeyes became National Champs! I first began mentoring Jaiza when she was in high school when the John Glenn School at Ohio State assigned her to intern in my courtroom at the time when I served as Environmental Court judge.

I'm confident Jaiza will apply her strong work ethic, legal acumen, and commitment to working with community groups and civic organizations that she showed while being the attorney assigned to police zone five to the rest of the city as the newest member of Council.



Assistant City Attorney Jaiza Page was recently appointed to serve on Columbus City Council.

January 2015



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Keep On Moseyin'

City Attorney Pfeiffer's neighborhood documentary series "*Moseying with Rick Pfeiffer: Exploring Columbus Neighborhoods*" continues to be popular. For those who missed it, the second installment of the video series invites viewers to join Mr. Pfeiffer for a virtual tour of iconic Parsons Avenue and its surrounding neighborhoods.

This new venture to help document Columbus neighborhoods was launched last summer, when the pilot episode featuring historic Franklinton premiered. The amount of attention the video received was unexpected and pleasantly surprising, as the public reaction was overwhelmingly positive. Producers from Prime TV Network—based out of Long Beach, CA—even took notice.

“Moseying is a way for me to stay connected to residents and get a firsthand look at the issues that impact our neighborhoods.”

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

The Parsons Avenue episode highlights some important linchpins of Columbus' South Side, including Nationwide Children's Hospital, Columbus Castings, Plank's restaurant, South High School, and the new John Maloney Health Center.

Also featured are the distinctive neighborhoods that flank both sides of Parsons Avenue, along with several small businesses that help comprise the Parsons Avenue Merchants Association. Several unique individuals are included as well, ranging from wandering scrappers to Vassor Village resident Doug Smith and his 21-year-old Irish Wolfhound Terrier, Phoebe.



Click on the above scene to watch the second episode of City Attorney Pfeiffer's neighborhood documentary series.

Given the City Attorney's role in dealing with a variety of public nuisances, Mr. Pfeiffer advises that his video series doesn't gloss over the challenges that confront neighborhoods. However, he hopes what is ultimately conveyed is the pride and resiliency of residents in their neighborhoods.

“I never know what's going to happen on a mosey and these videos reflect that spirit,” said Pfeiffer. “Viewers are going to see the good, the bad, and everything in between.”



The next episode is currently being planned, a mosey around Mt. Vernon Avenue and the Near East Side.

The Parsons Avenue corridor mosey can be viewed online, with subsequent episodes planned for wider broadcast. DVD copies are available upon request.

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Theft Victim Aided by Partnership

When Theresa Ferrell, a *Street Speech* vendor who has fought hard to overcome homelessness, was victimized by a brazen thief and didn't know who to turn to for help, she looked at the bundle of newspapers she regularly sells in downtown Columbus and had an idea.

Since last August when City Attorney Pfeiffer and *Street Speech* Editor Jess Peacock announced a joint partnership, the City Attorney's office has been producing a monthly criminal justice column that appears in the social justice newspaper.

So, Theresa decided to call City Attorney Pfeiffer's office and ended up speaking with Chief of Staff and First Assistant City Prosecutor Bill Hedrick. When Theresa recounted what had happened to her, Hedrick, an experienced prosecutor who has handled over 20,000 criminal cases, became incensed.

“Theresa told me how her purse was stolen from her while she was shopping for groceries,” said First Assistant City Prosecutor Bill Hedrick. “She turned her back for a few seconds to get some items out of the freezer and just like that her purse, with her ID and all her weekly earnings from selling newspapers, was gone.”

Hedrick quickly communicated with the Columbus Police Division's Strategic Response Bureau, which began an investigation.

WBNS 10TV investigative reporter Glenn McEntyre also became involved and ran a [lead story on the evening news](#) about Theresa's plight. The report included surveillance video from the grocery store, showing the thief and her accomplice snatching Theresa's purse and then laughing about it.

Tips soon began filtering in, and, as a result, the Strategic Response Bureau was able to identify 20-year-old South Side resident Haley Stepp as the individual who appeared to be the one stealing Theresa's purse on camera.

Stepp and her accomplice, who is not being named because she is a juvenile, were both charged and were due to appear in court. Stepp skipped her court date and now has a warrant for her arrest.

Along with the tips, an outpouring of support and offers of help to Theresa started coming in as well. One of the people who watched the [10TV report](#) was Carla Young, who said that it broke her heart to think of what happened to Theresa. Young, who works for the Honeybaked Ham Company, was able to contact Theresa through *Street Speech* and offered her a seasonal job during the holidays.

Theresa gladly accepted. But she's still a fixture in downtown Columbus and can be found outside the municipal court house offering the latest issue of *Street Speech*.



First Assistant City Prosecutor Bill Hedrick with Street Speech vendor Theresa Ferrell.

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Zone Initiative Attorney Bill Sperlazza being interviewed by WBNS-10TV while the crime-ridden Knights Inn hotel near I-71 and SR-161 is being boarded up.

Working closely with the Columbus Police Division, the State Fire Marshal, code enforcement, health department, and many others, Bill helped spearhead the city's efforts to shut down four of the city's worst hotels in 2014.



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Senior Assistant City Attorney Cyndy Peterson with her award after being named *Most Outstanding Prosecutor for 2014* by MADD-Ohio in December.

Read more about Cyndy in the staff profile on [page seven](#) of this issue.



Chief of Staff Bill Hedrick and NBC4 investigative reporter Marcus Thorpe displaying the *Holiday Hoodlums* wanted posters.



Staff member Mary Culver coordinated with Franklin County building officials to provide an information and resources table at the court house during Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Pictured from left to right are: Mary Culver; CHOICES legal advocate Marisa Barrigan; and advocate Sarah Dotters.

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Our office was honored to receive an award during the Nationwide Insurance Mediation Luncheon program last Fall.

Accepting the award on behalf of City Attorney Pfeiffer was Principal Assistant City Attorney Robert S. Tobias. Pictured with Robert are staff members Tracey Butcher (left) and Kat Graham (right).

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City Attorney Pfeiffer presenting a plaque to Rob Levering, who retired last year after serving as a city prosecutor for more than three decades. *(Photo courtesy of Adam Friedman.)*



City Councilmember Jaiza Page and City Attorney Chief of Staff Bill Hedrick spoke recently at the Scioto Southland Civic Association meeting. Pictured with Jaiza and Bill are Becky Hart-Walcott and Robin Watson.

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Our staff had a great time participating in Judge Daniel R. Hawkins' second annual Environmental Court Open House last year. Pictured with Judge Hawkins are City Councilmember Jaiza Page

and Assistant City Attorneys Kristen Kroflich and Shayla Favor.

Shayla and Jaiza also enjoyed meeting Otis the Owl, who visited the open house from the Columbus Zoo & Aquarium.



City Attorney Pfeiffer and staff at the Civil Division say goodbye to long-serving Public Safety Director Mitchell J. Brown last October.

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Meet the Staff

It doesn't take long after setting foot inside Senior Assistant City Prosecutor Cyndy Peterson's office before one realizes how much her work means to her: behind her desk, near a credenza stocked with mementos and souvenirs accumulated over a legal career spanning more than two decades, stands a neatly stacked pile of papers more than a foot tall. They are closed cases from her time as a prosecutor in the Domestic Violence and Stalking Unit and represent all the victims she worked to protect, most of whom "made it out" but some who tragically didn't.

Also standing just inside the entrance to her office is a row of large case files, the "worst of the worst" as Cyndy considers them. They serve as a reminder every time she enters or leaves her office to remember the victims, such as a daughter tragically taken from her mother in a car accident caused by a drunk driver who was a chronic repeat offender.

It's that kind of dedication that has earned Cyndy her reputation as a compassionate victims' advocate and a tough-as-nails prosecutor, and also likely led to her being named *Most Outstanding Prosecutor for 2014* by the Ohio Chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) last month.

While Cyndy has enjoyed a well-respected legal career that has included training many current and former prosecutors, she initially took a less traditional route to becoming an attorney. She had been working for several years at Rax Restaurant corporate headquarters as executive legal secretary to the chief financial officer and chief legal officer when she realized she "could do what they do."

After that epiphany, she soon enrolled at Ohio State University as an undergraduate. At the time, she was a mother of a two-year old son, who often accompanied Cyndy to class. After graduating with a major in English and a minor in Criminal Justice, she entered Capital University Law School. It was during this time as a law school student that Cyndy first began working for the City Attorney's office, starting as a student mediator in the Night Prosecutor Program. It was a different era back then and those mediations ran the gamut from neighborhood disputes to—what now seems incomprehensible—domestic violence situations.

She matriculated to the City Attorney's Intake Office as a legal intern and then as night director before getting hired as an assistant city prosecutor soon after receiving her law degree and passing the bar exam. Cyndy then served as a general assignment prosecutor for a number of years until she was designated to replace Andrea Peeples, who was elected judge at the time, as a specialized domestic violence prosecutor. Things had definitely come a long way since Cyndy's days as a law student in the Night Prosecutor Program and it was at this time that her stack of DV closed cases began growing exponentially.

Cyndy—who resides in the Columbus area with her husband, Chief Real Estate Attorney Dave Peterson, and their daughter Samantha—currently is back in the regular rotation as a city prosecutor but she is one of the "go-to" people for some of the more intense and difficult cases. Pay a visit to her office and one can imagine that she wouldn't have it any other way.



Cyndy Peterson

Title: Senior Assistant City Prosecutor

Education: Capital University Law School, J.D.; The Ohio State University, B.A.; Westland High School, Columbus Ohio

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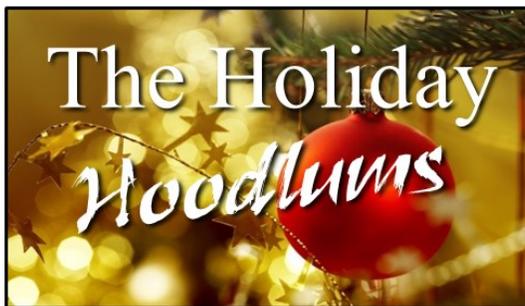
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Citizen Action

A new Holiday tradition has emerged in Columbus. Every December, city officials release their “naughty, not nice” list of crooks who deserve a lump of coal in their stockings and an extended stay in the county jail instead of presents under the tree and visions of sugarplums dancing in their heads. They are known as the “*Holiday Hoodlums*” and included two individuals who were recently arrested after being targeted by the City Attorneys office: Kaylum Lamar Montfort and Derrick Schneider, who had been charged with theft-related crimes over 30 combined times.



Twenty-three year old Kaylum Montfort had five open warrants for his arrest, all related to a theft spree that targeted Lowe’s stores throughout the city. On September 15, 2014 Montfort was caught stealing \$349 worth of copper pipe. Four days later, he was at it again, this time stealing \$447.50 worth of tools. On September 23rd, he stole another \$450.44 worth of copper and a day later he stole even more tools, valued at \$537. On October 10th, Montfort struck once more, stealing \$579 worth of tools.

His past criminal history includes charges of domestic violence, assault, drug abuse, OVI, driving under suspension, failure to control, illegal possession of drug paraphernalia, and multiple counts of theft.

Derrick Schneider’s criminal career dates back nearly twenty years and includes charges of breaking and entering, aggravated robbery, grand theft, assault, domestic violence, felony vandalism, escape, criminal trespassing, receiving stolen property, endangering children, and multiple counts of theft.

After being sentenced to jail for theft earlier in 2014, Schneider served his time and began stealing again upon his release. On November 11, 2014 he was caught stealing \$334.32 worth of socks, gloves, and razors from a west side Kroger store. Authorities suspect that Schneider intended to resell the items. After failing to appear for a court hearing, a warrant was issued for Schneider’s arrest.

Kaylum Lamar Montfort



DOB: 2/2/1991 (Age 23)
Height: 5’9” **Weight:** 145
Hair: Black **Eyes:** Brown
 Last Known Address:
 1989 Bridgemont Ct.
 Columbus, Ohio 43228

ARRESTED

Derrick Schneider



DOB: 1/18/1979 (Age 35)
Height: 6’4” **Weight:** 260
Hair: Brown **Eyes:** Brown
 Last Known Address:
 710 Columbuswood Ave.
 Columbus, Ohio 43221

ARRESTED

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