THE BEYOND EDITION

PRIORITIZING SAFETY

- •Investing in our Youth
- Progress through Innovation
- · Equal Justice for All

DISTRICT ATTORNEY ANITA HOWARD



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Harvesting

for this Generation \$



CHANGING THE FACE OF JUSTICE DAY - JUNE 09, 2023

A Letter from The DA



On June 9, 2021, the Macon Judicial Circuit DA's Office presented its first Changing the Face of Justice Day as way of being a accountable to you for our work, both in the courthouse and beyond. We looked upon that day as a way of giving you an inside view of what we are doing to

make our Circuit and our communities safer for all. We continue to covet the trust that you have placed in us, and want to show you, through these pages, how, three years into my first term, we are still working hard each day to promote public safety and to provide ground breaking and proactive solutions to address violent crime and the trauma it creates.

We have all experienced tremendous personal and professional challenges in these past few years, as has our Office. We have come through a worldwide pandemic that practically halted our entire criminal justice system for a time. We have experienced the Great Resignation nationally and locally in both law enforcement and prosecution, which has had an effect on how we process cases through the system. We have experienced the same equipment and supply chain issues as everyone else. Crime and the need for public safety, accountability and justice, however, has never ceased.

In these unprecedented times, none of us were given a guidebook on how to move forward. Just as you have been resilient in these times, we in the Macon Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office, too, are ever resilient. We have met our challenges head on. We have not been afraid to make changes to meet our challenges, but we have not, and will not compromise our duties to prosecution and to our crime victims. At the same time, we have recognized that we must step up and step out into our communities if we are to make a real difference in public safety. We must look beyond the confines of our Office walls if we are to make a difference in the lives of our children so that they will not become victims of the vicious cycle of violence.

Through these pages you will see some of our innovative efforts and initiatives both in traditional criminal prosecution and in crime prevention that are having a tremendous impact on our Circuit. With your continued blessings and support, I intend to grow and to improve these initiatives and to begin others to better serve the needs of justice and public safety in all our communities. As you read through these pages, I encourage each of you to find a way to serve alongside me and my staff as we continue to serve YOU! God Bless and Godspeed!

KHoward

3rd Annual Changing the Face of JUSTICE Day

JUNE 09, 2023

Schedule of Events

9:00AM | BREAKFAST

Georgia Sports Hall of Fame 301 Cherry St, Macon, GA 31201

10:00AM | BRIEFING Georgia Sports Hall of Fame 301 Cherry St, Macon, GA 31201

1:00PM | THE DESK GRAND OPENING Record Restriction - Outreach and Restorative Justice Center 774 Hazel Street, Macon, GA 31204

3:00PM COMMUNITY GRAND OPENING *R.I.S.E. at Lundy Chapel*, 2081 Forest Hill Road, Macon, GA 31210

All events are open to the public and subject to registration limitations.

Please visit www.MaconJudicialCircuitDA.com to learn more about upcoming events.



scan to learn more:

BEYOND ALLIMITS We have the talent and experience to secure justice for victims and the community.

Anita R. Howard was overwhelmingly elected as the first African American and first female District Attorney for the Macon Judicial Circuit in 2020. She is dedicated to promoting public safety and creating a healthier community by holding offenders accountable in an ethical, equitable, and independent manner. She also recognizes, however, that an important part of long-term public safety is addressing the needs of the young people in our community with an eye toward preventing them from seeing criminal and risky behavior as an attractive option. She knows that prosecution alone cannot create a safer community. We must all work together as community with law enforcement to reduce crime and to keep all neighborhoods safe.

DA Howard has created an all female Executive Leadership Team. In addition, she has diversified her assistant district attorney staff to be more reflective of the communities they serve, increasing African American representation therein by 133% since taking office on January 1, 2021.



DISTRICT ATTORNEY Anita R. Howard



CHIEF ASSISTANT Cynthia T. Adams



DIRECTOR OF VICTIM SERVICES Pamela D. Faison

Our Mission

To seek justice, to act with integrity, and to work with our partner agencies to protect the citizens of the Macon Judicial Circuit and the State of Georgia. To prosecute professionally, competently, and fairly; to treat all people courteously and respectfully; to advocate for the rights of victims; and, above all, to make our share communities a safer place.

SPECIALIZED UNITS

When DA Howard took office in January 2021, there was a backlog of old cases both from before and

after the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic court shut downs accelerated these numbers. Languishing cases do not provide justice. Further,

shortages in law enforcement, both locally and nationally, have resulted in difficulties with evidence gathering and analysis. In order to meet this backlog challenge head on, DA Howard formed the first Intake Investigative Unit (IIU), which focuses primarily on our most serious felony cases—both old and new. This specialized team of District Attorney Investigators, victim advocates, and administrative staff are tasked with reviewing all serious felony cases that come to our

Offices immediately after intake and assignment to be certain that those cases have all evidence needed for effective and efficient prosecution. Once reviewed by the IIU, all serious violent felony cases go to one of our specialized prosecution units, which as of June 2023, include:

"You cannot address what

you won't acknowledge."

Homicide Unit (all cases involving a death); Serious Violent Felony Unit (Aggravated Assault, Armed Robbery; Serious Injury by Vehicle);

Special Victims Unit (Aggravated Child Molestation; Rape; Sexual Assaults); Domestic Violence Unit; and Gang Unit. With the assistance of the IIU and our specialized prosecution units, our Office is promoting equitable outcomes for all and ensuring that the process is no longer the punishment. This system also facilitates making alternative prosecution decisions at an earlier stage, for appropriate offenders, which is of great benefit to all involved in the criminal justice system. These new Units allow for more targeted training for our ADA's and result in more proficient and streamlined prosecution for the various cases.

WHY IT MATTERS

We in the District Attorney's Office have the unique ethical responsibility for ensuring that the rights of both defendants and crime victims are preserved. Efficient case management promotes justice for all while saving time and taxpayer dollars. As can be seen with the data, the IIU, together with our newly formed Prosecution Units, are assisting with the effective movement of cases through our system.Prosecution Units, are assisting with the effective movement of cases through our system.

BIBB COUNTY CLOSED CASES THROUGH 5-22-23				
Closed in	Murder	Sex and Crimes Against Children	Domestic Violence	Serious Violent Felony
2021	12	50	67	180
2022	24	55	81	310
2023 (as of 5/22/23)	20	43	41	126

DIDD COUNTY CLOSED CASES TUDOUCUE 202 02

BEYOND THE CASE

Our goal is to reduce violent crime and the trauma it creates by focusing key office resources on the most serious crimes including homicide, armed robbery, aggravated assaults, domestic violence and gun crimes.



Pictured Above: Senior ADA Neil Halvorson, DA Howard, and Senior ADA Dawn Baskin at post trial press conference on bringing justice for Anitra Gunn.



REMEMBERING ANITRA GUNN

A parent's worst nightmare sending their daughter to school with the aspirations of a higher education only for those dreams to be shattered one day when she becomes the victim of fatal domestic

violence at the hands of her partner. Such was the tragedy of Anitra Gunn on February 14, 2020, when the Fort Valley State University senior was strangled to death by her boyfriend, Demarcus Little. After her family reported her missing, it took law enforcement four days to find her body in a heavily wooded area just over the Crawford County line, where it had been unceremoniously dumped by Little. Following an emotional weeklong jury trial in Peach County, Little was found guilty of Felony Murder and Aggravated Assault and sentenced to Life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Anitra Gunn's devastating story compelled us to reflect on how missed signs of potential domestic violence can have dire consequences. Statistics surrounding this type of crime are staggering: 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner—a deeply concerning figure. Although we secured a conviction and brought a measure of justice for Anitra's family, we knew we needed to go beyond the case and seek ways to reduce violent crime and the trauma it creates by focusing key resources toward this effort. One result was our Special Prosecution Units.

SPECIALIZED TRAINING

We firmly believe that addressing domestic violence requires collective action, action that we have taken and are prepared to extend. To better equip our prosecutors and investigators, we've attended the Alliance for Hope International Conference in 2022 and 2023, which focuses specifically on Domestic Violence training. Moreover, we have sent our teams to additional domestic violence trainings hosted by the Prosecuting Attorney's Council of Georgia and a particularly eye opening one, Strangulation: The Last Warning Shot, hosted by the Georgia Commission on Family Violence.

Collaborating with local entities, including higher learning institutions and local law enforcement agencies for citizen police academies, has proven instrumental in our mission. Not only have we learned alongside these local entities, we have also taught students and community members how to watch for the subtle signs of this often secretive crime and how to be proactive with this knowledge.

BEYOND THE CASE

A SURVIVOR OF A NON-FATAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ATTACK OF CHOKING OR STRANGULATION IS **MORE THAN 750%** MORE LIKELY TO BE KILLED BY THEIR

OFFENDER IN THE NEXT YEAR.

Specialized Prosecution Unit SPOTLIGHT

effective prosecution of serious violent crimes.

But it doesn't stop there. Another crucial aspect of our work is the recent establishment of Macon's first Family Justice Center, One Safe Place Macon. Our Office has been a partner with Crisis Line and Safe House of Central Georgia, since the inception of this proposal for our area. One Safe Place Macon will coIn putting our commitment to go beyond the cases into action, on January 1, 2023, we introduced our Special Prosecution Units, which included a Domestic Violence Unit. These specialized units have given our attorneys the ability to direct their training and talents in specific areas of expertise for more focused and



Pictured Above: DA Howard and Staff presented a session on Domestic Violence and Crimes Against Children to Peach County residents at Fort Valley Police Department's Citizens Law Academy

locate many different entities to provide services and comprehensive support for crime victims under one roof. At One Safe Place Macon, victims are more likely to seek assistance and remain engaged, thereby helping to ensure a pathway toward healing and breaking free from the cycle of abuse.



ONE SAFE PLACE MACON: HOPE HERO

DA Howard was honored to receive the inaugural One Safe Place Macon Hope Hero award in April 2023, which is given to an individual in the community who makes extraordinary contributions to the lives of victims, survivors, and our community.



About Middle Georgia's first Family Justice Center, One Safe Place Macon

The DA's office has placed significant resources toward helping create our local Family Justice Center, One Safe Place Macon. One Safe Place Macon, a collaboration of 15 difference local agencies, enhances our ability to secure successful prosecutions while improving victim services. This Family Justice Center will truly become a safe haven,

reducing the trauma experienced by survivors and their families and helping to break the systemic cycle of violence for future gemerations.

RISE BEYOND Creating Opportunties of Hope for our Youth

Through her work experience in juvenile court as an ADA, DA Howard has seen first hand the devastating effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's): traumatic events including abuse and neglect. Studies show a significant relationship between the number of ACE's a person experiences and a variety of negative outcomes in adulthood, including poor mental health and risky behaviors. As such, DA Howard prioritizes initiatives that treat the whole child and his or her family in order to break the cycle of violence which is a root cause of our Circuit's rise in violent crimes.

JUVENILES WHO HAVE HAD PRODUCTIVE & PROTECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS ARE 13% PERCENT LESS LIKELY TO ENGAGE IN CRIME.

CAMP HOPE

In July 2023, One Safe Place Macon and the Macon Judicial Circuit DA's Office together will be the first



Camp Hope Affiliate in Georgia. Camp Hope is a week-long camp for youth who have been adversely affected by ACE's, particularly in regard to the secondary victimization of having family members who are involved in the criminal justice system.

The camp is specifically designed through curriculum and counselors to restore hope to these children and help them develop the tools needed to implement positive change in their lives. This initiative is progressing and ongoing. Our inaugural Camp Hope

90 PERCENT of juvenile offenders have experienced traumatic event in childhood

will be held at Camp Twin Lakes in Rutledge, GA.





JUNIOR JUSTICE LEAGUE

Our annual summer program for middle age school children, the Junior Justice League, provides opportunities for students to learn about the criminal justice system by interacting with it at various levels in a positive manner. This past summer's activities aimed at increasing self confidence, broadening horizons, and



education included a tour of the courthouse and its various departments, an interactive visit to The Farm at Fort Valley State University, becoming vets for the day with the Critter Fixer veterinarians, going to the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village, and a trip to an Atlanta United soccer game.

RISE BEYOND

THE R.I.S.E. INITIATIVE

DA Howard launched her R.I.S.E. (Restoring Inspiration by Success in Education) Initiative in January 2022. R.I.S.E. is focused on moving children up to 17 years old away from the criminal justice system. R.I.S.E. examines the behavioral effects of secondary victimization and exposure to violence in children in order to strengthen and support families in our communities. R.I.S.E. focuses on concise and targeted service delivery for the children who are a part of this

Initiative to increase Public Safety for all communities. In order to accomplish this goal, trauma, criminogenic, and mental health assessments are conducted prior to each child's review by the Fast Track panel. This panel is comprised of community, civic, and mental health professionals who evaluate the information and set a specific and targeted course of action for the success of these youth. With our community partners and grant and forfeiture funds, we are able to provide services at no cost to these children and their families. Once a





service plan is in place, the R.I.S.E. Team continues to review each case for changes and adaptations to ensure successful outcomes for each child and his or her family.





R.I.S.E. GRADUATES ITS FIRST CLASS

In December 2022, R.I.S.E. celebrated its first year with rave reviews and 26 successful graduates, and is continuing to move forward with even more participants for 2023.

Dr. Dan Sims, Bibb County School Superintendent, delivered an inspiring commencement address to the graduates and their families, which recognized all the hard work they had put into arriving at this moment.

"My heart was full, and I was bursting with pride as I recognized all the graduates with their certificates and plaques. It is my prayer that these young people will take the lessons they have learned over this past year and apply them to their daily lives. They will all continue to have challenges, and I am so humbled that my Office, in partnership with others in the community, have been able to give them tools they can now use

toward a lifetime of success. I sincerely thank everyone who has been a part of this vision with me, and I am very much looking forward to the coming year with R.I.S.E.!" DA Howard

To reward the hard work and accomplishment of meeting their graduation goal, the Macon Merrie Christmas Project celebrated the students and their families with a special Christmas shopping trip following the graduation ceremony.

BEYOND MULBERRY

Our mission is not only to seek justice but to make our shared communities a safer place, and part of that is being involved and connected.

NO ONE EXPECTS TO BE A VICTIM OF A CRIME

No one expects to be a victim of a crime. If you or someone close to you is affected **IN 2022, OW** by crime, you may be shocked, angered, shamed or afraid.

You may also feel helpless and confused. The criminal justice system has traditionally ignored the special needs of victims while concentrating on protecting the rights of the accused.



Victim Advocate, Maggie Hernandez, with children while their mother testifies in court.

In 2022, our team provided 28,312 services to 4,514 victims.

It is the mission of the Macon Judicial Circuit's Victim-Witness Assistance Program

(VWAP) to provide compassionate assistance to victims, survivors, and witnesses of crime. It is our goal to provide the highest quality services, at no cost, and ensure that all victims stay informed and obtain increased knowledge of their rights under the Crime Victims' Bill of Rights. The VWAP provides a number of services to victims, survivors, and witnesses.

FREE SERVICES FOR VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

- Information about the status of your court case via letters and phone calls
- Notice of court proceedings, including changes
- Information and explanation about criminal justice proceedings
- Orientation to the courtroom setting
- Companion to attend court with you and provide emotional support
- Referral to social service agencies, counselors and others who can assist you with personal problems
- Employer Intervention to explain times missed from work due to required court appearance

- Private waiting Area prior to your court appearance
- Property recovery of stolen items that are being held as evidence
- Support group for family members and friends of murder victims
- Assistance if you are intimidated, harassed or afraid
- Advocacy & Support with any problems that you may be having as a result of the crime itself or court appearance
- Assistance applying for financial compensation to help victims of violent crimes
- Assistance completing Victim Impact Statements

BEYOND MULBERRY



difficult situations.

Right: Lamar at work! Lamar is our Office's veteran certified emotional support animal, who is available to assist with victim interactions and who especially enjoys working with our child victims. With our youngest victims, in particular, Lamar's attentiveness and sensitivity, help to ease the trauma of the necessary courtroom appearances to make sure their voices are heard and their stories are told.

> A part of our Circuit's Child Abuse protocol requires that whenever a child has to testify in court, "the district attorney will ensure any necessary and appropriate accommodations or arrangements are in place to minimize the potential trauma to the child." As our very special, trained Advocate, Lamar aids us in meeting this goal by offering his own unique support



Check out this review from the actual agency whose job it is to make sure offices like ours are doing the right thing:

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL'S AUDIT OF OUR VICTIMS SERVICES FOR 2022 FOUND NO DEFICIENCIES AND STATED:

to these brave children, thereby lessening their fear and anxiety in extremely

"[T]here are things that deserve praise: The office is very organized and has both a friendly and inviting atmosphere and staff."

THE VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS

The Georgia General Assembly declares it to be the policy of this state that victims of crimes should be accorded certain basic rights just as the accused are accorded certain basic rights

- The right to reasonable, accurate and timely
 notice of any scheduled court proceedings or any changes to such proceedings.
- The right to reasonable, accurate and timely notice of the arrest, release or escape of the accused.
- The right not to be excluded from any scheduled court proceedings, except as provided in this chapter or as otherwise required by law.
- The right to be heard at any scheduled court proceedings involving the release, plea or sentencing of the accused.

- The right to file a written objection in any parole proceedings involving the accused.
- The right to confer with the prosecuting attorney in any criminal prosecution related to the victim.
- The right to restitution and compensation as provided by law and when applicable.
- The right to proceedings free from unreasonable delay.
- The right to be treated fairly and with dignity by all criminal justice agencies involved in the case.

HOPE + HEALING LUNCHEON



In November 2022, the Macon Judicial DA's Office Circuit organized the Hope Healing Luncheon, + special occasion a designed for the families of our 2021 and 2022 homicide victims. This event aimed to provide these individuals with

encouragement, offer resources to help navigate their journey of healing, and to ensure they did not feel forgotten during the holiday season. One hundred victim family members were invited to attend and to hear an inspiring keynote motivational speaker. Also in attendance were certified counselors from The Family Counseling Center of Central Georgia and local faith leaders who were available to offer support and guidance in processing grief. In addition, our ADA's and Victim Advocate staff were on hand to answer questions about case status.

IF YOU ARE A WITNESS...

If vou receive a subpoena to appear in court, you are required by law to attend. Remember, your cooperation is very important to the prosecution of the person accused of the crime.

Unfortunately, court hearings are often continued by the court for any number of reasons.

You are very important to the case. If you are unavailable to testify, the accused person might go unpunished and continue to commit crimes.

Complete cooperation and truthful testimony of the witnesses and victims are essential to the determination of guilt or innocence of the person accused of the crime.

- The District Attorney's Office is required by law to provide the Defense Attorney with names, addresses and phone numbers of witnesses for the state.
- The Defense Attorney may contact you to discuss what you think about a case. If this happens, you have the right to choose whether or not you will talk to the Defense Attorney.
- You also have the right to have someone from the District Attorney's office, or your personal attorney, to be present at the interview.

"We ALL have a stake in keeping our communities safe."



As of May 9, 2023, in Bibb County: Of our 21 criminal homicide cases for 2023, **57%** remain unsolved. Of the 70 criminal homicide cases in 2022, **37%** remain unsolved. For 2021, of our 54 criminal homicide cases, **30%** remain unsolved. Although this rate seems high, it is still below the national average percentage for unsolved murders, which is a credit to our Bibb County law enforcement partners. Law enforcement officers and prosecutors alone, however, cannot solve these crimes.

We need you to help us identify the potential murderers who continue to roam our streets. Your information should be reported to the Bibb County Sheriff's Office or Crimestoppers, with whom my Office has a partnership.

SERVING YOU New! BEYOND MULBERRY

DA Howard believes you must go beyond the walls of the courthouse and meet people where they are...

No one plans to become a crime victim with the associated trauma, devastation, and often embarrassing and life altering results. Many victims and secondary victims are hesitant to come to a courthouse to talk about what has happened to them. This is one reason that DA Howard is committed to Once Safe Place Macon, where victim assistance providers can colocate and come together to provide services in a central location for victims from all walks of life.

DA Howard is taking her ability to meet victims directly in the community even one step further. On June 9, 2023, she is once again Changing the Face of Justice with the opening of satellite offices in two locations beyond the courthouse that will have nontraditional hours and will be staffed with members of her Victim Services and Outreach Teams.

Having these teams readily available in the community will enable more children to be exposed to our R.I.S.E. and other Initiatives and will allow our victim services staff to work more closely and effectively with crime victims in their own neighborhoods.



Unionville Missionary Baptist Church 3837 Houston Avenue Macon, GA 31206



Lundy Chapel Missionary Baptist Church 2081 Forest Hill Road Macon, GA 31210

ABOVE + BEYOND Community Recognition for the work we're committed to

The Macon Judicial Circuit DA's Office has been actively at work in and for our community since Day 1. DA Howard is putting words into action, seeking to bring greater justice and public safety to our communities. Here is just a sampling of the many ways that DA Howard's work has been recognized.



GBI STATE CHILD FATALITY REVIEW COMMITEE: PREVENTION AWARD

In October 2022, DA Howard received the GBI Child Fatality Review Board's 2022 Prevention Award for her work on her **Co-Sleeping Campaign** (also known as the Bassinette Drive).

About the Co-Sleeping Campaign (Bassinette Drive)

With our Office being the Chair of the Macon Judicial Circuit's Child Fatality Review Committee and seeing the number of preventable infant deaths due to unsafe co-sleeping environments, DA Howard began in 2021 and continues her Anti Co-Sleeping Campaign. This Initiative includes Lunch and Learn Events where new mothers and child caregivers can learn about creating safe sleeping spaces and are trained in infant CPR. After these educational sessions, each attendee is given a bassinet or a pack and play along with other supplies for newborns. Our community partners for bassinet and pack and play donations include the Macon Conference Women's Missionary Society of the AME Church and Pilot Club International of Macon. In October 2022, DA Howard received the GBI Child Fatality Review Committee's Prevention Award in recognition of her Office's work in this life saving outreach.

In his congratulatory letter to DA Howard recognizing the award and her efforts in this area, Governor Brian J. Kemp stated:

"On behalf of all Georgians, thank you for your noble service and all that you do to care for the lives of Georgia's children. Your efforts, along with others in the mission to reduce and prevent child deaths, impacts

the lives of many across the State. We are grateful for your public service."



Above: Accepting the GBI CFP Award with members of the Macon AME Women's Missionary Society (left to right): Shirley Washington, President Sylvia Moore, DA Howard, President Gwendolyn Byrd, Comm. Elaine Lucas



people's DA" by her constituents.



WOMAN OF THE YEAR

District Attorney Anita R. Howard was named the 2022 Law and Justice Award recipient by Women Works Media Group. This award recognizes the most powerful and influential attorneys in Georgia, who are working towards justice and equality in the community.



Women Works Media Group honors

advocates who showcase excellence and dedication to justice and equality within the law. Honorees possess intellectual capital, integrity, courage, vision, and an unwavering commitment to their respective legal practices. As the District Attorney for the Macon Judicial Circuit, Anita Reynolds Howard is consistently recognized for her professional contributions and is affectionately called "the

DA ANITA HOWARD HOSTS INAUGURAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

In March 2023, DA Howard hosted the Inaugural Anita Howard and Fani T. Willis Cherry Blossom Leadership Summit.

DA Howard welcomed the Leadership Team of Fulton County District Attorney Fani T. Willis to Macon for a four day joint Leadership Summit with her own Leadership Team.

This Summit's activities included: Leadership Training and Teambuilding from experts in the areas of management, organizational excellence, communication, problem solving, and trial advocacy; Presentations about preventive services for youth affected by adverse childhood experiences; Tools for the expansion of victim

services for both crime victims

and individuals secondarily affected by trauma through the criminal justice system; and Valuable networking between the leaders and managers of both Offices.

One full day of training was conducted by the Vera Causa Group, nationally known for their excellence in the field of leadership training and management. This Group works with offices of all sizes to build the capacity within and develop individual skills needed to make tangible improvements in work place operations and team member engagement. Their particular area of expertise is with governmental offices.



DO ALL THE GOOD YOU CAN, IN ALL THE WAYS YOU CAN, TO ALL THE SOULS YOU CAN, IN EVERY PLACE YOU CAN, AT ALL THE TIMES YOU CAN, WITH ALL THE ZEAL YOU CAN, AS LONG AS EVER YOU CAN.

John Wesley