

SUMMARY OF THE 2015 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

The District Attorney hereby submits this summary of his annual report in the severe condensed format required by board resolution.

This report begins where the others have all begun. The calendar year 2015 saw the high caseload numbers of prior years continued, while the total numbers are down slightly from the previous year, they are still high. The caseload of all the prosecutors remains at levels far exceeding limits recommended by National and State Prosecution standards, with a corresponding impact on efficiency and effectiveness. Budget limitations, with corresponding decreases in the operational abilities of the office, are the norm. The funding received by this office, while increased slightly over the years, is still far below the level provided to other prosecutors in counties of similar, or even smaller, population. This administration, as well as the previous ones, has worked hard to keep within budget constraints, and to obtain outside sources of revenue.

Keith A. Slep finished the final year of his first elected term as District Attorney, his fifth year as DA (the first being as Acting District Attorney) and twenty-fifth as a prosecutor. The year, like the others, has passed quickly. Fortunately, there were no changes in personnel either at the Assistant District Attorney level or in support staff.

Norleen E. Enders of Belfast, NY and Suzanne B. Colligan of Wellsville, NY, served as the Confidential Secretaries to the District Attorney for the year. Norleen E. Enders completed her eighteenth full year, having taken over the position in July of 1997, and Suzanne B. Colligan completed her fourth full year, having taken over the position in December of 2011. Michael B. Finn, Amanda B. Finn and J. Thomas Fuoco continued as assistants. The position of 5th Assistant DA (which is combined with the 2nd Asst. slot) continued to be funded from the diversion program for Vehicle & Traffic offenses, which also funds the Victim Advocate's position. Welfare Fraud Prosecution was continued with funding from the Dept. of Social Services for the 6th Assistant position (combined with 1st Asst. slot). (The policy of the office has been to combine the duties of additional prosecutor positions such as the 5th and 6th slots with existing positions in order to avoid the cost of additional fringe benefits.)

During the 2015 calendar year, 2,971 new files were opened to be added to those carried over from 2014. Each of these files required the attention of one or more prosecutors, as well as support staff. In many cases there are various or multiple crimes charged against one individual. For statistical purposes we have counted only the highest crime charged in each incident. The only Felonies itemized above are those reaching the Indictment or Superior Court Information stage.

Of the 2,971 files opened, 861 of these were misdemeanors, 248 were investigations or miscellaneous or initially regarded as a felony level arrest, 1,764 were violations and 98 were violations of probation. Of the new files, 1st Assistant DA Mike Finn was assigned 503, Assistant DA Amanda Finn was assigned 1,376 and Assistant J. Thomas Fuoco was assigned 945. Keith A. Slep, as District Attorney, assumed direct responsibility for 136 new files, including one homicide case, other pending major felony cases and exercised supervisory authority over all other files. A Special Prosecutor was needed and appointed to handle just 11 files in 2015.

In conclusion, as in the past, I would invite any member of the public to inquire further if they have any questions regarding our office and invite anyone with an interest to examine the expanded report on file with the Clerk of the Board of Legislators, visit our web page, or request a copy from our office.

And, in keeping with the tradition begun by my predecessors in 1974, I offer the following proverbs and quotes for your consideration and reflection:

The precepts of the law may be comprehended under these three points: to live honestly, to hurt no [one] willfully and to render every [person] his due carefully. Aristotle

A nation that will not enforce its laws has no claim to the respect and allegiance of its people. Ambrose Bierce

And an important carry over from last year which is going to become a permanent addition to my reports for the remainder of my years as District Attorney:

Firearms are second only to the Constitution in importance; they are the people's liberty's teeth. George Washington

Respectfully submitted,

Keith A. Slep
District Attorney