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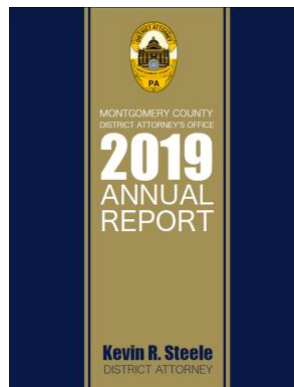
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2019 ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS COMMUNITY JUSTICE UNITS, DIVERSIONARY PROGRAMS, KEY INITIATIVES AND NOTABLE CASES



2019 ANNUAL REPORT

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (July 9, 2020)—Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele today released his 2019 District Attorney's Office Annual Report. The report highlights significant initiatives and accomplishments during the 2019 calendar year including the work and successes of two Community Justice Units, notable prosecutions, alternative sentencing programs, ongoing efforts fighting the opioid-heroin-fentanyl crisis and other issues.

In 2019, the District Attorney's Office handled 8,069 adult and juvenile cases. Approximately 18-20 percent of the adult criminal cases are handled through the Accelerated Rehabilitation Disposition (ARD) program, with a majority of those cases being DUI cases. The ARD program eliminates the need for costly and time-consuming criminal proceedings while at the same time offering the defendant the opportunity to expunge his or her record. ARD is just one of a number of specialty courts and diversionary programs, which include the highly successful Drug Court, Behavioral Health Court, Veterans Court, Section 17 Program, TOP Program and DEAP.

"Our 53 attorneys, 39 county detectives and professional and support staff are dedicated to serving the residents of Montgomery County and keeping this county the vibrant, livable and safe place it is," said Steele. "We are dedicated to fairly and thoroughly investigating crime, following the evidence where it leads and charging

accordingly. We are dedicated to victims, achieving justice for victims and protecting their rights, while also protecting the rights of the defendants. And we are dedicated to providing individuals with a deserved second chance or some extra assistance through our Specialty and Diversionary Courts and Programs. It's a smart-on-crime approach that I think best helps us attain our mission to seek justice."

In his four years as District Attorney, Steele has been committed to evolving the office and trying new approaches to better serve Montgomery County. He has been tough on drug traffickers who cause overdose deaths and on firearms crimes, especially crimes committed with illegal firearms. He has also shined a spotlight on domestic and relationship violence, especially strangulation and domestic violence committed in front of children.

Included in the 2019 Annual Report is information on:

Community Justice Units: One of the successful initiatives during his tenure is the establishment of Community Justice Units in Pottstown and Norristown. The prosecutors on those teams work with leaders of faith groups, community groups and businesses as well as police to come together to make a difference in bringing down crime and fostering economic development and growth.

Opioid-Heroin-Fentanyl Crisis: Sadly, overdoses have risen again, setting a new high of 251 lives lost in 2019. The increase is from the deadliness of fentanyl but also from a resurgence of methamphetamine and an ever-changing mixture of deadly drugs that is oftentimes sold as heroin. The annual report provides a broad overview of the crisis and the efforts to fight the epidemic, from saving lives with naloxone to ridding homes of unwanted pills/medicines through the Drug Take Back Program to investigating and prosecuting drug dealers.

"The law enforcement community in Montgomery County is committed, to stemming the tide of the pain, suffering, addiction and death that those who traffic drugs are raining down on our communities and bringing into all of our lives," said Steele. "Far too many families are suffering the unbearable loss of a loved one through overdose."

Notable Cases: Many notable and serious cases went to trial in 2019, including defendant Keenan Jones, who was convicted of a mass shooting after opening fire in a crowded Walmart store. Other successful prosecutions profiled include the horrific homicides of a 4-year-old who spilled his cereal, setting off a daylong beating that took his life; a former model brutally killed in Ardmore; and a boyfriend who stabbed to death his pregnant girlfriend and her unborn baby. Other prosecutions that were highlighted involved sexual assaults by a teacher, sex trafficking of a young girl, a disbarred lawyer who stole from special needs clients, a female drug dealer prosecuted for Drug Delivery Resulting in Death, and five now-former physicians who were prosecuted for illegal practices and prescribing of opioids, sometimes without any medical care.

Support for Victims: DA Steele and the entire staff are committed to helping the victims of crime as well as witnesses. Beyond the office's beloved K9 Turks, who comforts victims and witnesses, especially young children as they tell what happened to them, the DA's Victim Witness Unit assisted more than 5,000 direct victims, providing valuable assistance with notifications of court-related matters, sentencing and prison release dates, victim impact statements and crime victim compensation/restitution information.

Community Involvement: The annual report also highlights a few of the community outreach efforts by prosecutors, detectives and staff members. The DA and the entire team are active and engaged members of their communities, speaking to student and community groups about a variety of topics from cyberbullying to financial scams, meeting residents at events like National Night Out, and raising money for families of fallen police officers and abuse victims through the Wheels of Justice and Heels of Justice teams, respectively.

The 2019 District Attorney's Office Annual Report can be viewed online and downloaded from the DA's home page: <https://www.montcopa.org/da>.

Approved for release:

Kevin R. Steele