

2013 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GREENE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

The Greene County District Attorney's Office maintained the prosecution of all of the criminal cases in the county's Justice Courts and Greene County Court last year, including the specialized courts created by the New York State Court System such as the Greene County Drug Court, Integrated Domestic Violence Court and Veteran's Court. We have been advised that a new Greene County DWI Court will be implemented in the near future, which will require the participation of the District Attorney's Office. We will provide more information regarding this new court in next year's report. In addition to prosecuting criminal cases in Greene County, we continued our agreement with the Columbia County District Attorney's Office to offer mutual support in conflict cases. By accepting the Special Prosecutor assignments for conflict cases we continued to save Greene County the expense of paying an attorney to handle our conflict cases.

Last year there were a number of Appellate Decisions filed with regard to Greene County cases, all of which upheld the convictions obtained by the District Attorney's Office. Most significantly, the NYS Court of Appeals, the highest level appellate court in New York State, confirmed the Murder in the Second-Degree conviction obtained in the People v. Travis Augustine trial. The Greene County District Attorney's Office continued its excellent appellate record in 2013.

The District Attorney's Office increased the number of drug investigations conducted through the hard work of Investigator Greg Sager and the Assistant District Attorneys. Due to Inv. Sager's work, the District Attorney's Office was awarded federal money and equipment from Inv. Sager's contacts. The new equipment was used in covert drug investigations within the county. The equipment increased the quality of the investigations and the safety of those involved in the investigations. We saw an increase in the number of convictions obtained without the need for litigation due to the increase in the quality of the evidence obtained and we anticipate an even greater number of drug cases and convictions in the 2014 calendar year.

Acting in my capacity as the Greene County DWI prosecutor, I conducted a misdemeanor DWI jury trial in the matter of People v. Coates in the Town of Catskill Court. The trial was presided over by Hon. William Wootton and defended by Assistant Public Defender Joseph Stanzione. After two days of trial, the jury found the defendant guilty of the misdemeanor of DWI, Driving With a Blood Alcohol Content of Greater than 0.08% and the violation of Driving While Ability Impaired. After reviewing the Pre-Sentence Report and taking into consideration the recommendations of the People and the defense, Judge Wootton sentenced the defendant to a period of incarceration in the Greene County Jail and fines.

In 2013 we were unfortunate to see the departure to two significant men from their respective roles in the Greene County legal community. After serving the public for years as a Greene County Court Judge, Family Court Judge and Acting Supreme Court Judge, the Hon. George J. Pulver, Jr. retired. Throughout his career as a judge in the Greene County Court, Judge Pulver presided over countless felony hearings and trials conducted by the District Attorney's Office. His wisdom and experience as a jurist will be greatly missed.

It should come as no surprise to the reader that the other man I referred to above is Terry J. Wilhelm, Esq., who ran unopposed for the Greene County Court Judge seat vacated by Judge Pulver. Running unopposed for such an important position was clearly a reflection of the high regard to which Judge Wilhelm is held in the Greene County community. The loss felt by his departure from the DA's Office is softened only by the knowledge that Greene County is gaining a judge with an excellent command of the law and who possesses the necessary judicial temperament to do justice in all cases that come before him on the bench.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Greene County law enforcement officers whom we work with everyday. No matter how skilled or experienced an attorney in the employment of the District Attorney's Office is, without being provided with a properly investigated case we would not enjoy the success that we have grown accustomed to in the Greene County District Attorney's Office. By having daily contact with law enforcement agencies, including nights and weekends, we are able to communicate effectively between our agencies and ensure that those that violate the laws of the State of New York are charged and prosecuted

appropriately. In addition, I would like to thank the Assistant District Attorneys with whom I work for their continued hard work as public servants in their difficult yet rewarding jobs. I am cognizant of the great responsibility that the District Attorney's Office holds in the safety of the Greene County community and will continue to uphold the high moral and ethical standards set for this office by Judge Wilhelm.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles O. Bucca
Acting Greene County District Attorney