STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

CALVERT COUNTY

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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Welcome to the Annual Report of the Calvert County State's Attorney's Office. 2025 marked my 5th year as Calvert County State's Attorney. Thanks to our great team of experienced prosecutors and dedicated support staff, the Office has never been more innovative or productive.

In 2025, we hired the first-ever Digital Forensic Analyst to assist in the prosecution of complex felony cases. Almost all cases in today's world involve the use of cell phones and other electronic devices. By analyzing the data from these devices, we can track the location of suspects during the commission of a crime and develop other evidence to help secure a criminal conviction. Our new analyst comes to the Office with extensive experience in the profession gained from work with the Brooklyn, NY, District Attorney's Office. My sincere thanks to the Board of County Commissioners for recognizing the need for this position and providing the funding in times of budgetary constraints.

Perhaps no case was more significant in 2025 than the prosecution of Brandon Ross Holbrook for the murder of Joseph Shymanski, a well-known Washington, DC, photographer and businessman. Holbrook murdered Mr. Shymanski in the driveway of his home in Huntingtown and then transported the body to Pennsylvania, where he dismembered and burned it. Despite having no body, no murder weapon, no eyewitnesses, and no confession, prosecutors Chris Monte and Ben Lerner were able to build a case based upon forensic evidence. The jury convicted Holbrook after approximately 90 minutes of deliberation. Holbrook was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole. The case was featured on the CBS program "48 Hours."

I am pleased to report that the overall crime rate in Calvert County remained low in 2025 compared to other Maryland jurisdictions. Unfortunately, we saw an increase in 2025 in violent crimes committed by persons under the age of 18. When permitted by law, we charged these individuals as adults so that the cases were handled in the adult, rather than the juvenile, criminal justice system. At present, the adult system provides for greater accountability than the juvenile system.

Robert H. Harvey, Jr.
State's Attorney

Statistical Data

- In 2025, the State's Attorney's Office initiated 128 cases in the Circuit Court for Calvert County by way of indictment or criminal information. Most of these cases involved felony charges. In addition, the State prosecuted 91 Circuit Court cases in which a jury trial or appeal had been requested in the District Court. In total, there were 240 Circuit Court prosecutions in 2025, an increase of 3 cases over 2024.

- The State's Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit handled a total of 260 new cases in 2025, a decrease of 23 cases from 2024. Sixteen of the cases were prosecuted in the Circuit Court, with the remainder in District Court.

- The Child Support Division ranked #1 in the State of Maryland in terms of current child support collected and arrearages paid. A total of $9.54 million was collected and disbursed for the benefit of the children of Calvert County. Calvert achieved the highest average collection rate in the State at $5,240 per case. There are currently 1,821 open child support cases in the County.

- The District Court Division handles the vast majority of the criminal prosecutions in Calvert County. In 2025, there were 2,840 misdemeanor cases initiated, an increase of 345 cases from 2024. Of these, there were 311 cases of impaired driving.

- Calvert County experienced 76 instances of drug overdose in 2025, a slight increase over 2024. Seven of those overdoses were fatal, representing a 40% decrease in fatalities over 2024. This decrease may be attributable to the widespread availability of Narcan, "Good Samaritan" laws that make it easier for people to report overdoses, and the rapid response of law enforcement and the Mobile Crisis Team. Unfortunately, 7 overdoses, but no fatalities, involved juveniles. This number represented a significant increase over prior years. It is too early to tell whether the increase is an aberration, or represents a more alarming trend.

- The Calvert County Child Advocacy Center (CAC) offers a safe and secure facility where children can be interviewed about allegations of sexual child abuse. One attorney and 1 victim advocate from the State's Attorney's Office typically participate in the interview process. In 2025, 76 forensic interviews were conducted at the CAC.

Significant Prosecutions

- Following an 8-day trial in April, a Calvert County jury convicted Brandon Ross Holbrook of the premeditated murder of Joseph Shymanski. Shymanski, a prominent Washington, DC, businessman, was shot in the driveway of his home in Huntingtown on September 3, 2023. Holbrook transported the body to his home in Reedsville, PA, where he dismembered and burned it. Investigators discovered Mr. Shymanski's remains and forensic evidence linked Holbrook to the crime. On July 18, 2025, Holbrook

was sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. The case was prosecuted by Assistant State's Attorneys Benjamin G. Lerner and Christopher J. Monte.

- Mark Roosevelt Fields was convicted by a jury in January, 2025, of aggravated animal cruelty and possession of a dangerous weapon. He was sentenced to 6 years incarceration, with 3 years suspended, followed by 5 years of supervised probation. The evidence revealed that Fields, 39, of Prince Frederick, stabbed and killed his cousin's dog during a family dispute.

- On March 3, 2025, Ronni Laine Davis, 34, of Lusby, was sentenced to 8 years incarceration, with 60 days of active time, and 2 years of supervised probation for the crimes of impaired driving and child neglect. Davis was observed driving erratically on MD Rte. 4, nearly striking a guardrail and driving into the median. She failed all field sobriety tests and was arrested. At the time of the incident, Davis had 4 young children in the vehicle. Although it was Davis' first offense, the State recommended incarceration due to the fact that she was transporting minor children. Davis was removed from the courtroom in handcuffs to serve her sentence at the Calvert County Detention Center. The case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant State's Attorney Rebecca N. Cordero.

- Joshua Walter Messick, 36, of Lexington Park, was convicted of involuntary manslaughter. Messick was working as a security guard at CalvertHealth Medical Center when he was called upon to escort the victim from the lobby. Once outside, Messick shoved the victim to the ground causing him to strike his head on the pavement. The victim sustained a brain injury and died. On February 3, 2025, Messick was sentenced by the Honorable Mark W. Carmean to 10 years incarceration, with all suspended but 1 year, followed by 3 years of supervised probation.

- On February 14, 2025, Thomas Eugene Harris, II, 28, pleaded guilty to first degree premeditated murder. Evidence revealed that Harris stabbed Shaquille Quadry Braxton multiple times in a field near Fairground Road in Prince Frederick following an argument over the victim's attempts to visit his child. Mr. Braxton later died from his injuries. On June 20, 2025, Harris was sentenced by the Honorable Mark S. Chandlee to life imprisonment. This case was prosecuted by Assistant State's Attorney April N. Brown.

- On June 2, 2025, Thomas Patrick Raley, 40, of Leonardtown, was convicted of possession of fentanyl and theft in Calvert County District Court. He was sentenced to 1 year incarceration, suspended to 90 days of active time, followed by 3 years of supervised probation. Raley was a paid paramedic at the Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Department. He was convicted of stealing 3 vials of fentanyl from the Department and using them for his own purposes.

- Brandy Leigh Leagan, 31, of Prince Frederick, was convicted on June 18, 2025, by a jury of 2 counts of child neglect and impaired driving. The case was prosecuted by Assistant State's Attorney Montra Martin. In January, 2024, Leagan drove her vehicle onto MD Rte. 4 and crashed into the guardrail. She had 2 young children in the back seat. At the time, she was determined to be impaired by alcohol. Leagan received a sentence of 12 years incarceration, with all but 90 days suspended, followed by 5 years of supervised probation.

- Andre Xavier Howe, of Huntingtown, pleaded guilty in Calvert County Circuit Court to attempted second degree murder, first degree assault, and use of a firearm in a crime of violence. The charges arose from an incident that occurred on July 14, 2024. Howe armed himself with a handgun and drove to Prince Frederick to settle a score with another individual. Once on the scene, Howe fired random shots into a townhouse injuring 2 victims. The intended victim lived in a separate townhouse and was not hurt. Although Howe was 17 at the time of the incident he was charged and prosecuted as an adult. On December 16, 2025, he received a sentence of 22 years in prison.

- On August 27, 2025, Sean Luke Peterson was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment by Calvert County Circuit Court Judge Mark W. Carmean for the crimes of sex abuse of a minor and production of child pornography. In September, Peterson received another 25 years for similar crimes in Wicomico County, for a total of 50 years imprisonment. While living in Wicomico, Peterson was found to be in possession of a USB drive containing multiple images of child pornography. Police were able to identify 3 of the children in the videos and determine that Peterson produced the images while living in Calvert.

- Toniray Joseph Silva was convicted on May 1, 2025, of 3 counts of sexual abuse of a minor and 3 counts of second degree rape. He received a sentence of 135 years in prison, with 60 years of active time, followed by 5 years probation upon release.

- On October 10, 2025, Daniel Joseph Bliss, 42, of Waldorf, pleaded guilty to 3 counts of second degree rape and 1 count of sexual abuse of a minor and was sentenced to 65 years in prison. When the victim was 16 years old, Bliss provided her with drugs and alcohol and repeatedly raped her while she was incapacitated. This case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant State's Attorney Rebecca N. Cordero.

- On December 8, 2025, Gail Lynne Hawkins, 68, of Port Republic, was sentenced to 25 years in prison, suspended to 4 years of active incarceration, by Judge Andrew S. Rappaport. Hawkins was convicted of first degree assault and obstruction of justice in September. The charges arose from a 2024 domestic violence incident in which Hawkins fired multiple shots at her husband with a handgun. After she was charged for

this incident, Hawkins compounded her problems by attempting to pay a bribe to her husband to induce him not to testify.

- Calvin Wayne Blackwell, Jr., was convicted of threatening a public official and trespass and sentenced by Judge Mark S. Carmean to 3 years and 90 days incarceration, suspended to 250 days, followed by 5 years of supervised probation. In November 2024, Blackwell made several verbal threats to harm a law enforcement official in Calvert County.

Diversion Programs

- The Circuit Court Adult Treatment Program (Drug Court) graduated 28 individuals in 2025. Assistant State's Attorney Allison Walton is an active participant in the drug court "team," which selects candidates for the program and monitors their progress as they move forward. In order to graduate, participants must complete a minimum of 18 months of intensive treatment and be drug-free and sober. Violent offenders are not eligible.

- The Calvert County District Court has a specialized docket of cases involving individuals with diagnosed mental health conditions. The State's Attorney's Office handled 69 such cases in 2025. Five of those cases involved military veterans who were directed to additional services through the U.S. Veteran's Administration.

Awards

- Assistant State's Attorney Benjamin G. Lerner was honored by the Optimist Club of Calvert County as prosecutor of the year for his role in the Joseph Shymanski murder case.

- Assistant State's Attorney Allison S. Walton received a $750 scholarship from the MSAA to be utilized for training purposes.

- State's Attorney Robert Harvey presented the Detective of the Year Award to Calvert County Sheriff's Office Detective Chase Ward.

Training

- The State's Attorney's Office continued with its program of in-house training. On March 20, 2025, in conjunction with the Calvert County Bar Association, the Office hosted a presentation from our local judges and magistrates on the "do's and don'ts" of courtroom practice. On April 24, 2025, Thomas DeGonia, Bar Counsel, gave a presentation on Maryland's Attorney Grievance Commission and on lawyer ethical rules in general.

- Staff attorneys provided training to local law enforcement agencies. Over the course of the year, attorneys taught at the Southern Maryland Criminal Justice Academy on numerous occasions to provide updates on criminal laws. Attorneys also assisted in training new recruits at the Calvert County Sheriff's Office.

- Staff attorneys attended training courses throughout the year to stay current with best practices in criminal prosecutions. Senior Assistant State's Attorney Lee Bell participated in a 3-day course entitled, "Investigating and Prosecuting No Body Homicides." Assistant State's Attorney Gina Fioravanti attended the Trial Advocacy Program presented by the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association (MSAA) on October 5-8, 2025. Deputy State's Attorney Timothy Maher and Assistant State's Attorney April N. Brown attended the weeklong homicide investigation seminar at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Baltimore.

- Fourteen attorneys, 1 investigator, and 1 victim advocate attended the MSAA Summer Conference in Ocean City in June. State's Attorney Harvey attended the MSAA Board of Directors' overnight meeting in Cambridge in November. The overnight meeting featured presentations from District Court Chief Judge John Morrissey and Acting Director of the State Department of Juvenile Services, Betsy Fox Tolentino.

- Teresa Weeks received a $750 scholarship to attend the Roper Victim Assistance Academy in Marriottsville, MD in February.

- State's Attorney Harvey lectured at the Maryland Prosecutor Institute in August. The Institute was funded for the first time in 2025 by Governor Wes Moore to educate law school students about careers in criminal prosecution. About 30 students attended this 3-day program.

Policies and Procedures

- With the assistance of the Department of Technology Services, the State's Attorney's Office implemented a new automated case management system, eProsecutor, by Tyler Technologies, replacing the old Justware case management system.

Community Outreach

- At Thanksgiving, the State's Attorney's Office contributed 5 large boxes of groceries to the Community Harvest Network (formerly End Hunger) located in Huntingtown.

- On August 5, 2025, attorneys from the State's Attorney's Office participated in National Night Out functions in various communities throughout the County.

- Governor Wes Moore reappointed State's Attorney Robert Harvey to the Maryland Commission of Criminal Sentencing Policy. The term of office is 4 years.

- State's Attorney Harvey hosted home schooled students at the courthouse for the Day of Law Program on November 21, 2025.

- The State's Attorney's Office maintained a booth at the Calvert County Fair from September 24-28, 2025.

- State's Attorney Harvey testified on several pieces of proposed legislation before the Maryland General Assembly in Annapolis. One bill was enacted into law dealing with the penalties for persons convicted of animal abuse.

- The State's Attorney's Office was active in Calvert County public schools. Assistant State's Attorney Patrick R. Cathro spoke to students in criminal justice classes in Calvert's high schools. State's Attorney Harvey and Senior Assistant State's Attorney Christopher J. Monte participated in the mock crash program at Huntingtown High School.

- The State's Attorney's Office was featured on the CBS crime show "48 Hours." The October 18, 2025, episode dealt with the prosecution of the Joseph Shymanski murder case.

- State's Attorney Harvey was a panelist at public forums on human trafficking and domestic violence awareness held at Middleham Chapel in Lusby on January 12, and October 19, respectively.

Personnel

The State's Attorney's Office welcomed several new employees in 2025. Lakeisha Taylor was hired to fill the new position of Digital Forensic Analyst. Ms. Taylor has many years of experience in cell phone mapping and data analysis from the Brooklyn, NY, District Attorney's Office. De'Yana Mackall was brought onboard as an Office Assistant III to handle the receptionist responsibilities in the District Court Division. And finally, Crystal Honeycutt joined the office as a Legal Secretary I in District Court. Her primary duties are to handle discovery obligations.