

ERIE COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT FOUNDATION



Celebrating 36 Years

**“Honoring distinguished individuals for dedicated
service and outstanding contributions”**

Thursday, May 18, 2023

Classics' V Banquet Center
2425 Niagara Falls Blvd, Amherst NY 14228



Left to Right: William Regan, Kimberly Beaty, Robert Vogel and Carolyn Skaros

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the 2023 Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation Award Dinner. We sincerely appreciate all your continued support of the Foundation and our goals.

The Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation Inc., was founded 36 years ago, in 1987. The individuals being honored are icons, nominated by their peers for their service to the community.

The professional men and women who serve on this board are dedicated to improving the quality and overall services that are provided by the law enforcement agencies throughout Erie County. Your valuable contributions allow for enhanced leadership training programs, specialized equipment and numerous other opportunities that have been outlined in your dinner programs.

Tonight, we are proud to honor twelve individuals who have made significant and valued contributions to the criminal justice system.



Kimberly Beaty

Chairwoman, Board of Directors
The Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation, Inc.



PROGRAM

Pledge of Allegiance	Samuel Palmiere
National Anthem.....	Samantha Tocke
Invocation.....	Michael Bryant
Welcome.....	Kimberly Beaty

DINNER

Remarks/Presentation of Foundation Awards	Michael Bryant, Kimberly Beaty and Samuel Palmiere
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2023 Award Recipients

Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation Awards in Recognition of Dedicated Service to Law Enforcement

Matthew J. Stegner	Senior Investigator <i>NYS Troopers</i>
Joseph Strano.....	Director <i>Erie County Law Enforcement Training Academy</i>
Gary Hackbush.....	Assistant District Attorney <i>Homicide Bureau Chief</i>
John Feroletto.....	Assistant District Attorney <i>Major Crimes Bureau Chief</i>
Ryan Haggerty.....	Assistant District Attorney <i>Homicide Bureau</i>
Noha Elnakib.....	Assistant District Attorney <i>Special Victims/Domestic Violence Bureau</i>
Justin Caldwell.....	Assistant District Attorney <i>Narcotics and Intelligence Bureau</i>
William Pelow.....	Lieutenant <i>West Seneca Police Department</i>
William Loewer.....	School Resource Officer <i>Lancaster Police Department</i>
Anthony Nazzarett.....	Officer <i>Town of Cheektowaga Police Department</i>
Meghan E. Leydecker.....	Assistant United States Attorney <i>United States Attorney's Office</i>
David Elias.....	Contributor/Supporter <i>Safe School Initiative</i>

Congratulations to all our Awardees

SENIOR INVESTIGATOR MATTHEW J. STEGNER

NYS Troopers



In 1997, Senior Investigator Matthew J. Stegner, New York State Police Troop A Bureau of Criminal Investigation, began his law enforcement career with the City of Atlanta Police Department. In 2002, he returned to New York and joined the State Police. His unfailing work ethic and intelligence earned him a promotion to Investigator and then Senior Investigator in the Bureau of Criminal Investigation. As he progressed in his career, he also continued his education, earning a Bachelor's degree in 2018 from Hilbert College and a Master's degree in 2021 from the University at Albany. He spent several years in the Campus Sexual Assault Victims Unit (CSAVU), honing his skills as an interviewer of both victims and suspects of sexual assault, resulting in arrests and successful prosecutions.

In July of 2021, Sr. Inv. Stegner transferred from the CSAVU to SP Clarence BCI, as the supervisor of the back-room Investigators assigned to SP Clarence,

SP Buffalo and the Child Advocacy Center. There, Sr. Inv. Stegner proved to be a capable mentor and a transformation leader. He guided his team through complex investigations with a victim-centric approach, leading to successful arrests in cases involving cyber stalking, revenge porn, and human trafficking, all while performing the regular duties of a back-room Senior Investigator with a high degree of proficiency and professionalism.

One of the biggest pieces of their workload involved victims who were unable to ask for help. SP Clarence BCI is responsible for the lion's share of Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) child exploitation cybertips generated in Erie County, which has a population close to 1 million people. The number of cybertips has grown exponentially in the last few years, as electronic service providers do a better job of flagging child exploitation uploads. These cases tend to be labor intensive, usually involving surveillance, search warrants and extensive forensic analysis on the items seized. The immense number of these cases was overwhelming the resources of SP Clarence BCI and the NYSP Computer Crimes Unit (CCU), creating a backlog.

Sr. Inv. Stegner immediately recognized the existence of the problem and its importance. While the initial victims and abusers may not even reside in the US, the people who view these images and videos are not only re-victimizing the children, but they are also likely to be a danger to their current community. Sr. Inv. Stegner attacked the backlog, triaging and prioritizing cases where an offender might have a live victim or be in a position with greater access to children. As he and his team worked through the cases, Sr. Inv. Stegner worked with Computer Crime Unit and the Erie County District Attorney's Office to streamline the process for more efficient arrests and prosecutions. This process is currently being adopted and implemented across New York State due to its success. In particularly heinous cases, such as those involving live victims, or cases involving persons in positions of authority or trust, such as those involving live victims, or cases involving persons in positions of authority or trust, such as those involving live victims, Sr. Inv. Stegner worked with federal partners in the FBI and HSI to prosecute the perpetrators federally.

Sr. Inv. Stegner is a staunch and dedicated public servant, and he is unwavering in his efforts to protect the public. His tireless work on behalf of victims and his dogged tenacity in pursuing predators have served as an excellent example for the team of Investigators he leads. He is a subject matter expert and is regularly called upon by prosecutor's and law enforcement agencies to provide guidance and assistance. The work by him and his team has undoubtedly rescued and saved the most vulnerable victims from repeated unspeakable heinous criminal acts. Senior Investigator Matthew Stegner is a worthy candidate to be recognized by the Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation.

DIRECTOR JOSEPH STRANO

Erie County Law Enforcement Training Academy



Currently, Joseph Strano is the Director of the Erie County Law Enforcement Training Academy and has held this position since December 2018. In this role, Director Strano is responsible for all operations and supervision of the police training academy to include two basic recruit classes and dozens of in-service courses yearly. The basic recruit classes are 20 weeks in duration and cover all required instructional topics for the NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services police officer certification. Approximately, 130 police officers graduate yearly from the basic class and approximately 500 police officers attend the in-service courses administered by the police academy.

Director Strano began his career in law enforcement with the Buffalo Police Department (BPD) as a report technician in 1977. Subsequently, Director Strano became a police officer graduating from the 157th Basic Academy Class in 1982. During the ensuing years, Director Strano was promoted to Lieutenant, Captain, Chief and Inspector which is the highest civil service rank within the BPD. During his career with the BPD, Director Strano held numerous assignments including Interim Commissioner of Police. As BPD Inspector, Director Strano was instrumental in the hiring of all BPD police personnel as well as serving as the Duty Officer which included oversight over all major incidents in the City of Buffalo.

During his 46 years in law enforcement, Director Strano has been recognized for his service with numerous commendations and is widely respected among his law enforcement peers in Erie County.

ADA GARY HACKBUSH
Homicide Bureau Chief

ADA JOHN FEROLETO
Major Crimes Bureau Chief

ADA RYAN HAGGERTY
Homicide Bureau

ADA NOHA ELNAKIB
Special Victims/Domestic Violence Bureau

ADA JUSTIN CALDWELL
Narcotics and Intelligence Bureau



These five (5) attorneys were assigned to handle the prosecution of The People of the State of New York v. Payton Gendron. This horrific case involved the murder of ten (10) individuals, and the attempted murder of three (3) individuals on May 14, 2022 at Tops Supermarket on Jefferson Avenue in the City of Buffalo, New York. These attorneys, along with multiple law enforcement agencies, conducted the initial investigation of the case and were responsible for the Grand Jury investigation. The indictment of Payton Gendron included the charge of Domestic Act of Terrorism motivated by Hate in the First Degree, the first time in the history of the State of New York that this particular Penal Law Statute was charged. These attorneys handled the subsequent prosecution of Payton Gendron which resulted in the defendant pleading guilty to the Domestic Act of Terrorism motivated by Hate charge, along with ten (10) counts of Murder in the First Degree, three (3) counts of Attempted Murder in the Second Degree, as a Hate Crime and one (1) count of Criminal Possession of Weapon in the Second Degree. These attorneys were responsible for putting this racist murderer behind bars for the rest of his life without the possibility of parole.

Homicide Bureau Chief, Assistant District Attorney Gary Hackbush has been with the office for 30 years. Prior to becoming Chief, he was a member of the Homicide Bureau for 8 years. In addition to serving as an assistant in various bureaus within the office, he has also served as Chief of the Felony Trial Bureau and the Tactical Prosecution Unit.

Major Crimes Bureau Chief, Assistant District Attorney John Feroletto has been with the office for 15 years. He has been a member of various bureaus within the office, including Homicide and Tactical Prosecution. He has also served as Chief of the Felony Trial Bureau.

Homicide Bureau, Assistant District Attorney Ryan Haggerty has been with the office for 13 years. Prior to serving in the Homicide Bureau, he served in the Felony Trials, Special Victims, and Major Crimes Bureaus. He is also a veteran of the United States Army.

Special Victims/Domestic Violence Bureau, Assistant District Attorney Noha Elnakib has been with the office for 8 years. She has served in various bureaus within the office, including Felony Trials and Raise The Age.

Narcotics and Intelligence Bureau, Assistant District Attorney Justin Caldwell has been with the office for 5 years. He has served in various bureaus within the office, including Domestic Violence and Special Victims. He is also Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer for the office.

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM PELOW

West Seneca Police Department



Lieutenant William Pelow has been a member of the West Seneca Police Department for the past 17 years and was promoted in 2018 to Patrol Lieutenant. He is the epitome of hard work and integrity. He was one those “go to” Officers, who will take on any project and do a great job. Lieutenant Pelow is self-motivated. He recently took on a project to update the Annual Employee Evaluation process and forms in order to better serve the departments needs. This was not a task he was asked to do, he took it upon himself to see improvements were needed, all while handling his duties as Patrol Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Pelow’s leadership skills have developed beyond his seventeen y ears in law enforcement. He is well respected by his subordinates and set a great example for younger officers to aspire to. The Accident Investigation Unit and Aviation Unit are both under the leadership of Lt. Pelow. He was able to take both

to new levels of performance and expertise. He takes on every job with the same attitude, big or small. To do the best he can, because that’s what he does.

Lt. William Pelow has accomplished so much already in his dedicated service to the West Seneca Police Department and Community he serves. There will be much more to come.

SRO WILLIAM LOEWER

Lancaster Police Department



SRO William D. Loewer has over 27 years of experience within the Lancaster Police Department. SRO Loewer received a Bachelor of Science degree from Buffalo State College in 2003. He was a graduate of the 88th Basic Police Academy Class at the Erie County Law Enforcement Training Academy. SRO Loewer was a field training officer from 2003-2008 where he also trained numerous new officers on how to properly do the job. Several of his trainees have gone on to become Lieutenants and Captains.

SRO Loewer served as a member of the department's Emergency Response Team (SWAT Team) from 2002-2014. He was a member of the entry team and later a sniper. SRO Loewer is a Certified Police instructor, firearms instructor, and a Glock armorer. From January 2008 to November 2009, he served as a detective, but from January 2017 to present, SRO Loewer has been serving as a School Resource Officer. Currently he is the SRO at the Lancaster Middle School and senior SRO of Lancaster's 3 other SROs.

Officer Loewer has been the recipient of numerous letters of appreciation from citizens and of several Department commendation. SRO Loewer is widely respected by his fellow officers and also the Lancaster School District administration. They continue to contact him for his insight and advice. SRO Loewer is known for his professionalism and his dedication and his dedication to doing his job to the best of his ability.

OFFICER ANTHONY NAZZARETT

Town of Cheektowaga Police Department



Officer Nazzarett was originally hired by the Town of Cheektowaga as a public safety dispatcher in 2004. He worked diligently in the dispatch center until he was hired as a police officer on 08/03/2006. He spent four years working as a patrol officer until transferring into the accident investigation unit on 11/03/2008. Officer Nazzarett became a part of the motorcycle unit on 6/1/2008. He became a field training officer for new recruits in 2012, a position he stills assists with when called to do so. From 12/3/18 to present Officer Nazzarett has been assigned to a full time school liaison position.

The school that Officer Nazzarett is assigned to is Erie 1 BOCES Edge Academy. The Edge Academy is an alternative education program that offers options for students who have faced difficulty with absenteeism, excessive tardiness, lack of academic progress or motivation, and negative behavior choices. The afterhours Twilight program is for students who may be credit deficient or

for those who need an alternative placement. School districts form all of Erie County place students in these programs when they are not able to attend traditional school due to primarily disciplinary problems. Officer Nazzarett works long hours every day that school is in session Monday to Friday from 0700-1800 hours. When school is not in session Officer Nazzarett serves as additional manpower for the patrol division, where his stats remain near the top of the shift average.

Officer Nazzarett is a model for conflict resolution at the school and is well liked and respected by the students and staff. Officer Nazzarett represents the embodiment of what School Resource Officers should do day in and out. Officer Nazzarett has a keen awareness that no significant outcomes can happen without significant relationships. He has the respect of the most at-risk and alternative students that have not experienced success in other schools because he has taken the time to get to know them, listen to them, support them and take interest in their lives. He listens to people, is always kind and seeks to deescalate situations before they turn into anything more significant. There is no doubt that Officer Nazzarett's interactions change peoples' minds about policing for the better. He consistently demonstrates that he is a great fit for the Edge Academy as he continuously solves problems without the need for direct supervision. Officer Nazzarett harbors a special skillset specifically around the role of informal counselor and mentor that is unrivaled. Students and staff alike find Officer Nazzarett approachable, confide in him and most importantly, trust him. An example that speaks to this point is the ICMP. The school social workers create an ICMP (Individualized Crisis Management Plan) for every student, asking probing questions about their triggers, early indicators when escalating behaviors are imminent and who their "go-to people" are in the event of crisis. Repeatedly, the students list Officer Nazzarett as the key person to find should they experience crisis. Officer Nazzarett has strong relationships with students and staff alike. He is honest, loyal and dedicated to students' success. His community outreach extends beyond the school building as he has had significant impact on the students and families at the school. Officer Nazzarett is a team player who goes above and beyond. This sentiment is not unique to one student, teacher, or police supervisor; everyone shares it. Officer Nazzarett has the respect of all he encounters because he takes a community policing approach to his job. We cannot express how lucky we are as a police department to have Officer Nazzarett in our ranks.

ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

MEGHAN E. LEYDECKER

United States Attorney's Office



Ms. Leydecker joined the United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of New York on November 24, 2019, after previously serving as an Assistant District Attorney in the Erie County District Attorney's Office. In 2022, she was promoted to the position of Deputy Chief of the Narcotics and Organized Crime Section of the Criminal Division. In this position, Ms. Leydecker oversees a team of Assistant U.S. Attorneys in the Buffalo Office handling the prosecution of international narcotics trafficking, illicit firearms trafficking, violent crimes, gang cases, and opioid overdose cases involving fentanyl and other dangerous drugs. Ms. Leydecker is highly regarded for her mentoring of newer attorneys and for her ability to handle difficult and complex cases.

Ms. Leydecker has prosecuted numerous cases while working with several federal, state, and

local law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, Buffalo Police Department (BPD), Cheektowaga Police Department (CPD), Amherst Police Department (APD), Tonawanda Police Department, and Orchard Park Police Department.

In 2022, Ms. Leydecker served as the lead prosecutor in a four-week trial where a federal jury convicted the defendant of multiple charges, including murder while engaged in a continuing criminal enterprise and narcotics conspiracy, tampering with a witness, discharge of firearms causing death in furtherance of crimes of violence and drug trafficking crimes, conspiracy to distribute heroin resulting in death, and several narcotics offenses. Between 2012 and November 2018, the defendant was a leader of a heroin and cocaine trafficking organization operating in the Buffalo area to distribute significant amounts of heroin, which at times was mixed with fentanyl.

In 2020, Ms. Leydecker assisted with the trial of a Buffalo man who was convicted by a federal jury of distributing heroin and fentanyl resulting in the death of an individual, as well as conspiracy and other distribution charges, resulting in a sentence of 360 months.

Ms. Leydecker received a Bachelor of Arts degree cum laude in Political Science and History with a Minor in English from the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida. She received a Juris Doctor Degree from the Boston College Law School in Newton, Massachusetts, and is a member of the New York State Bar and the Bar of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She currently serves as a Member of the Western District of New York Human Trafficking Task Force and as the Ghost Gun Coordinator for the District, as well as participates in weekly meetings with BPD and other law enforcement agencies to review all fatal and non-fatal shootings in the City of Buffalo in an effort to address gun violence in the community.

DAVID ELIAS

Appreciation Award in Support of our Safe School Initiative



David Elias has filled his career in the corporate and volunteer worlds by first excelling in providing leadership and strategic advice in investment matters, and focusing later on media relations and more broadly as a problem solver within corporate America.

With his undergraduate degree from SUNY Brockport and graduate studies at the University of Rochester, David began his career at Morgan Stanley in 1973 as an investment advisor. In 1977, he joined Marine Midland Bank where he managed investment portfolios. In 1981, David started his own investment management company, Elias Asset Management. As one of the Buffalo area's biggest investment management firms with @\$1 billion in assets, the firm was acquired in 2000 by Community Bank System Inc.; David stayed on as the investment manager. In 2006, he took on a new role as an independent consultant and strategic advisor. From 2008-2016, David served as a principal at Alesco Advisors LLC, a multi-billion-dollar wealth management firm.

David has served on the boards of the Harvard Kennedy School, the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy, and the Council for Economic Education. He is the author of four

books, including *Dow 40,000: Strategies for Profiting from the Greatest Bull Market in History*; all proceeds went to charity. An in-demand speaker, David has made over 250 appearances on network shows, including the NBC Today Show, GMA, CBS Evening News, CNN, and MSNBC. He has also been featured in countless publications like Forbes, Time Magazine, the Wall Street Journal, and the New York Times.

Locally, David is a member of the investment committee of the Roswell Park Alliance Foundation. He is also a long-time member of the US Secret Service's Empire State Cyber Fraud Taskforce, and serves on the planning committee of the Safe Schools Initiative Seminar which is presented by the Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation.

David resides in Amherst with his wife Barbara. They have two daughters and 6 grandchildren.



Rob Vogel OSJ, CFP

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MUSARRA LAW OFFICES

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2023 ERIE COUNTY
LAW ENFORCEMENT FOUNDATION AWARD
RECIPIENTS

Thank you for your service to our
community!

Arthur Musarra, Esq

In Memory Of



Pat Casilio, Founding President of the Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation
Rosemary Casilio, Founding President of the Casilio family



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Kathy and Barry Chubb congratulate the 2022 Community Service Award Recipients

Thank you for your service

Contact Barry Chubb at (716)631-8300 for details on the ECLEF referral program



**Sending our congratulations to all the ECLEP 2023
Award Recipients. Thank you for your service.**



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We are proud to support the Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation. Thank you for everything you do for Western New York's hard-working law enforcement professionals.



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Congratulations

to this evening's winners and
thank you all for your dedication
to keeping our communities safe.



Kaleida Health

www.kaleidahealth.org



The background features a large, semi-transparent watermark of the Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation logo. The logo is circular with a gold border and contains the text "ERIE COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT FOUNDATION, INC." around the top and "Professional Support for Law Enforcement" around the bottom. In the center is a shield with a scale of justice and a sword.

Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation

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Thank you for supporting the
Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation,
to which contributions are tax deductible.

In the Foundation's opinion,
\$54 of the \$125 ticket price for tonight's function
qualifies as such a contribution.

Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation



*Not all Board Members are pictured

The Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation, Inc., is a non-profit, non-political, tax-exempt 501 (c)-3 corporation that assists federal, state, and local investigative and law enforcement agencies by providing grants for special equipment and technical training that may not be funded through their budgets. The Foundation also sponsors seminars on topics of timely value to such agencies.

Activities funded by the Foundation since its inception include:

- Co-sponsor the Safe Child ID Program with the 100 Club of Buffalo and the Erie County Sheriff's Dept.
- Co-sponsored programs and seminars for over 7,000 law enforcement personnel with Hilbert College Institute for Law and Justice.
- Pilot training for country-wide airborne law enforcement.
- Avionics system for Erie County Sheriff's Office backup helicopter.
- Bar code computer for CPS Laboratory to track evidence admitted to its custody.
- Narcotics detection, tracking/rescue dog for Orchard Park Police Department
- Underwater video camera system for large-scale searches

Numerous courses seminars and training programs offered for law enforcement officers throughout Western New York and Canada, including:

- Co-Sponsored 18th Annual Safe Schools Summit
- Interview and Interrogation Advanced
- Cryptocurrency Investigations
- Gangs and Social Media
- Dark Webb Investigations
- Cell phone Investigations
- Countering Violent Extremism
- Law Enforcement Intelligence
- Current Heroin Threats
- Middle Eastern Intelligence
- Courtroom Testimony
- Social Networking
- Technology Threats against Law Enforcement

Since our last awards dinner in June of 2022, we have supported the following Law Enforcement and other First Responder Trainings:

- Co- Sponsored 19th Annual Safe Schools Initiative Seminar
- Autism Awareness Training for First Responders
- Human Trafficking and Sex Trafficking Identification for Law Enforcement
- Social Networking
- Drug Contraband Interdiction Training
- F.O.I.L and Related Media Requests of Law Enforcement Agencies
- Law Enforcement Basic Intelligence
- Street Gang Investigations
- Mexican Drug Cartel Investigations
- Mid-Level Narcotics Investigations
- Drug Identification for Law Enforcement





The Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation would like to thank you all for your continued generosity and support for law enforcement.

We will continue to pride ourselves in community support for Professional Law Enforcement