



# OFFICE OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY

City of Suffolk  
Godwin Courts Building  
150 North Main Street  
Suffolk, Virginia 23434-4552



COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY  
C. PHILLIPS FERGUSON

CHIEF DEPUTY COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY  
T. MARIE WALLS

DEPUTY COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEYS  
VAUGHN T. BREEDLOVE  
DEREK A. COLVIN  
NARENDRA R. PLEAS

ASSISTANT COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEYS  
CARMEN T. CABRERO  
HEATHER EMMERT  
EDWARD W. FERREIRA  
ALMETIA F. HARDMAN  
F. JEFFERSON JAMES  
EMILY E. MCLAUGHLIN  
JOHN V. MOLITOR  
T. GEORGE UNDERWOOD  
SUSAN H. WALTON  
KARA M. WEBBER  
BRANDON T. WROBLESKI

*Please visit our website:*  
[www.suffolk.va.us/cwatty/](http://www.suffolk.va.us/cwatty/)

MAIN NUMBER (757) 514-4365  
VICTIM/WITNESS (757) 514-4366  
FAX (757) 514-4400

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER  
KAREN H. WILLIAMS

CHIEF INVESTIGATOR  
NEIL M. BOONE

COMMUNITY OUTREACH COORDINATOR  
JOAN R. TURNER

VICTIM/WITNESS DIRECTOR  
DIANE BRYANT

ASSISTANT VICTIM/WITNESS DIRECTORS  
KATHERINE C. GARDNER  
BRITTANY R. LANDON  
SHARON M. SMITH

June 10, 2020

To The Citizens of Suffolk:

Re: Letter to the Editor – George Floyd

The death of George Floyd was tragic, senseless, and wrong. Nobody condones what happened to Mr. Floyd and it should not happen again.

At the same time, in some cities, there has been violence, looting, and serious property damage. Police officers in some cities, have been injured and/or murdered. Likewise, these actions are tragic, senseless, and wrong and should not happen again.

In contrast, in Suffolk, protests and marches have been peaceful, with no violence or destruction of property. This is the way protests should occur. Those that have chosen to protest, have done so lawfully and should be commended.

All of us should remember that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. supported only peaceful protests. He also made clear that people should be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin.

In Suffolk, a real effort has been made for some time for law enforcement to work with the Community. Captain Lance Callis recently stated that, “he works for the finest police department in Virginia and that in Suffolk, we have an incredible relationship with our citizens and we demand professionalism, compassion, and fairness from our officers”. As Commonwealth’s Attorney, for the City of Suffolk, my experience with the Suffolk Police Department is that they do exactly that.

The Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office does the same. Our philosophy is that first and foremost, our goal is to educate the public and prevent crimes from occurring. By taking this approach, we try to reduce the number of people who are victimized and the number of people who are charged with crimes. If that doesn’t work, then we prosecute cases to ensure that justice is served, which is what the law requires. Among Commonwealth’s Attorneys’ Offices, the Suffolk Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office has one of, if not, the most extensive Community Outreach programs in Virginia. This past year, we attended 142 Community Outreach events, made over 20,000 citizen contacts, of which 8,662 were young people under the age of 18, and distributed over 4,875 brochures and 1,885 crime prevention awareness items.

Each year, we go into the Suffolk Public Schools to educate the youth on a variety of topics including gangs, the importance of avoiding them, and the consequences of becoming involved in one. These efforts are designed to keep young people from becoming involved as defendants in the Criminal Justice system, so instead, they can become well educated and productive citizens.

Currently, we have had eight (8) Citizens Academies for adults 18 or older, in which we explain everything we do in the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office. As a part of the Academy, the other four (4) Constitutional Officers, likewise explain what services their offices provide to the Community. In addition, we have had eight (8) CSI Forensics Camps for youth 12-15 years of age. Each of these events are FREE and are done with existing staff.

Through our Community Outreach program, we have fifteen (15) PowerPoint presentations, one (1) annual Citizens Academy, one (1) annual CSI Forensics Camp, two (2) interactive mock trials, scheduled court tours, and twenty-six (26) public awareness brochures on various topics.

Through our Outreach program, we have helped to protect the elderly population by implementing educational and crime prevention programs, which help keep Senior Citizens from becoming victims of abuse, fraud, scams, and other types of crimes.

Annually, we participate in Suffolk's award-winning National Night Out crime prevention event with the entire Suffolk Community and our public safety partners, including the Police Department, Sheriff's Office, and Suffolk Fire and Rescue, all of whom are heavily involved in Community Outreach.

As a result of all of the education and prevention efforts we undertake, Suffolk is a low crime City and a City where people want to live. My philosophy is simple; Every person should feel safe in the community in which they live. This can occur, only, when public safety agencies are working together with the people living within those communities. This type of cooperative relationship between public safety agencies, and the community is essential for a City to be safe and great. Suffolk is such a City and is a model for others.

Should any church, civic group, or other organization wish for the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office to make a presentation or participate in any other community outreach endeavor, please contact Joan Turner, Community Outreach Coordinator at 757-514-4379 or [jturner@suffolkva.us](mailto:jturner@suffolkva.us). I also invite you to visit this office's website at <https://www.suffolkva.us/204/Commonwealths-Attorney> and/or our FACEBOOK page.

Sincerely Yours,



C. Phillips Ferguson  
Commonwealth's Attorney