

Lindemuth leads her first District Attorney Conference

By Clint Campion

The Alaska Department of Law, Criminal Division held its 2016 District Attorney/Victim Witness Paralegal Conference Oct. 26-28, 2016, at the Anchorage Sheraton Hotel. This was the first conference under the new leadership of Attorney General Jahna Lindemuth.

The title of this year's conference was "Prosecuting Domestic Violence in a Post-SB 91 World," and featured presentations from leaders from the Department of Corrections, the Office of Victims' Rights, the Alaska Court System, members of the Criminal Division, and instructors from AEquitas.

AEquitas is an organization that provides training to prosecutors in the areas of violence against women and human trafficking. The funding for the conference was provided by the STOP Violence Against Women grant. Conference attendees included state prosecutors from all across Alaska from Kotzebue to Fairbanks to Ketchikan. Prosecutors from the Anchorage Municipal Prosecutors Office were also in attendance.

Attorney General Jahna Lindemuth kicked off the conference with a presentation. She urged

prosecutors to maintain a high level of professionalism in their dealings with opposing counsel, the court, victims and the communities served.

The conference mainly focused on the changing world of law enforcement following the passage of Senate Bill 91, the legislation seeking to reform Alaska's criminal justice system. Prosecutors were instructed on the purpose of criminal justice reform and its genesis from the evidence-based recommendations provided by the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission. Presenters provided information on how the law was being implemented, including the emphasis on treatment instead of jail time.

The conference also included two ethics presentations: "Ethical Considerations for Prosecutors in Intimate Partner Violence Cases" and "Safeguarding Victim Privacy: A Plan for Action for Prosecutors (Ethics)."

On Thursday night, the annual Criminal Division Awards Banquet took place at the Anchorage Sheraton. Longtime Ketchikan District Attorney Steve West was named the Prosecutor of the Year. Kenai Victim Witness Paralegal Anna LaRoche was named the Paralegal of the Year. Bethel Assistant District Attorney Bailey

Woolfstead was awarded the Making a Difference Award which recognizes professional commitment and dedication to enhancing the communities she serves. Assistant Attorney General Adam Alexander of the Office of Special Prosecution was awarded the Model of Excellence Award which recognizes a prosecutor whose work enhances the public image of the Criminal Division. The support staff at the Office of Criminal Appeals (Mackenzie Milliken, Nancy Anthony, and Sylva Ferry) were awarded the Team Award.

For the first time, the Criminal Division gave awards for the trial of the year and the appellate brief of the year. These awards are designed to highlight the litigation that had the most significant impact on a community. The Fairbanks Four Litigation was recognized as the trial of the year. Assistant Attorneys General Adrienne Bachman, Bob Linton, and Ali Rahoi represented the State of Alaska in the litigation. Assistant Attorney General Diane Wendlandt was recognized for her briefs in the appellate litigation involving the admissibility of polygraph examination testimony.

Clint Campion is the Anchorage District Attorney.

