Serial Sex Offender Nelson Clifford Sentenced to More Than 30 Years

Serial rapist, Nelson Clifford, was sentenced in May to 31 years for sexual assault and theft. Clifford’s conviction represents the fulfillment of a major campaign promise from State’s Attorney Marilyn Mosby to bring Clifford to justice.

Nelson Clifford’s predatory behavior started in 1997. Clifford pled guilty to second degree sex offense after he sexually assaulted a woman at knife point. He was sentenced to ten years.

After Clifford’s release in 2007, he allegedly committed nearly a half dozen sexual offenses, four of which he was found not guilty. At each trial—despite DNA evidence—he was acquitted after testifying that the sexual contact between him and his victims was consensual.

First Day of Junior State’s Attorneys Program Is a Major Hit

More than two dozen rising eighth graders assembled in the training room of the State’s Attorney’s Office downtown, (dressed in blue blazers) for the inaugural day of State’s Attorney, Marilyn Mosby’s new Junior State’s Attorney program.
A TRUE CALLING: HOW ONE WOMAN MADE A CAREER OUT OF CARING FOR THE BEREAVED

Paulette Carroll, the Office Services Assistant at the Baltimore City State’s Attorney’s Family Bereavement Center, is a Baltimore native who has devoted her life to the emotional well being of others. She is one of our newest employees—but is likely one of the offices most familiar faces. Carroll volunteered full time at the Bereavement Center for four years, until she was made a permanent employee shortly after Marilyn Mosby took office in January.

To understand how truly special Carroll is as a person and as a professional, you must understand what she does for a living. Carroll is part of a specialized unit in the SAO that deals specifically with the family members of homicide victims. The unit provides social service support, free grief counseling from licensed professionals and court watch services to qualified individuals that seek the Bereavement Center’s help.

Baltimore sees hundreds of murders every year—this year being no exception—and Carroll estimates that her unit has contacted or served nearly all of the families of the homicide victims in the City. “We get in contact with the next of kin immediately,” Carroll said.

Carroll’s first job was at City Hospital, which is now Johns Hopkins Bayview Hospital. She worked in the chronic pain unit providing patients with care. Carroll’s experience at City hospital eventually led her to St. Agnes Hospital. She worked there 15 years as a phlebotomist (someone who draws blood). In 2007 Carroll began working for Miller’s Metropolitan Chapel Mortuary.

Carroll also began to volunteer her time at Roberta’s House, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing bereavement support services to members of the community. At Roberta’s House she was the liaison between the families, the State’s Attorney’s Office, and the Police Department. She first met her future colleagues, members of the victim services unit, at a conference held at Morgan State University. Soon after, she began volunteering at the SAO’s Family Bereavement Center—Carroll hasn’t looked back since.

“I couldn’t stop once I got started. The need here is so great,” Carroll said. Carroll handles intake for family members of homicide victims who are interested in receiving services. She says she never knows what to expect when she picks up the phone, but her faith in God, the myriad trainings on grief counseling, and the latest professional literature pertaining to bereavement support have prepared her to handle each call.

“I try to find every tool I can to make me better at my job. If I go to a training on Wednesday, I’m using what I’ve learned on Thursday and Friday,” she said.
We cannot allow serial rapists to deny their crimes in the face of DNA evidence, and make a mockery of our justice system.”

~ State’s Attorney Marilyn Mosby

Clifford's testimony relied on the fact that his past convictions and charges would be shielded from the jury. Juries were barred in each of his cases from hearing testimony about Clifford's previous victims and his status as a sex offender.

"We cannot allow serial rapists to deny their crimes in the face of DNA evidence, and make a mockery of our justice system," Mosby said.

Special Victims Unit prosecutors Jennifer McAllister and Jesse Halvorsen prosecuted Clifford.

Mosby fought for legislation in Annapolis for the past two years to bring the “consensual sex” defense to an end by bringing the Maryland Rules of Evidence in line with Federal Rules. Under Federal Rules 413 and 414, evidence of other sexual assaults and child molestation is admissible in a criminal trial in which the defendant is charged with sexual assault against adults and children.

Several states have already followed suit, and Mosby believes it is time for residents in Maryland to enjoy the same protections.

SAO VICTIM ADVOCATES RECOGNIZED BY GOVERNOR

Ruth Bloom Barkley and Michelle Lee were recognized by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention for their commitment to victims of crime in Baltimore City.

Barkley has worked with Victim Services since December of 2013 and received the Governor’s Victim’s Assistance Award for Outstanding Victim Services Professional.

“I felt honored and humbled to be recognized,” Barkley said.

Michelle Lee, who works as an advocate, received the Governor's Award for excellence and for advocacy work with the Survivor Advocate Program at Roberta’s House.

“I don't look at it as a job," Lee said. "I look at it as a Ministry and that makes all the difference in the world.”

Lee has been with Victim Services at the State’s Attorney's Office for 6 months, but she has worked in the field for 25 years.
AIM TO B’MORE PROGRAM
CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR FELONY DRUG OFFENDERS

Baltimore City State’s Attorney, Marilyn Mosby, announced a pilot program in May aimed at reducing Baltimore’s recidivism and unemployment rates by targeting non-violent—first time—felony drug offenders with cases pending. Each participant will have their record expunged after successful completion of the program.

Deborah Spector, Deputy Director of Crime Control and Prevention, developed the program under the direction of Mosby. Spector is a former public defender who spent nearly 20 years representing residents of Howard County and Baltimore City.

Mosby’s Aim to B’more is modeled after a nationally successful program model that is proven to both reduce recidivism rates and save tax dollars. Experts lauded Attorney General Kamala Harris’ (D-CA) version of the program in California as a holistic approach to solving systemic issues within the criminal justice system.

“I’ve seen this program work, and I’ve talked with Attorney General Harris and her team about how to make it a success. I’m excited that we’ve been able to get this program off the ground so quickly. Aim to B’more will change lives,” Mosby said.

Components of Probation Include:

- Community service
- Completing a GED or similar educational program
- Completing STRIVE’s job skills program at the Centers for Urban Families; obtaining internships and full-time employment
- Probation lasts three years; probation becomes unsupervised when full-time employment is achieved
- An expungement is granted upon completion of the program

According to Spector, defendants are granted a Probation Before Judgment and placed on three years of meaningful probation.

“I am honored to take the lead on this program,” Spector said. “This program is more than just expungements. It is also about providing offenders an opportunity to turn their lives around—this is what will make Baltimore a better and more thriving community.”
COMMUNITY MEMBERS UNITE

Justice for McKenzie Elliott

Northern Police District, States Attorney Marilyn Mosby, Baltimore Police Department, City Council President Bernard C. “Jack” Young, Council members Mary Pat Clarke and Bill Henry, Metro Crime Stoppers, Blessed Sacrament Church and Waverly Improvement Association.

McKenzie was 3 years old when she was killed in Waverly on August 1, 2014. The case remains unsolved.

McKenzie’s Remembrance Program

To contribute online to the McKenzie Elliott Reward Fund, please visit http://metrocrimestoppers.org/mckenzie-elliott-donations-accepted/.