

PRESS RELEASE

**FROM THE OFFICE OF SHANE A. TIEMAN
SCIOTO COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY**

December 3, 2021

Several media outlets have requested comment on the passing of Michael Mearan and the effect on the upcoming trial and the County.

The Scioto County Prosecutor's Office was involved initially in an advisory role with local law enforcement in the investigation into Mr. Mearan. As the scope and depth of the investigation developed, our local law enforcement asked for and received assistance from State and Federal partners. Based upon the limited resources of the office and concerns over potential conflicts of interest, based upon Mr. Mearan's position as a local attorney, the Scioto County Prosecutor's Office requested assistance. The office requested that the Attorney General's Office assume responsibility for the review of the investigation and subsequent prosecution of any charges arising from the investigation. The Special Prosecution through the Attorney General's Office permitted this office, which has a limited number of criminal prosecutors, to continue to address the robust criminal caseload that has developed over the last several years as a result of the opioid epidemic.

Mr. Mearan was ultimately indicted for various charges and a trial was set for January of 2022. A prosecutor, at his or her core, is considered a "minister of justice." Justice takes place when all the parties in a case have their day in Court, so that their voices can be heard in a fair trial and a jury can render a just verdict. With Mr. Mearan's passing, this will not occur for any and all parties involved in this matter.

It is very important to note that this investigation arose from local law enforcement officers, who took the time to listen to the concerns of some of our most ill-used citizens and the courage of those citizens to speak out.

Anyone who is being subjected to trafficking, abuse or neglect of any kind is encouraged to seek help. In addition to our local law enforcement agencies, a person can contact Appalachian Voices Unite, part of the Scioto County Health Coalition or the Ohio Attorney General Human Trafficking Initiative.