



**Barbara LaWall**  
Pima County Attorney

Pima County Attorney's Office  
32 N. Stone Avenue  
Suite 1400  
Tucson, AZ 85701

Phone (520) 740-5600  
Fax (520) 740-5585

[www.pcao.pima.gov](http://www.pcao.pima.gov)

## **PRESS RELEASE**

For information contact:  
Isabel Burrue! Smutzer  
Communications Coordinator

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 10, 2011

### **STATEMENT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY**

(Tucson, AZ) – Barbara LaWall, Pima County Attorney, released the following statement:

I am certain that you all are as shocked, stunned, and deeply saddened as I am by the horrific and senseless violence that occurred this Saturday morning. Dedicated, committed public servants, honest caring citizens, and a young innocent child were brutally attacked and cold-bloodedly murdered in an unspeakably evil and despicable act that has impacted and reverberated throughout our entire community. I extend my most sincere personal condolences to the families and friends of those killed and injured, some of whom are very close personal friends of mine and of other employees of this Office.

I am tremendously proud of, and grateful for, the outstanding work and consummate professionalism of our prosecutors, victim advocates, detectives, and community volunteers who were at the scene and at the various hospitals where the victims were treated. The value of their contributions cannot be overstated. I want to applaud and acknowledge the incredible assistance each of them rendered to the entire community. They all quietly and effectively did their jobs exceedingly well, and too often this tireless dedication goes completely unheralded and unnoticed by the media and public.

Within 45 minutes of receiving the call, Victim Services Director Kent Burbank, along with Advocates Vanessa Helms and James Gierke, organized 30+ staff and volunteers to respond to the crime scene and assist the victims and witnesses. The speed with which the Victim Services Division deployed teams to five separate locations - all the hospitals and the crime scene - was astonishing. They compassionately attended to the witnesses, to victims, and their families. Two command posts were immediately set up: one at the crime scene, the other at UMC.

They immediately responded to four different hospitals, conducted critical incident debriefings at the crime scene with witnesses, Safeway employees, and victims, and delivered exceedingly difficult death notifications to the

families of the murdered victims. They were active participants all day and into the evening, and then met again and worked with the first responders on Sunday. They had a full and overwhelming weekend. They are unsung heroes and deserve enormous credit for their steady perseverance, their compassionate care and their unwavering support of severely traumatized victims, survivors, and their family members.

A very special acknowledgement goes out to the numerous PCAO citizen advocate volunteers who served this weekend as well. These are the men and women of our community who gave generously, without any remuneration or reward, of their time, their energy, and their hearts to be of help to those who most needed it in a time of extreme crisis. We would be unable to provide the kind of assistance to this community that was offered without their dedicated volunteer assistance. I am so deeply grateful to them.

Needless to say, in the midst of the ugly and frightening chaos of the crime scene, our seasoned and most experienced prosecutors were present. They provided reasoned and expert legal expertise throughout the day and late into the evening. Law enforcement was grateful and appreciative for the immediate and steady presence of our folks: Rick Unklesbay, Kellie Johnson, David Berkman, and Ken Janes. Deputy County Attorneys Rick Unklesbay and Kellie Johnson worked through the entire weekend, including early morning meetings on Sunday. Countless hours throughout the weekend were spent by them working on and sorting out the myriad legal issues that have arisen as a result of the unique confluence of concurrent state and federal criminal jurisdiction resulting from these crimes. At the completion of their meetings, they didn't go home, but instead returned to the office to work on and prepare for the capital murder trial of Shauna Forde which starts this week. Moreover, I am particularly pleased with how everyone coordinated and cooperated with other local and federal agencies and have committed to continue to do so.

As you can imagine, phones never stopped ringing. I want to especially acknowledge the work of Isabel Burruel Smutzer who handled the countless, often frenetic, and sometimes frantic and demanding, media calls with incredible confidence, utmost grace and great efficiency. She was a phenomenal and steady presence all weekend, working with the media and triaging the calls.

It is late Sunday night as I compose this email and I can report back to you that everyone involved is emotionally and physically exhausted. But despite our utter disbelief and shock, our concern is not for ourselves, but for the victims and their families. I know I speak for all of us in sending our most sincere condolences to the families of the slain and our wishes of healing to the families of those injured.

We hope Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and all the other survivors recover quickly and fully. Our hearts go out in particular to the family of Judge John Roll, our former prosecutor and colleague in this Office. We keep all of them in our thoughts and prayers. Our most sincere condolences and sympathy go out to all the families of the deceased. Their loss is immeasurable and we stand with them in their grief. Please hold everyone in your thoughts.

Sincerely,  
Barbara LaWall