



OFFICE OF THE ULSTER COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY Emmanuel C. Nneji, District Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DISTRICT ATTORNEY NNEJI ANNOUNCES EXECUTIVE TEAM

Kingston, NY—On January 13, 2024, Ulster County District Attorney Emmanuel C. Nneji announced his executive team, ahead of his public swearing in ceremony scheduled for January 14, 2024 at SUNY New Paltz. This team will provide support and guidance as he carries out the duties of the Office of the Ulster County District Attorney.

“As I have emphasized to every employee of the office, I want to repair the fissures and eliminate the negativism that have ravaged and undermined our service and public confidence in it; the leadership I have seen and expect from my newly appointed executive staff will immensely boost our morale and facilitate the effective force for ‘Justice for All’ that our County deserves,” said **DA Nneji** of his appointments. “I have seen firsthand the commitment of these individuals over the years, which is especially poignant given that all of our executive team, including myself and Chief ADA Culmone-Mills, are serving our community while parenting young and school-age children.”

Paul Derohannesian is promoted to Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney

On the heels of his promotion of Chief ADA Elizabeth Culmone-Mills, DA Nneji has promoted Paul Derohannesian to the position of Deputy Chief ADA, previously held by Culmone-Mills.

“In his second year as a prosecutor in 2015, I trained and assisted ADA Derohannesian in his first felony trial in Ulster County Court and saw in him the qualities of a strong prosecutor: intelligence, humility, respect, and the fortitude to tackle the more difficult and challenging cases in this County. We continued his training by preparing and trying together a felony aggravated cruelty to animals case, resulting in a jury conviction. His growth and continued development as a prosecutor reflect his personal commitment to being his best,” said **DA Nneji**.

Derohannesian remained steadfast in his commitment to the oath as a Prosecutor in late 2020 through 2021 as other experienced prosecutors left the office under the enormous burden brought by the criminal justice reforms, which had taken effect in January of 2020.

“Paul persevered to help this office regain its footing; he showed teamwork whether working from home during the pandemic or in the office, giving me hope and energy to do as much as I could to see justice for the community and victims of crimes,” said **DA Nneji**.

Derohannesian graduated from North Carolina State University as Valedictorian in 2008, then from Wake Forest University School of Law in 2012. While in law school he was on the Journal of Business and Intellectual Property and the Moot Court Team; he also served as a Research Assistant for Dr. Gregory Parks focusing on unconscious and implicit racial bias and the law.

Derohannesian joined the office in January 2013; during which time he has handled numerous felonies and tried several to verdict in County Court. In June 2018, Derohannesian was recognized by the Ulster County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) for his tireless dedication to the protection of animals. He was featured in the documentary "For the Birds", was shown at the 2018 Woodstock Film Festival.

In August 2021, Derohannesian was promoted to Bureau Chief for General Felonies and DWI. He will be moving on from this position to take on his new assignment as Deputy Chief ADA. He will be sharing the responsibility of covering the daily calendar of the Ulster County Court with Chief ADA Culmone-Mills, prosecuting and supervising serious vehicular crimes, and providing general training for ADAs.

Lauren Swan continues decades of service to the Ulster County DA's Office

Executive Assistant District Attorney Lauren Swan has served in the District Attorney's Office for since 2004. She handled cases in various justice courts throughout Ulster County. Ms. Swan was the first ADA assigned to the newly established Domestic Violence Court in Kingston City Court.

Ms. Swan was promoted to handling a felony caseload in 2006, with an emphasis on domestic violence and sex crimes. She presented cases to the Grand Jury weekly, and tried numerous felony cases to verdict, including burglary, narcotics, and sex offenses. In 2010, Ms. Swan was promoted to Senior Assistant District Attorney. In this role, she represented the District Attorney's Office for the daily County Court docket for several years. Additionally, she conducted felony hearings, including sex offender registration.

“In 2022, Swan recognized the office's local court ADAs were also struggling under the constraints of criminal justice reforms and post-COVID changes to the office, and the need for additional supervision of the courts where our Office has highest volume of cases and most interaction with the public, and stepped up to serve as the Justice Courts and Diversion Bureau Chief,” **said DA Nneji**.

Swan supervises ADAs who appear in 22 justice courts before almost 40 judges of our Towns and Villages throughout the County and Kingston City Court, as well as

maintaining her own caseload. As Executive ADA, she is actively involved in hiring and training of new prosecutors. She also supervises the Office's involvement in diversion programs including Drug Court, Veteran's Court Track, and Restorative Justice.

A graduate of SUNY Binghamton and New England School of Law, Ms. Swan is a lifelong resident of Ulster County. She is a member of the Mid-Hudson Women's Bar Association, a longstanding Board member of the Ulster County Bar Association and has been appointed by the Presiding Justice to serve two terms on the Third Judicial Department's Character and Fitness Committee.

Sajaa S. Ahmed Begins New Role as Administrative ADA

Sajaa S. Ahmed will serve as the first Administrative Assistant in District Attorney in the Ulster County DA's Office. Her role will include serving as Communications Director, overseeing internal communications and external relationships with the community and government partners at all levels. In addition to carrying a caseload, she will serve as liaison to our County Executive and Legislature, particularly in matters of County budget and finance. She will also continue to lead in litigation arising from the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act, which has created additional burdens for prosecutors and victims of violent crimes.

"I have appointed Sajaa to these tasks given her previous experience and knowledge within our County government in dealing with related matters, and considering the tidal wave of reforms in the criminal justice system and the continuing changes in the work of DA's Offices across the state," said **DA Nneji**.

Ahmed joined this Office in 2021, serving as an ADA in local courts, including handling the Domestic Violence Calendar in the City of Kingston, as well as serving as the Operational Director of the Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Task Force. She joined the Ulster County government in 2018, appointed as Director of Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT), during which time she collaborated with County leaders on Ulster County's COVID-19 response to ensure the public and UCAT staff were safe as they continued public transit service through the pandemic. She also oversaw the deployment of the County's first fully-electric transit buses now in use around the County.

Prior to her service in Ulster County, Sajaa Ahmed was an attorney for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey where she handled primarily federal employment and civil rights litigation; she also served as Law Clerk to the Honorable Alexander Waugh in the Appellate Division of the Superior Court of New Jersey. She is a graduate of Columbia University and Rutgers University School of Law. She was admitted to practice law in New York in 2015 and in New Jersey in 2014, and is also admitted in Federal Courts in both states She served as an intern in the Summer of 2008 in the Domestic Violence Bureau of Kings County District Attorney's Office.

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