

Keith Anderson – Oral History Transcription

Interviewee: **Keith Anderson** (Warren County Assistant Prosecutor, ret.)

Interviewers: **Tori Otten** (Archives Technician), **Jenifer Baker** (Deputy Archivist)

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List of Initials: TO (Tori Otten), JB (Jenifer Baker), KA (Keith Anderson)

Location of Interview: Warren County Admin Building in Lebanon, Ohio

Transcriber: Ted Hitchens (Records Specialist)

[Begin transcription 00:00:02]

TO: Today is July 13, 2022 and we're here at the Warren County Records Center and Archives for part of our Warren County employee histories. My name is Tori Otten and I am the archival specialist here.

JB: My name is Jenifer Baker and I am the deputy archivist.

TO: Today we're going to have our guest introduce themselves if you'd be so kind.

KA: My name is Keith Anderson. I worked at the county prosecutor's office for thirty-one years and I've just retired, so I'm here to help out on this.

TO: And we are so thankful for you. It really helps our cause. So you've already said your name, so when and where were you born?

KA: I was born in Vincennes, Indiana. It's in Knox County, it's right on the Wabash River. Take US-50 and go west and you'll hit it from Cincinnati.

TO: So did you grow up there or somewhere else?

KA: No, I grew up in Knox County. Not in the city but on a farm in the county.

TO: Okay. So where have you lived since then now?

KA: Okay, after- after going to college, I lived at Purdue University for how ever many years I was there; four I guess. I then lived in Cincinnati when I went to law school. And then I lived in Lebanon since then. Not many places. Not many cities, yeah.

TO: So you went to Purdue for your undergrad. Did you go to UC (*University of Cincinnati*) for your law degree?

KA: I did.

TO: And did you have any other jobs prior to working for Warren County?

KA: Yes, I was- for three years prior to 1990 I was with a law firm – a small law firm – in Cincinnati. And for three years prior to that I was with a small law firm in Northern Kentucky.

TO: So since you've answered a lot of our general background questions, we can move onto department questions about your actual history here.

KA: Okay.

TO: So you've already said that you've worked for the prosecutor's office for thirty years. What positions did you hold in that department while you were here?

KA: Assistant Prosecutor.

TO: The whole time?

KA: Yeah.

TO: I love it.

KA: Various assignments but the same title.

TO: Very interesting.

JB: So the Prosecutor's Office is what brought you to Lebanon?

KA: Yes.

TO: So what year did you start?

KA: September of 1990.

TO: Can you tell us about the different locations your office is located while you were working here?

KA: Yes, initially it was on Warren Street. I couldn't tell you the address but it's where TASC is now in the same building as the old- where the old courthouse is on Warren Street, little old house. After that- well after that we moved into the building at ... 500 Justice Drive. What's there now is I think a couple of small courtrooms and court personnel of some kind, magistrates I think.

TO: So what was an average day of work like for you compared to the beginning of your career here to versus when you were leaving?

KA: Before I forget though, after we left that when they built that new building that's now 520 Justice Drive. And so we moved from that downstairs up to that second floor of that new building. But in between time, I also spent some time on the third floor of this building, the Admin Building, because before they built that new building we were bursting at the seams, we didn't have room. So the part that I worked for- the division that I worked for – in the Civil division of the Prosecutor's Office – moved upstairs where... I'm not sure who's there now, it's on the third floor here.

JB: Right. So what was that like going from like a small house situation and then kind of like in some courtrooms, and then now you guys have an entire floor to yourselves, right?

KA: It's much nicer. It's the envy of a lot of prosecutors who come to visit us, or other law enforcement from other counties that are envious of our building. It's a lot different, of course everything has changed since. We didn't have computers when I started or cell phones, so... Along with the change in all of that came a change in not only personnel but technology and workspace.

JB: Well and is it the growth that has happened throughout the county that has increased the prosecutor's office, you know, personnel in size?

KA: Yeah it goes hand in hand ... When I started, we had four attorneys doing criminal felony prosecutions and three of them were part-time. So as the county grew, then yes the population unfortunately then that type of work comes with it. And in the civil division that I eventually worked for – we'll probably get to this – is a lot based on growth too, the growth of the county.

JB: So did you enjoy working on Warren Street in the smaller confines?

TIME 00:05:00 MARK

KA: Yeah. There was few people, it was very cozy (*JB: Right*) you know, the conference room had a big fireplace like a lot of these old houses do around here. Yeah, it was a lot different. Shared space, but that's okay.

JB: Well and the county must have looked a lot different when you first moved here especially from Cincinnati to Warren County.

KA: Yeah I always use as an example, the Mason-Montgomery Road. If you're heading up 71-North and you get off at Fields-Ertel Road take Mason-Montgomery Road. When I started there was a Waffle House, a Shell station, a polo field and I think that nursery may have been there...

TO: Ah yes, Natorp's.

KA: Yeah Natorp's. And I think that's all until P&G built their research center there, then it just went boom.

JB: Well and do you think- did you like the small town aspect of Warren County in the more rural—?

KA: Yes I did. We lived in Clifton in Cincinnati for a number of years and I was raised on a farm, my wife was raised on a farm so yeah we liked it. We could get on our bikes and three or four blocks and we were in the country. But we can't do that from where we lived anymore.

TO: Not as much! So I guess we will talk about what was your average day like at the beginning of your career when you said was less individuals were working full-time, less busy as far as crime-rate I suppose you would say.

KA: Normally, most of my time at that time was spent in criminal prosecutions. At the courthouse, the courts were here on 500 Justice Drive, so we had a little driving back and forth at the whim of the dockets, you know. We were controlled by the scheduling of the court, so... But my average day then

would be mornings I'd do criminal prosecutions either- we didn't have that many trials, actual jury trials, but we had a few every year (or) I did. Also when I started, I also worked in the civil division because at the time I started we only had one lawyer who is now Judge Mike Powell at the 12th District doing civil work and he was part-time. But it was just getting out of hand workwise. And since I had some experience in the civil arena – and by civil I mean non-criminal; all things legal that is not criminal prosecution – I started doing both right off the bat because, you know, I did twenty-five percent of the criminal cases and whatever we needed in the civil division then. Largely things like the boom on Mason-Montgomery Road there was a lot of land that had to be acquired to widen that road, a lot of stuff like that.

JB: So when you're working on those civil cases, do you work with the other departments in the county a lot to try to, you know, do the research on—?

KA: Yes. What a lot of people don't know on one of your questions here about what the Prosecutor does is that the prosecutor – the County Prosecutor – is the legal, is the attorney for all of the county elected officials, departments, public libraries, some schools, Board of D.D. (*Developmental Disabilities*), Board of Elections- all of these things that we are required by law – we being the prosecution's office – requires you to have what we call the civil division, the non-criminal. We represent townships, we represent all elected officials from the coroner to sheriff to commissioners to judges and to my once-boss the prosecutor. I've actually represented him on stuff, so... That's what the prosecutor does, that's one thing that people don't really know what the prosecutor's office does and that's a lot of it in that area.

JB: So as the assistant prosecutor, would you- so let's say for instance with the- the growth in Warren County, would you actually go to the other departments to do research on those cases, work directly with them or how did that work?

KA: Say, if there's development going on – I don't really have expertise in that – but subdivision law, water and sewer is going in to these new places, there's zoning to be done, and yes we would work closely with places like the Engineer's Office, the Zoning Department here, the Water and Sewer Department and townships if they're involved, and if there's no conflict, we would be their legal- their counsel for anything they needed. If that meant easements, acquisitions, zoning issues...

JB: Right. I was just thinking out Map Department, they reach out to us a lot to look for historic court records. So I wasn't sure if you guys represented like if you got into that with—

KA: Yeah, if it was in- if it was overlapping us, the Map Department is part of the Engineer's Office which is also one of our clients because he's an elected official.

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KA: So yeah, we would work with them on whatever they... A lot of the county agencies do their own work up to the point they need a lawyer and then they call us for whatever reason. Deeds, easements, that type of thing.

JB: That's so interesting, I never thought much about that, so...

KA: Most people haven't.

JB: Right.

KA: Most people don't know that there is a civil division. I try to explain it as being like a- If you think of the county as a corporation – they have a corporate lawyer that does everything from personnel matters to whatever they have. A lot of contract work... That's what the civil division does for Warren County, for the county.

TO: So which department would be larger then, your criminal division or the civil division?

KA: Criminal.

JB: Okay.

KA: They have I don't know how many but they encompass also the Juvenile Court prosecutors, County Court prosecutors and the felony prosecutors in the Common Pleas Court.

JB: So that's kind of what you started out doing, and then how has your position transitioned and what does that day today look like now?

KA: At one point when there was a change—gradually the civil division became busier and as did the criminal. But as we expanded, at some point when the prosecutor changed from Judge Oliver ... once prosecutor, then judge Oliver ... I worked for the next prosecutor in line was Rachel Hutzel and she was in the civil division, and she asked that I switched from all criminal to doing all civil somewhere around the early two-thousands. And so I didn't get out of criminal division that easily, we had one military guy that was getting called up. That happened, so I kind of transitioned from getting rid of all my criminal cases because I covered his stuff and then eventually just settled in the civil division.

JB: So when you transitioned from criminal into civil, who takes over the prior obligations?

KA: They had new lawyers come in.

JB: New lawyers? Okay.

KA: They hired new lawyers. As we- as we gradually increased lawyers, that would have been part of it.

TO: Are there big differences that occur when a new prosecutor is brought in?

KA: So far, no.

TO: Okay. I was going to say, could that be a thing?

KA: It could be a thing (*TO: Okay*). In Warren County, it isn't because- it could have been, yes, but no- there was no mass exodus or mass replacements in any of the prosecutors I've been through.

JB: Which I suppose leads me to another question. So when there is a new prosecutor that comes in, like, how much control did they have to change things?

KA: Complete.

JB: Complete control? Okay.

KA: Aside from the fact of classified civil servants, they can't get rid of- they can't just fire classified civil servants without cause or without jumping through some hoops, but somebody like me- I was the terminable-at-will... They lawyers are not classified. The lawyers are at terminable-at-will, and yeah. It is not uncommon for a new attorney to bring in people – especially in the higher levels of administration, the administrative stuff, because they trust them, they know them – that would not be unusual. Didn't happen here luckily.

TO: Do you tend to find a lot of the prosecutor—the attorneys who come to work for the Warren County prosecutor's department tend to have law degrees from very nearby schools?

KA: Yes. Yes, we have a lot of UD (*University of Dayton*), we have a lot of UC (University of Cincinnati), might have Northern Kentucky (*University*), may have to think about that. But there's probably a few – I can't think of any other law schools right off of—I'm sure there is... Sorry, I'm forgetting what they are.

TO: I believe the two that you mentioned mainly are the most- they're the largest in this area, correct?

KA: Sure.

TO: Okay.

KA: Yeah and people tend (to) go in the prosecutor's office tend to stay local. They went to local schools, they want to stay local they can get a job at the prosecutor sometimes.

TO: So, how often did you have to interact with the public if it weren't for a case. Did you ever have to interact if you weren't, say, doing research or such things?

KA: Yeah, almost daily probably. The public – when I started in the criminal prosecution field, we would all take turns each day meeting the public who wanted to come in and talk about filing charges where there was no police involved, so at least weekly I had one of those days that I would do that. The walk-ins, we called them, charges- filing charges. Sometimes we would, sometimes we wouldn't. So I had contact with them and of course we had contact with any witnesses we used in the criminal case. So yes, pretty regularly.

TIME 00:15:00 MARK

TO: Did you have a large quantity of those walk-ins on a regular basis?

KA: Yes. I don't know number-wise. We were lucky if we made it through a day without doing it because you could do all your office work that you needed to do. But yes because people would come in and want to do something about their kids. We always felt like we were the disciplinarians for a lot of the children they wanted to file... And you had legitimate runaway cases (and) you had domestic cases that type of thing, but... If it was a serious or more serious offense, you probably had the police involved. But police would come in on that day too—

JB: I was just about to ask, like what does that actual process look like when people want to press charges because, I mean, clearly they come in with—

KA: Well they might come in without a police report. They've never called the police. They just want to do something. You know, "my kid ran away yesterday." They want to do a runaway thing, something like that which is a valid concern of course. But we also met with the police officers that come in- that would want to come in and file charges. They'd arrested somebody – you gotta file something within twenty-four hours, so they would come in the next day and do it.

TO: Interesting. So clearly, you were very very busy every day. What did your schedule look like? Were you working a standard forty hours or far more than that?

KA: If I did not have a trial to prepare for, you could normally get by with forty hours. Actually when I started here it was thirty-five hours which was odd. Everybody I think in the county was on a thirty-five hour week. That eventually bumped up to forty. Yeah, we didn't goof off much. I mean obviously it comes and goes. It would get busy and then it wouldn't. But normally if I didn't have to do trial preparation or meet witnesses, you know, other people work too so you have to meet them at nights or weekends. Doing the civil stuff, township meetings sometimes don't start until seven o'clock at night or six o'clock at night and if we represent a township, we will go to those meetings as needed. Not all the time but just kind of on-demand.

TO: If you had a case that went to trial, how long is the process from start to finish of a standard trial I suppose you could say?

KA: If you start from arrest, there are statutory and constitutional time limits within which you have to bring a case to trial. Those can be waived or extended depending upon on what the defendant—the defendant can waive that time, the prosecutor cannot. So within a certain amount of time it depends on the charge. But let's say after they're indicted – if they're in jail, it's done pretty quickly because we have to. If they're not in jail, those time limits are extended. You know a major case, a major thing... it could be a year to do a murder trial ... just because the defense may hire experts, we hire experts, all kinds of things get involved in those. I don't want to say run-of-the-mill crime because if you ask the victim, there is no run-of-the-mill crime. But, you know, a theft offense of some kind is gonna be done in a few months unless something strange happens.

TO: Very interesting. So do you have any memorable cases that you worked on that very much stick out to you during your tenure?

KA: On the criminal side, I prosecuted the first murder case that I did where the defendant faced the death penalty. (It) was a murder—probably not my most memorable, but that's the one that—those stick out in your mind. And the second one was two guys murdered a convenience store clerk working the night shift, of course. And that one we did have two defendants both facing the death penalty and

we had to go- well, one of them entered a plea, one of them went to trial. Those were memorable because you remember the victims.

TO: So, is there anybody who would be memorable not tied to your cases like your coworkers or any peers that you had- department managers – anybody who really made an impact on you?

KA: Yeah I would say so. I worked closely with Bruce McGary, he's an assistant prosecutor. He does a lot of our real estate stuff so I learned a lot about real estate and being meticulous from him. And also about just life, he's just a good guy.

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KA: And then there's everybody- you can't go without mentioning Chris Watkins who I went to law school with. And he's one of the nicest authentic people you'll meet. But they didn't influence- he didn't influence me so much through legal work but just personality, personal things.

TO: So what was your favorite – what was your favorite law to practice ... like what did you prefer criminal or did you enjoy civil or specific case types?

KA: Switching to civil at the time I did, it was good timing because the criminal I had done, not only here but in my previous life, and I preferred switching into the civil. So it was good timing when we had a change in prosecutor and they needed someone to do that. Really it was just good timing that I got to do it.

TO: So when did you say that switch was from criminal to civil?

KA: It was when Judge Oliver – Tim Oliver, Prosecutor, became judge and Rachel Hutzler became Prosecutor and somewhere around '02 or 2004 I think there was an election in '04 probably. But she may have been appointed to fill a vacancy and was elected after that.

JB: Is that election cycle stressful for anyone in the prosecutor's office? ... Was there a different feeling going onto those years?

KA: Can be The first couple of elections that I lived through, no. But then eventually there was more stress in another one, but...

JB: I'm just thinking of like takeovers from corporate, like, is that what it feels like – like you just don't know exactly how it'll play out (in that) situation?

KA: Yes, that's a good way to put it.

TO: So, something you and I had talked about earlier is that in 2009 you were president of the Warren County Bar Association. What did that- what was that experience like?

KA: Well, the Bar Association is not affiliated with the Prosecutor's Office. It's just a private, all lawyers can – they don't have to, but can belong to it – more of a social club. The IRS calls it like a club. The reason I mentioned that is because that year, our membership rose enough that the dues that are collected exceeded the amount that the IRS- the point where they require you to file a 990, some sort of a form like that. And of course nobody had done it, because they didn't know. It's funny, when I became treasurer before that, that all hit. And so we had to get reorganized, get all our taxes in shape. But as president – that was when I was treasurer it kinda carried through the years – but as president, you know, things were getting bigger and there was more membership and it was kinda fun, you know. It's not hard work being president, really. You go to meetings, you get a free lunch because our bar association was very congenial and small at the time and we do a CLE (*Continuing Legal Education*) which we had requirements to do, so we'll have one of those at 11 o'clock, have a lunch catered in at the grand jury room over there at 12 o'clock and that was where we had our bar association meetings was after we all finished lunch. And then we would just do whatever bar association stuff we did.

TO: Interesting.

JB: I imagine it was nice to have your peers to discuss – you know, like the daily life of....

KA: Yeah things came up like most recently I guess the thing that worked- it was a good thing is the bar association backed ... the defense bar wanting to increase the fees paid to the public defenders, because to keep them in line with other counties and to keep lawyers interested in doing that and they were all underpaid, even the prosecutor made the motion to do that- to do a support for that because it is important that they get compensated fairly for doing that. I did it in Cincinnati, so I like that.

JB: This is kind of a selfish question for us, but I know we've had to reach out to you as the records center & archives, like what sort of interactions have you had with our department through the years?

KA: Well I've been your lawyer for the most part ... mostly me have been since I've been doing civil work. I did legal work for your director, the previous director, and of course we represent the Recorder also who runs the Records Commission. So yeah, we've- a lot of contract stuff, the shredders and the storage up in Dayton whatever- I forget what it is...

TIME 00:25:00 MARK

KA: Some personnel issues in the past – not lately, luckily. But we've had that type of stuff. So yeah, I used to go to the Records Commission meetings on a regular basis. Our prosecutor does that now himself unless he's gone and he'll assign ... I keep saying me, but one of the other assistant prosecutors. I just retired last Thursday, so—

TO: So, did you have to get involved in, say, the records retention as well since that's a state-dictated schedule?

KA: Yeah. Over the years, you know, the first one that I saw the prosecutor's office had like three things on it – maybe six. And as records retention became more ... popular and more active with things like lawsuits, etcetera, I'd say every retention schedule of every division of the county has been rewritten numerous times since I've been here out of necessity because they should have been all along, so... Yeah, I've spent a lot of time on records retention schedules.

JB: Do you have any cases that come to mind where there was a public record needed for and it was not available?

KA: Not anything specific. We've had public records requests obviously weekly if not daily. Not just our office but everybody's office. You know, there was a time when the Board of Elections destroyed some ballots early. They have schedules when they can destroy them; didn't hurt anything, but it was one of those things that just happened because they were in the wrong or something. I can't remember being sued because they didn't exist. There was a current lawsuit that was filed right before I left that has to do with commissioners' meetings. I don't know the status of it – I don't know where it's going.

TO: Here's the thing about the records center, we've retained multiple records for other departments but it's always intriguing for the different state requirements for how long certain things- as, for example, your department does not have a great quantity of files in the back compared to others. But there are certain things that are quite- they will be there forever. They will be here longer than any of us (*KA: Right*). So ... how would the retention of the Prosecutor's—what would dictate something that would have to stay forever?

KA: By policy and not by law, the Prosecutor's office has decided to keep things like murders and violent- other violent type of offenses- sex offenses or murders basically forever, or at least until whoever dies – the bad guy dies if that can be the case. Otherwise they have a policy (of) each type of case. Normally the criminal cases are kept for ten years after they're over which counts the appeals and everything, plus ten years. But their policy is to keep the murder cases longer because those things crop up again through federal courts and everything. I don't think they destroy any of them – maybe sometime but maybe not. You might have them awhile. I know it says on the retention schedule they are not to be destroyed.

TO: Yes, there's an entire wall down here of those cases that you're talking about. This is purely curiosity on my part question. What do you do with evidence that is no longer needed...?

KA: Ideally we give it back to the police department who seized it, because the Prosecutor's office does not go out and seize evidence as does the police department with a search warrant at the scene of a crime. Ideally we return it to them and they have what we call property rooms normally where they keep stuff.

TO: Interesting ... So I believe that's mostly our department-based questions, so these are just some questions about Warren County as a whole. So, what would you consider some of your highlights of your time with Warren County?

KA: I was trying to think of this when I read these in advance, of course. It has more to do with not with the work but with outside work. Friends I've made, things we did – golfing and stuff like that. So my most memorable time with the county was not necessarily my employment with the county, although it came from that.

TO: Interesting. So, you've already kind of broached up on this one but when you started at the county, (it was) clearly much smaller in 1990 when you were in a very small building on Warren Street. What was the entirety of the county like in the operation of the county compared to 1990 to when you just left?

TIME 00:30:00 MARK

KA: Much more laid back. Look at the records retention and the public records requests. We didn't get public records requests in 1990. As that example, it became more popular when there was a- sometime in the 90's, one of the large media groups did a statewide sting operation ... just to research who was actually doing it right and who wasn't. And they'd go to a lot of the little counties on the boondocks, I call them which we were at the time, and just seeing if we were doing it right. And they printed up a big report about it and a lot of them weren't. And that kind of started the process of people making public records requests and becoming knowledgeable that they could do so and most are valid, I mean, most are easy to deal with. The press has learned how to do it, we've learned how to do it, and you can usually just talk to people and figure out what they're really looking for. Some people will ask for everything and anything under the sun which we don't have to give. But sometimes if you just talk to them, you find out what they're really looking for. So, the question was what has changed? That type of case stuff has expanded and obviously the development stuff too. Crimes happen about the same.

TO: Fair enough. So what types of significant events happened during your time as an employee? Overall in the county, not necessarily just the Prosecutor's Office?

KA: Okay. Significant events—the country as a whole? I mean we had significant events. In thirty years a lot of things have happened – the wars, et cetera. I don't know what has happened here that has had that big of an impact overall. You know, there's been tragedies and there's been triumphs I guess. The tragedies are what everybody remembers, you know, police officers killed or hurt or whatever. But I don't know what significant events- I don't know how I would respond to that.

JB: This kind of piggybacks off of a significant event – Is there a case that happened that was very sensationalized that you were a part of, like in the media that- it kind of like crept outside of your primary job duties where it was like--?

KA: There's been murder cases that I was only I haven't been doing any criminal cases in a number of years myself. But we always had to deal with public records issues – again, I'm bringing back that as reference. Things like the Ryan Widmer case. If anybody remembers it was tried three times, the press was all over it, private groups were all over it, authors were all over it in the press, so I spent a lot of time sorting through public records- sorting through the file, not just me but others to determine what was public record and what wasn't at the time because there was three trials. So you have to figure out when you start and when you stop. It's all based on public record now.

JB: Did that creep into your personal life outside of work at all?

KA: No. Other than everybody you meet asking you about it ... No.

TO: So I guess in regards to our (*indecipherable*) ... one we did not even think about recently a few other retirees have told us is 9/11 made a big impact upon them working for the county at the time. What was your experience with that? Did you notice differences in different ways the county operated?

KA: Security tightened up on just about every place, well that was happening anyway. I think the law enforcement folks who I interact with were probably affected largely by it more than they- (they) tightened things. But as far as affecting what I did at the county, probably not. Not a big deal. I mean it was a big deal obviously, but not as it related to my work.

TO: This question pertains to- earlier I asked if you noticed changes in the system once you got your prosecutor. Did it affect you all when a new judge or a new sheriff was elected?

KA: Yes. Yes it does. The sheriffs that I've had- well, only one came from outside the system and that was Tom Ariss (*Warren Co. Sheriff 1992-2009*) because he was a state trooper, he was retired.

TIME 00:35:00 MARK

KA: But Larry Sims (*Warren Co. Sheriff 2009-present*) was a detective- an office and a detective before so I knew him from my criminal prosecution days anyway. Yes, that can make a difference and also the judges make probably a bigger difference, at least in my experience, because they handle things differently. You have to figure out- When you're the Prosecutor, you have to figure out when you have to be nice and when to fight. Sometimes you have to argue and sometimes they're right, darn it!

JA: Well- so this might be a weird question, but because- As a prosecutor you clearly have to present information in front of other people- like, I have severe stage fright, like was that when you first started ever like an issue for you?

KA: Sure.

JB: Yeah.

KA: I came from the criminal defense side in Cincinnati. I took public defender cases there, so the trials I did there was the defense side. And you don't have to prove anything. When you become prosecutor, you have to prove everything. And so- and you go first, so when the jury walks in the room – or even without the jury – I wasn't too worried about judges, about bench trials. Yeah I was nervous, or at least somewhat anxious up until the end of the jury trials because you have to speak and you have to convince people about something. Yeah- unless you're comfortable at public speaking, it's not easy and it wasn't easy for me the whole time.

JB: Well that's like a different level where you have to be on it- listening and, you know, keeping up with what is going on and what's being discussed so that you're present. So that's an interesting—

KA: You can't let your mind wander at anytime. The worst thing or experience is when a judge looks at you and says "what do you think about that" and you say "What?" (*laughter*). I mean, that has happened.

JB: Right. I was about to say, if you feel like you would just have to be present like learn how--

KA: You have to be on your toes.

TO: Do you have to use destressing techniques when you went home. I feel like that is a very high-stress environment compared to, say, what we are used to here.

KA: Yeah I like to do things other than just sit. In summer it's easy. Harder in the winter because there's nothing much to do outside. Nothing in particular really.

TO: So what are some of the most important things that you learned from working for Warren County?

KA: Well let's see – the most important things I've learned. I suppose it's maybe tolerance and- that is of other people's views and opinions and all that other viewpoints. A criminal victim sees things different than, say, a family member might or a family member of the defendant might, and they all have value- maybe valid reasons to think what they think. So tolerance of others and patience I think. You have to be patient with people like—it can be very stressful for the players in the cases, you know. I'm going to go home after it's over and start anew the next day, whereas the victims or the defendants or their families- that's the only time they've ever done it. Hopefully for them they've never had to do it more than once and that sticks. So you know – patience, tolerance, understanding. I learned that from just doing it I guess.

JB: Is there ever a situation where you- you all in the Prosecutor's Office have additional support when it comes to working with people like that, like, as far as like mental health or- you know what I mean, like is there—because it is such a delicate subject with some of the cases, like, do they ever bring in maybe outside people to help support the staff when it comes to stuff like that?

KA: Not support the staff but for victims, we have within ... they have in the Prosecutor's Office a victim-witness division of victim advocates. And to each criminal case is assigned a victim advocate to do communications with the victims and more than that, you know, notify them and keep them advised as to what's going on, court with them, meet with their family and all of that – help them through the system. But for the lawyers we don't have a- we don't have that. So far I guess we haven't needed any. Maybe some people do.

TO: Interesting. So I realize you've only been gone a little while but what will you miss the most about working for Warren County?

TIME 00:40:00 MARK

KA: Well it's probably the same answer everybody gives and I thought about that one too. I'll miss everybody I worked with.

TO: The people.

KA: That's probably what everybody says, isn't it?

TO: Usually it's very similar.

KA: To a certain extent, I will miss just working doing the type of thing that I was doing. But I can still do some work outside, but- No, I think it's more along the line of individual people plus going to a place where there are people everyday. You know, a lot of people there...

JB: Warren County does a great job of building community within—

KA: Yeah, I think so. So I know that sounds like everybody else but that's probably the truth.

TO: Well ... (*indecipherable*) ... we all very much appreciate our peers.

KA: Yeah. Yeah I think so. I can't think of anybody who I would avoid walking down the street. Over the years anybody that I worked with or know that I work with I see them come down the street, I'm probably not going to cross over to avoid them. I mean, I'd probably chat with them if I saw them.

TO: So do you have any advice for any current employees?

KA: I would say don't give up on your employer. At times you get stressed or you think there might be greener grass somewhere else, and there might be. But you need to pay attention to what you've got first before you go jumping off a cliff because it may not be better. So the advice would be, be patient and think about what you've got before you give it up.

TO: I like that. So that is our last official question. Do you have anything else you would like to share with us?

KA: You know, I thought of that question too. I don't know, we've kind of covered everything as far as the county goes, so no I don't think I have anything to add.

TO: Well in that case we would like to thank you for participating in our program and I will conclude this oral history. Thank you.

[End transcription 00:42:15]