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WOUNDED KNEE MASSACRE AND THE TOY SOLDIER: A "GEORGE FLOYD MOMENT"



(Cont. on pgs. 2-3)





NIAGARA FALLS

Wounded Knee Massacre and the Toy Soldier: A "George Floyd Moment"

Ken Hamilton

While at the American Veterans Monument at Niagara Falls in city's Hyde Park, Allegheny Seneca Indian and community activist Paul Winnie stands in front of one of the eight small monuments dedicated to American warriors who have been awarded a Medal of Honor for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty." That particular monument in which Winnie sadly gazed upon was the one dedicated to then-Niagara Falls resident and US Army Sergeant Frederick E. Toy. Muttering to himself, he softly whispers and calls the monument, "... a George Floyd Moment." There's good reason that he wonders why it is still there.

WOUNDED KNEE, SOUTH DAKOTA

In 1890, 30-years after the start of an American Civil War that would eventually lead to the abolition of African enslavement in the United States, American Army expeditionary forces would continuously engage in the mistreatment of its indigenous peoples, the American Indian. One of the most egregious acts perpetrated during the so-called Indian Wars of those days was the December 28th, 1890 massacre of an estimated 250 to 300 Native Americans whereas, according to Myles Hudson, an Editorial Intern at Encyclopedia Britannica, "about half were women and children."

WHERE ARE THE "ALL-LIVES MATTER" PEOPLE ON THIS?

While this week marks the 31st week since the death of Minnesotan and African-American George Floyd, killed by a

Minneapolis police officer that sparked Black Lives Matter protests throughout the country and around the world, it also marks the 130th anniversary of that senseless massacre of relatively unarmed people.

Though the city of Niagara Falls NY is associated with that massacre in Wounded Knee SD, some 1,172 miles away from this city, through Frederick E. Toy, whom reportedly "bravely" shot and killed two unarmed and fleeing Native Americans as they tried to seek refuge in a ravine, one has to wonder why he would be celebrated with such a monument by the city through its Niagara Falls Veterans Monument Commission. While this reporter sought comment sent several requests to the commission's vice-chairman Stan Zimmerman, Zimmerman has yet to respond.

However, Niagara Falls community activist Ken Cosentino said that in his contacts with both City Council Chairman Chris Voccio and Zimmerman, both declined any action pending a decision by the federal government to rescind such honors by those whose actions that led up to the awards were questionable. That inaction not only includes the removal of the Toy monument, but also publicly questioning the merit in it remaining in place.

While the single death of George Floyd was terrible, effectively due to a white Minneapolis police officer kneeling on a handcuffed and subdued Floyd's neck until he was dead, how much more terrible would have been the actions if white army non-commissioned officer killing two unarmed fleeing Indians on their own property?

How many people in the world know

anything about Minneapolis as compared to their knowledge of a world-famous city like Niagara Falls? The Cataract City not only has a Seneca Indian Reservation within its city limits in the form of a casino resort, and a nearby Tuscarora Indian Reservation a stone's throw away, as well as 23% of the city's population being African-American. Can there be little wonder why Winnie wonders why there is little government and area concern over the toy monument?

THE FACT IS THAT NIAGARA FALLS HAS LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WOUNDED KNEE MASSACRE

Zimmerman is a retired educator, school principal and retired soldier. As such, he likely knows more about the Wounded Knee Massacre than does 'almost' anyone of the city councilmen, whom by the councilmen's predecessors chartered the commission that Zimmerman often leads. But it is likely that given the near 1,200-miles distance of Wounded Knee, and the commonality of such events as the Wounded Knee in the 1950s-1960s

media of "cowboy and Indian" culture in which many Niagarans experienced in their childhood, the ignorance of such real events would go unnoticed in American school text books, as did the racism against blacks and most other minorities – almost!

Four of the five councilmen understandably said of Sgt. Toy that they didn't have enough information to come to a conclusion as to do anything about the sergeant's monument. While it is incumbent upon them, because the monument commission acts in agency for them, now is the time that they should learn. Councilman Bill Kennedy, Jr. was the "almost" among his peers. When I ask him for a comment, he said that he would have it written and sent to me via email. Kennedy's comments shed much light on the massacre and Toy monument, and he espouses a position that his colleagues may want to somehow embrace.

COUNCILMAN KENNEDY'S COMMENTS ON TOY MONUMENT

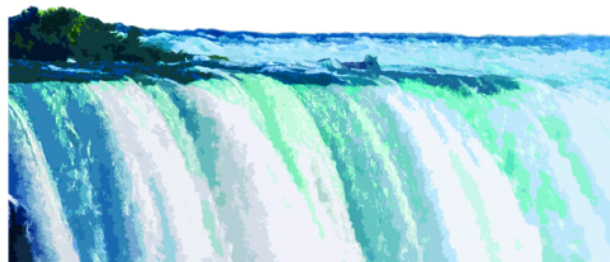
The following is in full what Kennedy submitted in what he titles My Research and Opinion on Wounded Knee:

"On this, the 130th anniversary of the Wounded Knee Massacre, I wish to first express my deepest sympathy for the Lakota people who are still healing from this tragedy. On December 29th, 1890, an estimated 250 - 300 Lakota were brutally slaughtered by the 7th cavalry; half of those killed were women and children. Their only "crime" was being Indigenous. This occurred during a time in history when Indigenous people were colored over as savages who deserved to be exterminated. What happened at Wounded Knee was an act of genocide, there is no doubt about that.



Councilman Bill Kennedy with Native Americans.

NIAGARA



REPORTER

Frank Parlato, Jr.

Publisher & Editor in Chief

P.O. Box 3083, Niagara Falls NY 14304
(716) 870-1175 niagarareporter@gmail.com

"For Wounded Knee, 20 soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest and most esteemed award. One of these recipients was Sgt. Frederick Ernest Toy, a resident of Niagara Falls. I am not at liberty to speak of Sgt. Toy's character as I clearly did not know the man. Sgt. Toy received his Medal of Honor for "bravery," and there is nothing brave about genocide. According to his superior, Captain Edgerly, who recommended Toy for the award; "I saw the sergeant deliberately aim at and hit two Indians who had run into the ravine; his coolness and bravery exciting my admiration at the time."

"For context, this band of Lakota under Chief Spotted Elk were targeted for practicing a spiritual ceremony known as the "Ghost Dance," which frightened the settlers at the time and was deemed a threat. Historically, the United States government has had a bloody past with those who were here first. For example, President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act of 1830 resulted in the infamous Trail of Tears, which resulted in the deaths of thousands of Indigenous people. For some, 1830 and 1890 seem like ancient history. This is not the case for our Indigenous families who still suffer from this generational trauma, living on reservations without clean water and fighting for their rights. In fact, it wasn't until 1978 with the passing of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act that practices such as the Ghost Dance became legal. Still today there are elders who were abused in American and Canadian reformation and boarding schools, something our governments would rather we NOT talk about which is an issue itself. If these atrocities occurred in Nazi Germany, we wouldn't even have to debate whether or not Sgt. Toy's name should be removed from the statue. For comparison: 20 million Native Americans died due to the European invasion, and an estimated 6 million Jews died during the Holocaust. Today, we would deem these actions as an act of terrorism.

"For these reasons, I am in full support of the removal of Sgt. Frederick Toy's name from the Medal of Honor Veteran's Monument at Hyde Park. While the Veteran's Monuments are something [that] we should be proud of, the acts of Sgt. Toy on Dec. 29th, 1890 are not. There is no honor in genocide. I support the rescinding of all 20 medals by the "Remove the Stain Act," introduced to Congress in 2019 by Senator Elizabeth Warren. These great statues, one of which bears the name of my grandfather Delbert Kennedy, a World War II veteran, should be valued and protected in our community. Yet the Medal of Honor statue is disfigured by including Sgt. Toy's name next to 6 American heroes who earned their medals. The legacies of these 6 will forever live in the shadow of Wounded Knee unless we make this right and remove Sgt. Toy's name. I am asking for Congressional and public support in these matters."

SIGNIFICANCE OF A GEORGE FLOYD MOMENT

Minorities are understandably more sensitive to such incidences of George Floyd-types, so much so that many African- and Indian-Americans have called for the removal of statues of Christopher Columbus. Little wonder why the Seneca Paul Winnie wonders about the lack of outrage about Frederick E. Toy's monument that sits with six others who likely undoubtedly were awarded their Medals of Honor for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty." Second LT John P. Bobo's is a stellar example of such. In times past, though Councilman Kennedy took the lead in this one, such situations would have been delegated to minority members of a political body for decisions. Former Niagara County Legislator Renae Kimble was often the go-to source when

she was the only elected minority official in Niagara County. City councilmen, such as Andrew Walker, Charles Walker, Robert Anderson, Jr. – who initiated the Niagara Falls Veterans Monument Commission, and then, after Anderson, would have been Councilman Ezra Scott, Jr., but he elected not to run for reelection.

Nonetheless, because Scott has, unlike the others, remained relevant, Scott was questioned on the issue of Wounded Knee.

Scott, more briefly, said, "Understanding history and how we often may not have the full story, it's fair to understand an individual's thoughts and stance evolving once becoming enlightened."

In essence, Scott said that once you know something different that you thought that it is incumbent to act upon that same thing in a different way than was acted upon when in ignorance.

Former Niagara Falls City Administrator Albert Joseph has a mixed view on the subject. While Joseph is excited about the prospects of Congresswoman Deb Haaland rising to the position of Secretary of the Interior [mentioned later in this article], Joseph, a former USAF captain who was offered the rank of major, but opted to retire after a long enlisted and commissioned service, said that he would not be in favor of unilaterally taking away everyone's medals. "There may be some who have, through courage and actions beyond the call of duty, deserved the medals, and others may not have."

By no stretch of the imagination is Joseph anti-Indian; sometime after his term as city administrator, Joseph moved to El Paso TX and worked for ten years with the Pueblo Indians as a housing director, helping the tribes to get the much-needed housing infrastructure that they deserved.

"Instead of a Carte Blanche, taking away every medal won that day, a review of each case is warranted," he said.

GOING FORWARD

In June of 2019, Congressman Denny Heck of Washington State, along with Congresswoman Deb Haaland of New Mexico -- the first female Native American congresswoman and a prospective Secretary of the Interior under prospective President Joseph Biden, introduced a bill to examine and rescind the medals that were awarded for service during the Wounded Knee Massacre. Introduced into the Senate by Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, if passed in both houses, regardless of who is president, will most likely pass.

Many politicians and public policy-makers would then be freely obligated to make the decision to remove on federal property any and all such permanent and paper citations of any individual so honor from public display.

What then, to the Frederick E. Toy Monument in Niagara Falls?

Is the monument a public or private monument that was commissioned by the city and sits on public property?

In my opinion, the monument is city property; and the council who commissioned and paid in-part for its construction can with the stroke of a pen rescind any decision that the commission makes. Therefore, it is likely that, upon the passing of the Warren-Heck bill, the Toy monument will be sanded smooth and polished in preparation for the next American service member who is awarded the Medal of Honor for actual "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty."

AN ONGOING STORY

The Niagara Reporter will be closely following this particular story, and in no way is advocating violence or desecration of any structure.

AUTHOR'S PERSONAL OPINION

I was an American warrior in Vietnam. As any good soldier, sailor, airman



or Marine, I, for the most part, followed the orders of those under whom I served.

In the summer of 1972, as a young sailor aboard the cruiser USS England I served in the Tonkin Gulf along the coast of what was then North Vietnam. My job was in the ship's Combat Information Center where, among other things, I tracked the US Navy and USAF bombing raids on the Vietnamese war and support facilities to ensure the safety of those aircraft. England's mission was to weed out any enemy aircraft and destroy them with our terrier missiles; and, in the event that a pilot was shot down and could make it into a position for safe pickup, England had a Sea Knight helicopter embarked for the rescue.

Prior to my naval service, in 1968 I became acutely aware of the actions of one US Army Lt William L. Calley and his involvement in the My Lai massacre of a reported 22 unarmed Vietnamese village civilians. Naturally, as a youngster, my heart went out to the villagers. However, as an actual war veteran, I begin to better understand the thinking of Calley. Having been flooded with a high tide of adrenaline and testosterone, and having a brain and heart ebbing in compassion, my views had honestly changed. To quote the Civil War Union Army General William T. Sherman, "There is many a boy here today who looks on war as all glory, but boys, it is all hell." I was one of the boys that looked at war as all glory.

It was easy to feel so when stationed a few miles off the shore where through a pair of Navy Big Eyes binoculars and four terrier missiles on the rail, I could feel relatively safe watching the bombs fall from the planes and destroying the

enemy's facilities that aided their aims in war. But, years later, the other part of Sherman's quote came home to my heart: that is, "War is hell." The hell comes later when the adrenaline and testosterone wanes, and the heart ebbs with tears and flood itself with humanity, and the brain comes to realize that there were fathers in those factories who didn't want war and wouldn't be coming back home to a subsequently starving family of women and children. Whereas, for me, the war wasn't hell, but the memories of it are. And while I don't regret answering my country's call, I do regret the country calling any of us for a situation that could have been settled diplomatically – and such should be the issue of the Wounded Knee Massacre.

How can I blame Sgt. Toy for accepting a Medal of Honor and all that came with it, when it is not known if he ever asked for it in the first place; or blame him for following orders?

However, there is nothing to suggest that he actually warranted the medal, especially under the circumstances of the battle. After all, 78-years after Wounded Knee, LT Calley was convicted and went to jail for similar actions. In the black Hills of the Dakotas, Toy faced nowhere near the danger that Calley faced among the rice paddies of southeast Asia.

I'd have to say that whether or not Haaland's bill passes and is signed by the president, that local policymakers, politicians, and commissioners, at the very least write a writ, much like Kennedy's and Scott's, acknowledging the situation, agreeing that Toy likely didn't earn the Medal of Honor, nor any accolades, during that massacre, and then do whatever is necessary as they await what Washington might do.

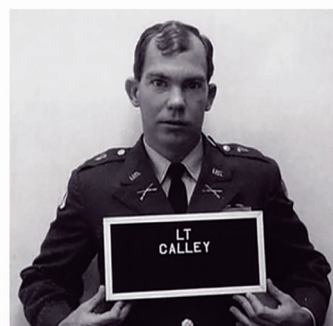
The local politicians should treat this situation in the same way that they treated the Floyd protests, but in a way whereas to abate any protest at all – and that is by doing the right thing. Kennedy and Scott have given you both the necessary information and the right mindset; it is up to you to follow-up.

After all, in my oft-re-quoting of the words of former Speaker of the House Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, "All politics are local." In this federated republic of ours, not only are we in Niagara Falls not confined by Washington in what we do in this situation – since this is not federal property, nor a federal decision as to what we do with it – Washington is supposed to be doing what its constituents tell it to do, and not the constituents being constantly under the guidance and thumb of the Beltway.

If it is a George Floyd moment, would you take your knee off the neck?

It is easier to be a politician than a service member; and that is why so few politicians are veterans.

Stay tuned.



William Calley



At sea aboard USS Mount Whitney (LCC/JCC 20) April 19, 2003-- In the evening sun SN Josh Jones from Springfield, Missouri stands the forward look out post from behind the large binoculars known as "The Big Eyes". USS Mount Whitney and embarked staff are deployed to the Horn of Africa region, participating in Operation Enduring Freedom and the global war on terrorism. (Official U.S. Navy Photo by PH2 Steven G. Crawford)



THE CRIME

TOP HEADLINES

-Niagara Falls Police responded to 7-Eleven on the 9100 block of Niagara Falls Boulevard in the morning hours of December 25th, 2020, after reports of a Christmas day armed robbery. According to reports, one suspect allegedly held the store clerk at gunpoint with a shotgun while the other collected items. Suspects are reportedly two black males who were dressed in all black clothing / masks. Police are continuing to investigate the incident.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 2500 block of Walnut Avenue on December 27th 2020, after reports of a motor vehicle accident where a car drove into a house.

-Erie County Sheriff Timothy B. Howard reports Deputies charged an inmate with two criminal counts after he deliberately set off the sprinkler system at one facility and damaged a sprinkler head at another.

The first incident occurred on November 20 at the Erie County Correctional Facility. On this date, 20-year-old inmate Keinn Moore activated the sprinkler system in his cell. The spraying water caused significant damage to his cell, as well as the housing area and the adjacent housing area.

Then, on December 12 at the holding center, inmate Moore used a sheet to break a sprinkler head away from the pipe in his cell. Hundreds of gallons of water flooded the cell and surrounding areas. Moore proceeded to insert the sprinkler head into his rectum before Deputies removed him from his cell. Moore is charged with a misdemeanor count of reckless endangerment for the correctional facility's November 20 incident. He is also charged with a felony count of criminal mischief – damage another's property for the December 12 incident at the holding center.

The inmate remains at the holding center in administrative segregation under enhanced observation. The estimated damages to the facilities are over \$1000.00. Moore is remanded to the Sheriff's Office following his arrest by the Buffalo police for multiple felony counts and is held on \$10,000.00 bail.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the area of Jerauld Avenue and Lockport Street in the early morning hours of Tuesday, December 29th, 2020, after reports of more than a dozen gunshots fired. According to police, no injuries were reported.

-NFPD and Medical responded to an unresponsive 4-month-old baby around 2300 hours on Wednesday, December 30th, 2020. Location is being withheld as unofficial reports indicate the child did not survive.

-Niagara Falls Police, Fire and Medical responding to 500 block of 24th Street at 2050 hours on Thursday, December 31st, 2020, for a two-vehicle MVA that resulted in one car crashing into a home. According to reports, one male was entrapped in a vehicle after it flipped. The male driver in that vehicle and female driver of the other vehicle were transported to ECMC with serious injuries.

-NFPD received multiple calls overnight regarding a silver 4-door sedan driving around Downtown in the area of 19th Street where the passenger was allegedly shooting a gun out the window. If you have any information regarding who this is, call the non-emergency number at (716) 286-4547.

-Reports indicate that three cars were egged on the 1700 block of Cudaback Avenue in the early morning hours of Friday, January 1st, 2021. The vehicle identified as part of this incident was a blue Ford Escape with a red sticker on the back left corner of the window. Before the egging occurred it was reported that there was a fight on the same street involving multiple individuals. It is unknown if the two events are related.

-A concerned Niagara Falls resident who lives in the area of Portage Road and Niagara Street reports that a woman is screaming repeatedly loud enough to be heard several houses, or even blocks, away. Police were



called regarding the incident around 10:00pm on Thursday, December 31st, 2020, but seemingly could not locate the individual. According to the resident, the woman continued to scream at least 20 times into the morning hours of Friday, January 1st, 2020. This includes the woman shouting phrases such as "fuck you." She describes the screams as "loud and piercing." If you have any information, please call the NFPD non-emergency number at (716) 286-4547.

-Falls Police and Fire responded to the 600 block of 19th Street in the afternoon hours of Friday, January 1st, 2021, after reports of a possibly deceased male found between two houses. It is unknown how long the individual has been there or the circumstances surrounding how he died. The Niagara Action has confirmed that 28-year-old Carmelokris Brinson, of Niagara Falls, has passed away. A cause of death has not been determined as police are continuing to investigate.

-NFPD responded to reports of shots fired overnight in two separate areas of the city: 2400 block of South / Cleveland Avenue and 3500 block of Beldon Place. No injuries have been reported.

-NFPD responding to the 2200 block of Niagara Avenue around 0040 hours on Sunday, January 3rd, 2021, after reports of shots fired. It is unknown at this time if there any injuries or property damage.

-NFPD, Fire and Medical responded to the 600 block of Walnut Avenue in the morning hours on Sunday, January 3rd, 2021, after reports of an overdose where the individual was not breathing. No update as to their condition.

-Niagara Falls Police responding to the 1900 block of Falls Street around 2220 hours on Sunday, January 3rd, 2021, after reports of shots fired. Unknown injuries or property damage at this time.

-Niagara Falls Fire and medical responding to 39th Street and Packard Road at 1915 hours on Monday, January 4th, 2021, after reports of a hit and run two-vehicle MVA with serious injuries.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 900 block of Cedar Avenue in the afternoon hours of Monday, January 4th, 2021, after reports of a stabbing. According to police, one individual was stabbed and transported to ECMC with serious injuries. Police do not have a suspect and are continuing to investigate the incident.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 600 block of 19th Street around 2020 hours on Monday, January 4th, 2021, after reports of shots fired at a house. According to police, 19 shell casings were found at the scene. There were no injuries reported and police are continuing to investigate.

-Niagara Falls Police and Medical responded to the 2600 block of Highland Avenue around 2120 hours on Monday, January 4th, 2021, after reports of a stabbing. Once arriving to the scene, police identified a female inside of a red Chevy Trailblazer who had been stabbed in the upper body. The woman was bleeding profusely and transported to ECMC for treatment. Police are continuing to investigate the incident.

Ligammari Announces Run for Niagara Falls City Council

Staff Reporter

Local small business owner Colin Ligammari announced today she will seek to represent her neighbors on the Niagara Falls City Council.

Ligammari, who owns All On Red, Inc., a home renovation and short-term tourism rental business, said she hopes to put her experience in the tourism and housing industries to work for city taxpayers as both sectors work to recover from 2020's border shutdowns and travel restrictions.

"Since returning to my hometown of Niagara Falls in 2015, I have worked with other community leaders helping to create pathways forward for our vibrant small business community," Ligammari said. "Our city

government must work to attract smart, sustainable businesses to the city, and to re-grow our vital tourist market as our existing businesses emerge from COVID restrictions. Our city's vision going forward should be focused on helping our residents and boosting our local economy."

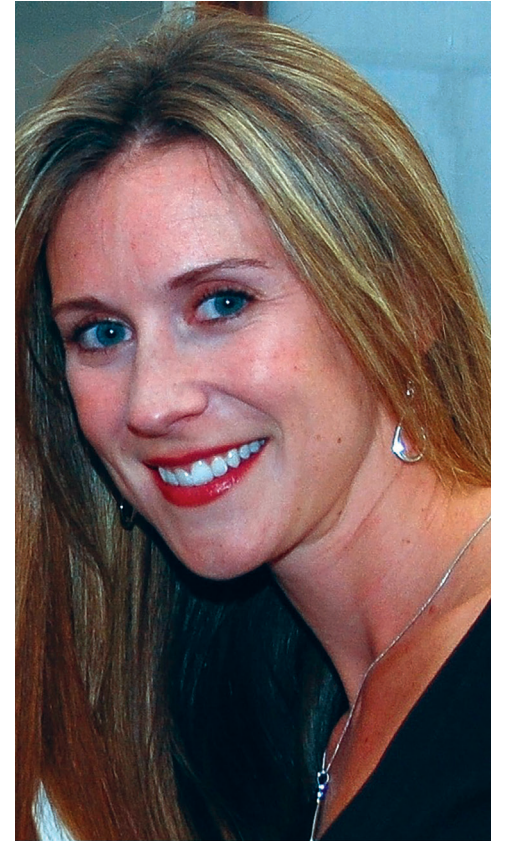
Ligammari, a Democrat, is seeking the endorsements of the Niagara County Democratic Committee and the WNY Working Families Party. She attended Niagara County Community College and graduated from Valencia College in Florida.

Ligammari is the vice president of the Niagara Falls Tourist Home Association, a tourism-policy advisory group. She also chairs the group's community outreach committee. She also is a part-time gymnastics coach

at Gleason's Gymnastics in North Tonawanda, and a long-time volunteer at the Niagara Falls Boys and Girls Club. Ligammari called herself "high-energy and community focused," and wants to make sure Niagara Falls remains "the best place to raise a family."

The Falls businesswoman noted that she and her fiancé Marc moved home to Niagara Falls raise their son. "I knew that Niagara Falls, was where we could count on the support of family and friends, was the best place for our son to grow up," Ligammari said. "We are so grateful to be raising him in a community of hard working men and women who love their hometown. I'm running because that's worth preserving."

For more information, visit Ligammari's Facebook page at



"Colin for Council," or email her at ColinforCouncil@gmail.com.

Christopher Mazur Announces Candidacy for Niagara Falls City Court Judge

Staff Reporter

Long time Special Prosecutor and current City of Niagara Falls Corporation Counsel, Christopher M. Mazur, has announced his candidacy for Niagara Falls City Court Judge for 2021. Mr. Mazur is seeking the seat currently held by Judge Mark Anthony Violante, who will be reaching the mandatory retirement age of 70 next year.

"My professional and life experience has prepared me to take the next step in my legal career as I am ready to follow in the footsteps of past and current City Court judges who are alumni of the Corporation Counsel's office."

Mr. Mazur is a lifelong resident of the City and is a graduate of the former Niagara Catholic High School. The first member of his family to attend college, he graduated from the State University of New York at Buffalo with degrees in Political Science and History prior to obtaining his law degree from the SUNY Buffalo Law School.

Mazur has worked as an attorney in the City of Niagara Falls Law Department since 1997, advancing through the ranks to his appointment as Corporation Counsel in January 2020. His experience as the City's legal counsel is wide ranging, and he has represented the City in countless civil and administrative proceedings. Mazur has practiced extensively before New York State Supreme Court as well as the New York State Division of Human Rights, the Workers Compensation Board and the Public Employment Relations Board.

In 1997, Mazur was appointed as the City's Special Prosecutor by the Niagara

County District Attorney; he has been re-appointed on a yearly basis ever since. "In my 23 plus years in the position, I have prosecuted several thousand cases in Niagara Falls Criminal, Housing and Traffic Courts. In addition to advocating for the interests of the public, it has given me the opportunity to work closely with Court staff and understand how the Court functions. This unique experience has prepared me for the rigors and responsibilities that go along with the position I am seeking."

Mazur is also active in the legal community and well respected by his peers. He currently serves as a director of the Western New York Prosecutors Association. He is a

Past President of the City of Niagara Falls Bar Association and previously served on the board of directors of the Niagara County Bar Association. He is a member of Niagara County, Erie County, New York State and American Bar Associations. Mazur was also a long-time director at Neighborhood Legal Services and currently serves as the City's Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator.

Mazur is admitted to practice in the State of New York and before the US District Court for the Western District of New York, the US Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of New York and has briefed and successfully argued numerous cases before the Supreme Court Appellate Division, Fourth Judicial Department, in Rochester.

Additionally, for over 20 years, Mazur has also represented hundreds of children in custody/visitation, child protective, PINS and juvenile delinquency proceedings as a member of Family Court's Attorney for Children/Law



Guardian program. "I am very aware that many children in our community do not have the same opportunities that I had when I was growing up. That is why I find it to be very rewarding to part of the Attorneys for Children program and provide guidance to those who most need it."

"As a lifelong resident of the City, I know our neighbors are concerned about their future and the future of their families. In these uncertain times, the already important role of the Courts in protecting the life and liberty of our citizens takes on even greater significance. Unfortunately, many people have lost confidence in our system. That is why it's crucial to have experienced individuals of the highest character to fill positions in the judiciary. I believe that my professional experience and my reputation for fairness, honesty and integrity demonstrates

that I am worthy of your trust and that I have what it takes to your next City Court Judge."

He currently resides in the same home which he grew up in the LaSalle section of the City with his wife Allicia and his son Lucas. He is also a member of the St. Vincent DePaul parish and is a past president and board member of the Niagara Falls Bowling Association.

Mazur plans to run the Democratic, Republican, Conservative and Working Families' party primaries in 2021. "I am looking forward to meeting as many people as I can in the coming year. However, given our current situation with the pandemic, the last thing that people want to see right now is a candidate knocking on their door asking for support. But I will do whatever I can, whenever I can, to get our message out there and connect with our community."



NIAGARA COUNTY

Signs of the Season: Christmas Decorations Across Niagara County Impress

Staff Reporter

Brian D. Seaman, with wife Donna by his side, was sworn in as Niagara County District Attorney on Wednesday, December 30, 2020 by Niagara County Court Judge Matthew J. Murphy III. Judge Murphy, who himself served as Niagara County District Attorney for 16 years, hired Seaman as an Assistant District Attorney in 2006.

"Judge Murphy gave me my first opportunity to serve as a prosecutor here in the community where I grew up. It was an honor for me to have him administer my oath to serve in the office he occupied for so many years," Seaman said.

Seaman went on to say, "2020 has been a very difficult year for ev-

eryone, including law enforcement. Crime, especially violent crime, is occurring at an alarming rate. I look forward to the challenge of serving as District Attorney. Fighting for justice for crime victims and their families is never an easy task, but I take office knowing that I have a dedicated and experienced staff at the DA's Office, as well as in our county's law enforcement agencies, to work with to meet the challenge. I would also like to thank the voters of Niagara County for putting their trust in me, and to everyone who helped me get here. There are many, many people that I would have liked to invite to this swearing in, but I couldn't because of the ongoing pandemic and the related restrictions. Please know how much



"I appreciate you all."
Seaman's term commenced

January 1st, 2021.

Sheriff Michael Filicetti Sworn and Others Sworn In



Staff Reporter

A small private ceremony was held at the Niagara County Sheriff's Office to swear-in Sheriff Michael J. Filicetti and his administrative team. The Sheriff began his four year term as the 57th Sheriff of Niagara County on January 1, 2021. Chief Jail Administrator Daniel N. Greenwald, Chief Deputy Patrick G. Weidel, Undersheriff Michael P. Dunn and Chief Deputy Aaron C. Schultz all took their oath of office alongside the Sheriff.

Sheriff Filicetti commented, "It was humbling to receive the strong support of our residents. I look forward to continuing the great record of public safety here at the Sheriff's Office, and leading the men and women who serve honorably. I will work hard every day to ensure the residents of Niagara County feel safe and protected. Lastly, it was important to me that my administrative team took their oath along with me. I count on these individuals every day to help me get the job done."

Caroline Wojtaszek Sworn in as Niagara County Court Judge



Staff Reporter

Former District Attorney Caroline Wojtaszek was sworn in as a Niagara County Court Judge on



Friday, January 1st, 2021. She then had a slightly larger ceremony on Saturday, January 2nd, 2021, to commemorate the occasion with close friends, family and colleagues.

Niagara County Sheriff's Office Celebrated Retirement of Deputy Craig Beiter

Reporter Staff

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office celebrated the retirement of Deputy Craig Beiter after more than 21 years of service on Tuesday, December 29th, 2020! Deputy Beiter was appointed as a Road Patrol Deputy in February of 1999, and went on to become one of the most respected and well decorated members of the department.

Deputy Beiter's achievements include appointment as a Police Instructor, Emergency Vehicle Operations Instructor, Defensive Tactics Instructor, Field Training Officer, and Firearms Armorer. He is best known by the public as a former K9 Officer, serving in the unit for over

a decade with his partners – Zeus, Rocky and Taz. During his time in the division, Deputy Beiter displayed such a deep connection and understanding of his canine teams that he was granted several state level certifications, including Police Canine Examiner, meaning he was trusted to help select and grade K9 teams throughout New York.

Deputy Beiter's love for his community continued on into his final role with NCSO – School Resource Officer for the Starpoint School District. Deputy Beiter served his alma mater in this role since 2016, protecting, mentoring and guiding students in a heartfelt manner.

"Deputy Beiter's knowledge,



experience and personal impact will be sincerely missed throughout the Sheriff's Office," said Sheriff

Michael Filicetti. "We wish you all the best in all of your future endeavors."



NORTH TONAWANDA

North Tonawanda Police Help Box of Hope Outreach Deliver Gifts

Staff Reporter

As 2020 draws to a close it is the hope that 2021 will be a much better year for everyone. This past year has been unprecedented to say the least. The hardships endured have been stressful on all. Loss of jobs, schooling going hybrid and virtual, businesses closed, events cancelled, and worst of all, those who became ill or lost a life due to COVID-19 weighed heavy on residents.

Through it all, people have endured and put every effort into complying with restrictions and following guidelines. A sincere, 'THANK YOU' to everyone who endeavored to help others and stayed safe at this difficult time.

Throughout this time services continued to progress in order to keep North Tonawanda running smoothly from the DPW and Police and Fire protection to the offices at City Hall. As always, the NT residents have been the high priority.

2020 is now in the past and



Mayor of North Tonawanda Arthur Pappas.

hopefully the new year will be brighter and more peaceful. Every attempt will be made to open closed businesses and restore those events our residents enjoy and look forward to each year. Things may not be exactly the same again but hopefully less stressful and more enjoyable.

Please continue to stay safe and healthy. Wishing you the very best in the coming new year.

Alderman-At-Large Bob Pecoraro Chosen as Next Common Council President



"I would like to thank my colleagues on the Common Council for showing their trust and confidence by electing me as the next Council President at tonight's reorganizational meeting. I'd also like to extend my thanks to Third Ward Alderman Eric Zadzilka for his service as Council President during the last four years. I want to build on the great strides that were taken by Alderman Zadzilka under his leadership and I look forward to working with all branches of government and our department heads.

As your new Council President, my top priority will be to offer our city's government steadfast leadership during these challenging times. As these difficult times rage on, our residents need to know their city's government is in capable hands. No matter what the new year presents, I will continue to address the needs of our community diligently, efficiently and effectively. In closing, I pray the new year is filled with happiness and health for all of you and the residents of our great city."

