We are the Public Defender’s Office. We believe in the Law.
We have always had people with vision here... attorneys and support staff who are so dedicated that they look beyond the edge of the judge’s bench to see what’s coming, feel what forces are moving in the community, and help our firm adapt to the challenge.

Many may not know it, but the office of the Public Defender is the largest criminal defense law firm in Hillsborough County. We employ over 200 people and handle more than 75,000 cases each year. In handling those cases, we touch the lives of one out of every ten residents of Hillsborough County, be they clients, families or law enforcement officers.

Our office is dedicated to helping people become successful in their lives. Our Social Services Department, through its Transitional and Restorative Services Team, has been successful in building partnerships with agencies and businesses in the community. On a daily basis, our staff members help clients find jobs, housing, transportation, and medical assistance. In essence, we help remove roadblocks that have kept many of our clients and their families from becoming successful and productive members of our community.

I certainly don’t profess to have all the solutions, but 14 years of experience guide my insight into what programs will increase our effectiveness in reintegrating clients into the community... and ensuring that they do not return to the criminal justice system.

Our clients enter the community not only as contributors who understand the consequences of choosing the wrong path in life, but also as neighbors and friends who understand that there are people who are ready, willing, and able to help them lead productive and meaningful lives.

Ten percent of Hillsborough County residents live below the poverty level – quite simply, too many in our community have lost hope. Our work does not end with upholding the system of justice for all Americans who are unable to defend themselves, but we must also help the families with whom we come in contact. Their stories have become our stories, and while we, like any Public Defender’s office, have some clients who cross our path more than once, we are proud of the many successes who do not.

From the mail room staff to the elected Public Defender, employees of this law firm are not only encouraged, but expected to give back to their community through the donation of time and resources. Pro bono work is also a part of this firm’s culture and is expected from all attorneys.

I am proud of the work we do. I am proud of the individuals and families we have helped become successful contributors to this community that we all share. Join me in sharing these accomplishments.

Julie Holt
Hillsborough County Public Defender
Our Mission and Our Values

We believe that providing our clients with good legal representation is the best way to ensure the integrity of our criminal justice system.

We believe in treating our clients, our employees, and our community with dignity and respect.

We believe in respect for victims and their families and also in the wisdom of juries and in our system of justice.

We believe in integrity and in maintaining the highest ethical standards.

We believe in duty and loyalty.

We are committed to being efficient and fiscally responsible.

We are committed to excellence, quality, and service to our clients and our community.

We believe in compassion and respect.

We believe in the law.

Our Goals for 2007

Protecting Democracy for All

• Increase communication with each client.

• Proactively identify and address mental health issues that contribute to the burden on the criminal justice system.

• Further develop our system of continued care and intervention to reduce the likelihood of repeat offenders

Promoting Good Stewardship of Taxpayer Dollars

• Continue to focus on office efficiency through technology.

• Plan for and respond to population, case load, and office growth.

• Track and respond to new constitutional requirements.

Building Community-Based Solutions

• Continue to identify and make available additional community services to our clients and pro bono opportunities to our attorneys.

• Work with state legislators to enhance employee benefits, including student loan repayment assistance.

• Continue to identify and partner with important nonprofit agencies that benefit our families and the community.

Our Strategy for Success

• Balance the responsibility of preserving democracy while conserving taxpayer dollars.

• Efficiently provide clients with legal representation, dignity, and respect.

• Believe that a person is innocent until he or she is proven guilty.

• Ask each employee to give back to our community through a donation of time or resources.
We are extremely proud of the ongoing success we’ve experienced in our Juvenile Justice division. It is our mission to increase public safety in Hillsborough County by reducing juvenile delinquency through a broad spectrum approach that includes prevention programs, intervention programs, and treatment programs that help mend families and create a new start for troubled youth.

While maintaining our high standards of accountability to taxpayers, the Hillsborough County Public Defender’s Office supports and partners with innumerable programs that provide opportunities for Tampa’s youth to develop into responsible adults. Many of these programs are highlighted in the accompanying graphic.

Through a balance of prevention, intervention, and treatment, we try to ensure that the juveniles who leave our system do so stronger, healthier, and better educated. Our goal is to place them in a position to better their lives, helping ensure that they do not return later or move on to the adult corrections system.

We are extremely grateful for the collaborative public and private partnerships and ongoing public support that this office enjoys, helping move Hillsborough County towards our shared goal of better preparing all of our youth for adulthood.

Successful Juvenile Justice programs are sometimes threatened by a loss of government funding. Such was the case two years ago with the Walker Plan, a program that helped troubled youth get a second chance without the stigma of a permanent record.

Because Ms. Holt stepped in and agreed to shoulder the burden of enrolling and monitoring the kids in the program, the Walker Plan has continued to be a huge success. Over 1400 kids have completed the program and are enjoying life as young citizens of our community. Most of them have learned from their mistakes and are happy for the second chance the Walker Plan and the Hillsborough County Public Defender’s Office has given them.
Juvenile Justice Programs for Youth in Hillsborough County

1. Riverside Academy
   Riverside Academy provides specialized treatment services for youth who exhibit primary substance abuse issues as substantiated by a DSM-IV diagnosis. The program provides comprehensive substance abuse, mental health, and medical diagnostic assessments upon admission; individual/group substance abuse treatment services; comprehensive psychological/psychiatric evaluations and individual/group mental health treatment services; on-site education through the Hillsborough County School System; on-site vocational services; on-site medical services; case management services; family system intervention and treatment services; and care and custody services within a structured behavior management system.

2. Teen Court
   The Teen Court Program offers teens arrested for the first time an alternative to adjudication in juvenile court. Juveniles who admit guilt are given the opportunity to have their cases heard by teens, with dispositions recommended by a teen jury. If the individual completes the sanctions, he or she avoids formal prosecution in juvenile court.

3. Project Bridge
   Project Bridge is funded through a grant given by the Department of Labor to assist at-risk youths from the ages of 16-21. This program exposes youths to the high-growth and high-demand career areas. Project Bridge also provides youths with the opportunity to attend vocational classes. For example, Project Bridge offers job-ready classes, computer classes, internships, and a nationally certified customer service class. Through this program, youths may also obtain a GED and receive free tutoring and mentoring services. Project Bridge partners with several companies in the community, including the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Tampa Marine Institute. These partnerships open doors for the youth by allowing them to “job shadow” at the partner companies.

4. Civil Citation Program
   The Public Defender considers the Civil Citation Program to be a promising practice with substantial benefits for all stakeholders in the juvenile justice system. It is a multidisciplinary approach that holds youth offenders responsible for their actions while implementing community service, including screening for mental health and substance abuse, and requiring the participation of families. It reduces the burden on juvenile courts and leaves them better able to apply their already-stretched resources to violent and serious offenders, while reducing their expenses. It gives young offenders a second chance to make good. The Civil Citation is a community-based approach that requires the collaboration of law enforcement, the county sheriff, state attorney, key community organizations, substance abuse and mental health treatment services, family counseling providers, parents or guardians, offenders, and victims.

5. Haven W. Poe Runaway Shelter – Hillsborough County Children’s Services
   Children In Need of Services (CINS) Families In Need of Services (FINS): Shelter is provided for families of children where there is no pending investigation of abuse, neglect, or abandonment or no court-ordered supervision by the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Children and Family Services for an adjudication of dependency or delinquency.

A Very Special Place
While not a Juvenile Justice program, the Hillsborough County Public Defender’s Office is equally proud to support The Pepin Academy. The Pepin Academy is a very special place for kids with unique needs. The Hillsborough County Public Defender’s Office is one of only two employers in the county who have made office space available for Tampa Transitional School, an extension of The Pepin Academy, so students can receive occupational therapy and training, allowing many of them to go on to productive and independent jobs of their own. The program is so successful that the Hillsborough County Public Defender’s Office was recently asked to take 12 additional students.
Workload and Office Information

Your Public Defender’s Office is a state agency with an ever-growing network of partners from all corners of our community: employees, clients, fellow criminal justice agencies, state legislators, nonprofit groups dedicated to helping people reach their full potential, and citizens of Hillsborough County.

Our responsibility is to preserve democracy, conserve taxpayer dollars, and serve the community. We do that in part by increasing the Public Defender’s role in education, intervention, and public safety each year. We are also committed to keeping our community informed about progress towards goals, efficiency, and cost effectiveness.

Hillsborough County is the fourth most populous county in Florida and boasts more than one million residents. More than ten percent of those residents live below the poverty level.

Our commitment to our clients ensures that each and every person who needs our help receives the best-quality legal representation possible. Hillsborough County Public Defender attorneys represented more than 48,713 different clients in 2006.

Our Major Crimes and Felony attorneys handle the most serious cases, where sentences range from one year in Florida State Prison to the death penalty. In 2006, our office handled 48 murder and attempted murder cases; of those cases, 31 were first-degree murder cases.

Florida Tax Watch has recognized our office for six straight years as a State Leader in creating innovative ways to save taxpayer dollars. Their recognition of our good stewardship of public tax dollars is something of which we are very, very proud.

- Florida Tax Watch Award 2001
- Florida Tax Watch Award 2002
- Florida Tax Watch Award 2003
- Florida Tax Watch Award 2004
- Florida Tax Watch Award 2005
- Florida Tax Watch Award 2006
- Florida Tax Watch Award Sustained Exemplary Service Award 2006

In 2006, we represented 48,713 different clients on 76,058 cases.
Dear Julie,

I’m the aunt of a teenage boy who was fortunate enough to come through your office a few years ago. Most parents or guardians might think that’s an odd thing to say, but not when you know what happened to my nephew Jonathan.

I got guardianship of him and his younger siblings when my brother was dealing with a drinking problem and his wife was battling a drug addiction. One of the children committed suicide.

Jon was 15 years old at the time and was so distraught, he started acting out. He broke a neighbor’s window and entered the house. Jon faced numerous felony charges. He was assigned to Attorney Lily McCarty. You would have thought Jon was her own son, as invested as she was in his case and in helping him. She spent long hours negotiating on his behalf, looking for alternative sentencing and appropriate counseling programs.

Thanks to Lily, Jon went on to be salutatorian of his class and got to fulfill his dream of joining the Army. He is now serving in Ft. Hood, Texas.

If not for the investment your office makes in the youth of Tampa, I don’t know what would have happened to our family.

I can’t thank you enough.

Sincerely,

Christi Moore

Transitional and Restorative Services Division: The Front-Line Battle Against Recidivism

The Law Office of Julianne M. Holt, Public Defender of the 13th Judicial Circuit, developed **Transitional and Restorative Services**. This program is designed to assist clients in complying with court-ordered sanctions, with the ultimate objective of reducing recidivism.

Extended client contact from our staff helps us identify and contend with emergent problems and helps avoid serious legal repercussions. Clients are counseled and supplied with individual case-appropriate information regarding residential, medical, psychological, and educational services available throughout the Tampa Bay area. In addition, we help clients obtain other essentials, such as a steady job, housing, clothing, and transportation assistance.

The **Transitional and Restorative Services** program has cultivated relationships with nearly 300 area businesses that have agreed to hire eligible individuals. Because we develop community-based partnerships with local organizations, our clients are able to secure employment and begin the process of meeting all of their obligations and becoming contributing members of our community.

**The Public Defender’s Office is Honored to Have Participated in These Programs**

- United Way
- Kids’ Fest Say No To Drugs Walk
- Law Enforcement Appreciation Lunch
- Law Week Lawyers for Literacy
- March of Dimes Walk
- Anti-Drug Alliance Fundraiser
- Life Link
- Palm River Elementary School Mentoring
- Bay Area Legal Services
- Metropolitan Ministries
- Food Drives & Fundraisers
- Bloomingdale Drug Task Force
- NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet
- Bowling for Kids’ Sake
- PACE Center for Girls Fundraiser
- West Tampa Elementary School Mentoring
- Franklin Middle School Mentoring and CSI Camp Fundraiser
- DeSoto Elementary School Mentoring
- Teen Court
- Family Enrichment Center Fundraiser
- The Children’s Home Society
- FHP Memorial Luncheon
- Foster Angels
- TPD Memorial Run
- USF Career Expo
- Guardian Ad-Litem Auction
- USF Criminal Justice Expo
- HCBA Law Fair
- Everyday Blessings
- Foster Home
- Hispanic Law Enforcement Dinner
- Freedom Playground
- Miracle Outreach Foster Home
- Breast Cancer Lee National Denim Day
- Riverside Academy Residential Facility
- Computer Sparks
- The Spring of Tampa Bay

One Soldier’s Story...

[Image of Pvt. Jonathan Thimyan]
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Felony Bureau Chief

Theda James, JD
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John Skye, JD
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Samantha Ward, JD
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Chief Investigator

Daniel Raysin
Human Resources Director