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August 1, 2025

To the Residents of Monroe County,

This letter is bittersweet. After 33 years in the District Attorney's Office, including the past thirteen as your elected District Attorney, I will be retiring on August 31, 2025. This decision did not come easily. Serving you has been the greatest honor of my life. But as I recently turned 62, I know that this is the right time for me, for my family, and for all of you.

There are no words strong enough to express my gratitude other than, thank you. You trusted me with this position four times. Each term brought both successes and tribulations, from restructuring the office after my first election to navigating the opioid crisis, a global pandemic, and criminal justice reform. Through it all, even in the most difficult moments, I have given you everything I have.

This community has also given me everything in return. Before I was District Attorney, I spent 20 years as an Assistant District Attorney. During my time in this office, I met my husband, raised my daughters, lost my parents, battled cancer, and found my purpose. The people of Monroe County have seen me at my best and worst. And even when I've made mistakes, you never stopped holding me accountable or giving me grace.

That's why, as I reflect on this journey, I want to share a few moments that have never left me.

I was hired by District Attorney Howard Relin and began my career in the Local Courts Bureau under Judge Thomas Rainbow Morse, a mentor who taught me what it means to be a prosecutor. I tried dozens of misdemeanor jury trials before moving to felonies, and ultimately worked in most of the felony bureaus. In 2004, I joined the leadership team at the Monroe County District Attorney's Office, becoming the Chief of the Felony DWI Bureau. I then went on to serve as the Deputy Chief of the Major Felony Bureau, the Second Assistant District Attorney, the First Assistant District Attorney, and eventually earning your trust as the elected District Attorney of Monroe County.

But my passion has always lived in the courtroom... standing beside victims and being their voice when they no longer could.

I still remember Alexandra Kogut, a SUNY Brockport freshman murdered by Clayton Whittemore. I remember her family's strength, and the weight of every decision in that courtroom. As clear as day, I can picture the crime scene. I remember the look on Clayton Whittemore's face as he claimed extreme emotional disturbance. We secured a murder conviction not just for Alex, but for every young person contemplating escape from an abusive and violent relationship.

I remember Charlotte Lahr, a mother and business owner who was murdered while protecting her store. I think of her daughters and the community who mourned her. Her killer, a parolee named Kevin Quander, is serving 40 years to life. I sincerely hope that this murderer will never again be afforded to see the light of day outside the New York State Department of Corrections.

I think of Mary Simzer, a woman who struggled with addiction and hardship but was still entitled to dignity, to safety, and to justice. Her murderer, Ronald Lagasse, committed unspeakable crimes. Holding him accountable was among the most important prosecutions of my career.

And then there was Wendy Jerome. Just 14 years old when she was murdered on Thanksgiving Day, 1984. Thanks to modern DNA technology, her killer was identified 36 years later. I will never forget the moment her family, who had waited so long, finally got the answers they deserved. I was honored to secure a guilty verdict in what turned out to be the first trial using familial DNA searching in New York State. I have a special place in my heart for cold case victims and their families. I hope that other families who are awaiting news on their loved one's cases never lose hope for justice.

There are victims who are near and dear to my heart, and their families are always in my thoughts. Stephanie Kupchynsky, Andrew Attinasi, Christine Sevilla, Karen Turtu, Lisa Kuligowski, Patricia Daggett, Lachelle Weaver, Matthew Watters, and Cathleen Krauseneck, these are some of the victims who I remember, not just because of their deaths, but because of the impact they had during their lives and their amazing families. Their loved ones showed up to every court appearance, not just seeking justice, but fueling our fight with their advocacy. I will never forget these victims, and I continue to hold a deep, lasting bond with the families who shared their stories and their strength.

Our pursuit of justice could not have been possible without law enforcement. I am profoundly grateful to the town and village police departments, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, the New York State Police, and especially the Rochester Police Department. I have worked shoulder-to-shoulder with RPD throughout my career, and I can say without hesitation that its officers are among the finest in the country. I have worked with officers, support staff, and technicians from this department closely for my entire career. I am continuously impressed by this police department and their commitment to protect and serve. This is why these cases involving RPD officers cut especially deep.

In 2014, Officer Daryl Pierson was killed in the line of duty. I will never forget that call. His death devastated our community and served as a painful reminder that the dangers officers face are not abstract. Daryl was a father, a husband, a friend. And I was proud to ensure his killer, Thomas Johnson III, will never walk free again. I think about Officer Pierson and his family often.

Officer Dennison Wright and I go back to the days when I was an Assistant District Attorney and Denny was a paralegal in Monroe County District Attorney's Office. Denny went on to become a career Rochester Police Officer and I was so proud. In 2021, he was brutally attacked and stabbed during a domestic incident call. He survived, but lost his sight. Keith Williams was convicted of Attempted Aggravated Murder and sentenced to 40 years to Life in the New York State Department of Corrections. And to this day, Denny says he would do it all over again. That is the kind of person he is, the kind of hero I am proud to call a friend.

Only months following the trial against Keith Williams, another call. Two officers shot. I spent that night in the hospital, the night Rochester Police Officer Anthony Mazurkiewicz was killed. I was outraged. As a community, we said never again, but there I was putting witnesses into grand jury for another RPD Officer killed in the line of duty. Preparing for that trial against his killer was one of the hardest things I've ever done, but the verdict brought justice. Kelvin Vickers was convicted for the Aggravated Murder of Officer Anthony Mazurkiewicz, the Attempted Aggravated Murder of Officer Sino Seng, and additional murder and violent felony convictions for the murders of Richard Collinge and MyJel Rand. This was for the Rochester Police Department, the community, and for Tony's many friends and loving family, especially his widow and my dear friend, Lynn Mazurkiewicz.

There are so many more names. So many victims I still carry with me. Because this job, at its core, was never about headlines or accolades. It was always about them.

I'm proud of the reforms we implemented: Gun Court, GIVE, the Non-Fatal Shooting Task Force, the Monroe County Heroin Taskforce, the Conviction Integrity Unit, the Measures for Justice public facing dashboard, expansion of the economic crime unit, and our relentless focus on public integrity. But policies mean little without people. I was privileged to serve alongside so many exceptional professionals, fellow prosecutors, investigators, victim advocates, and administrative staff. You were my second family.

To our community leaders, law enforcement partners, and community advocates, thank you for inspiring me with your courage and resolve.

And finally, to my family. I could not have done this without you. My late parents instilled in me the values that shaped my path. My husband, steady and supportive, stepped in at home every time I was called away. And my daughters, you are my heart. I hoped to inspire you. Instead, you inspire me. You make me proud every day.

To the people of Monroe County, thank you. For your faith, your candor, your partnership. I leave this office with a full heart, and with the hope that my service made a difference.

With deepest gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sandra", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sandra