

**DAVIDSON COUNTY
GRAND JURY--FINAL REPORT**

OCTOBER 2007 TERM

**PRESENTED TO:
THE HONORABLE J. RANDALL
WYATT, JR.
CRIMINAL COURT, DIVISION II
DAVIDSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE**

DECEMBER 13, 2007

We, the Grand Jury of October thru December 2007, have been honored to serve the citizens of Davidson County in this past session. We have enjoyed meeting Mayor Karl Dean, Police Chief Ronal Serpas, Judges Randall Wyatt and Seth Norman and many other dignitaries. This Grand Jury has visited River Bend Prison, toured the Medical Examiner's office, the Juvenile Court, visited COMPSTAT, viewed the Drug Court, and visited the Police Academy. We have been humbled by the dedication and perseverance of the many police officers, detectives, and the brave men and women that serve the citizens of this great county. Each member of this Grand Jury has learned how our criminal justice system works and how each component serves our community.

The Grand Jury has met 32 times during this session and has presided over # 857 cases. We have presented the court with #840 "True Bills" and #17 "No True Bills." A large majority of those cases were drug or alcohol related. Many of the cases we heard were from repeat offenders. In some of the cases of sealed indictments, this Grand Jury asked the Court to raise the bond on some of the defendants. Each member of this Grand Jury have been dedicated and honored to help in a small way in the Justice system of our county. We have been diligent in deciding if a case or charges were justified and seeking an indictment when the facts indicated that a criminal offense had been committed.

We have been charged by Judge J. Randall Wyatt to:

- 1) Inquire into, consider, and act upon all criminal cases presented by the District Attorney General;
- 2) Inquire into any report of a criminal offense brought to our attention;
- 3) Inquire into the condition and management of prisons and county buildings;
- 4) Inquire into the conditions of the county treasury;
- 5) Inquire into the correctness and sufficiency of the bonds of county officers;
- 6) Inquire into any abuse of office by state or local officers; and
- 7) Report the results of its actions to the court.

The biggest problem we have seen is that there are very few investigators in nearly every facet of police and social work. We, as citizens of this great state of Tennessee and this county of Davidson, need to make sure that these important duties are fully staffed. We heard many cases and wondered why many of them took months and years to make it to the Grand Jury. One case we heard was four years old! In many cases, we found out there are precious few investigators in that area that were testifying before us. The state and county need to be aware of the lack of adequate help in many areas. Even adding 1 investigator to homicide, to the board of Pharmacy, or to the sex crimes unit, for example, would aid their efforts greatly.

It is the humble opinion of this Grand Jury, that the police department needs more funding. We feel that the citizens require officers that have had sufficient training and preparation to deal with the many challenges on the streets of Davidson County. When we toured the Police Academy, we observed the training room where the Department simulates how to enter a room or a house where there may be armed individuals within. The room was deplorable. It was a make-shift area that was housed in the basketball gym. The officers had tied mats together with wire and made a maze of rooms. The police department was proud of their training room (they had spent \$3000 to build this area and completed it themselves). However, for a county the size of Davidson County, the police deserve better facilities. Many of the rooms were set up in trailers. The attack simulation room (where officers can practice shooting their weapons against various simulations) was shockingly out of date. Many of us have better X-Box and Play Station equipment in our own homes. This equipment needs upgrading soon. We had the opportunity to fly in the police helicopters over the city. We found out the helicopters are 17 years old and many parts have to be cobbled from other helicopters. The police helicopters need to be upgraded with newer machines as soon as possible.

Our tour of the Medical Examiner's Office was very eye-opening. Dr. Amy McMaster gave us the grand tour of the facilities. The facilities looked state of the art to us. Dr. McMaster was very informative,

