

Written by Kathy

Monday, 24 September 2012 18:15 - Last Updated Sunday, 07 October 2012 13:23

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By Kathy Wray Coleman, Executive Publisher, Editor, Cleveland Urban News. Com

CLEVELAND, Ohio- Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Bill Mason (pictured) has announced in a one page letter to supporters that he will resign, effective Oct 1, three months before the end of his third four year term.

And he spoke of prominent cases that his office has prosecuted and won, including murder and rape convictions and a death sentence for serial killer Anthony Sowell.

He said that he and his staff are doing their jobs.

"During my tenure as county prosecutor, my state and I have made significant improvements to the operation of the office and have fought tirelessly on behalf of the victims of crime," Mason said in his departure letter to Cuyahoga County Democratic Party executive committee members, some of his employees, Democratic elected officials, and a host of others. "I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support over the years,"

He has since told his staff goodbye and thank you for what he called a job well done.

He said that he will work for the Columbus law firm of Bricker and Eckler at its Cleveland offices.

Former Cuyahoga County Judge Tim McGinty, a controversial judge and the Democratic nominee for the seat for the November election, will be appointed by Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald to replace the still popular Democrat, party officials said.

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Mason, 53, said that, among other milestones, he credits his department with last year winning convictions on 82 of 83 counts, and a death sentence for serial killer Anthony Sowell, 52, who raped three women that survived, and also raped, murdered and dismembered 11 Black women on Imperial Ave. on the majority Black east side of Cleveland, a predominantly Black major metropolitan city led by Mayor Frank Jackson, who is Black.

Six of the 11 murdered women might have lived, say authorities, if Sowell, who is Black, were not dusted off and let go to target them after in custody in December 2008 on a rape complaint from one of the Black women that got away.

And the former marine, whose convictions and death sentence are on appeal, had served 15 years in prison for attempted rape before The Imperial Ave. Murders.

Still, he was let go even after police went to his home and "smelled death and saw blood that lined the walls of the home," a CNN report said.

Mason followed the late Stephanie Tubbs Jones, the first Black county prosecutor who went on to become the first Black female congresswoman from Ohio.

A Cleveland Democrat, Tubbs Jones died days before now President Barack Obama accepted the democratic nomination for president in August 2008.

Though sometimes accused of being over zealous in prosecuting Blacks and others, Mason can brag that his office of more than 150 assistant county prosecutors is a stepping stone to a judgeship, for some.

Among the Blacks that have recently won judgeships who were assistant county prosecutors under Mason are Gale Williams- Byers, the South Euclid Municipal Court judge, and Pinkey Carr, a Cleveland Municipal Court judge, and one of the lead prosecutors in the Sowell capital murder case.

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Dubbed the brains of the Cuyahoga County Democratic party, Mason escaped indictment with powerful county Democrats like convicted former commissioner and party chair Jimmy Dimora, who got a 28-year sentence in July for racketeering and other corruption related crimes, and the snitch Frank Russo, a former county auditor still out on bond and facing 21 years in prison after pleading guilty to corruption-related crimes in office.

More than 50 Cuyahoga County Democratic Party affiliate's, mainly if not all Democrats, and mostly businessman, have either been convicted or pleaded guilty in federal district court to malfeasance activities pursuant to an ongoing political corruption probe that began three years ago when FBI agents and the IRS raided Dimora and Russo's offices and homes and others liked former common pleas judges Bridget McCafferty, who served a 14 month prison sentence for lying to the FBI. and Steven Terry.

Terry, who is Black, is serving a maximum six year sentence for mail and mortgage fraud, a sentence that some Blacks have said is racist and unfair in comparison to sentences handed down by Akron Federal District Court Judge Sara Lioi to others associated with the ongoing political corruption probe..

And Mason's relationship with area Black leaders and elected officials is somewhat cold after voters opted, with his push of Republicans and that of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, Ohio's largest newspaper, to change the form of county government.

The newly adopted county reform measure, dubbed Issue 6 on the voting ballot in 2009, replaced the previously elected county sheriff, auditor, recorder, clerk of courts, coroner, treasurer, engineer and three-member board of commissioners with an elected 11-member Cuyahoga County Council and elected county executive, now Ed FitzGerald, the former mayor of Lakewood, Oh., and a former FBI agent.

Before the change in county government, all of the elected county offices, except for the judges, were held by the Democrats of Cuyahoga County, Ohio's largest and one that includes Cleveland and is roughly 30 percent Black

The county council does have three Republicans, though Democrats dominate it and it has four Blacks including Cuyahoga County Council President C. Ellen Connally, a retired Cleveland

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Municipal Court judge.

Black leaders have said that Mason crafted Issue 6 with an all White team of county movers and shakers and that the county executive has too much power, and that the Mason posse gerrymandered the 11 county districts to the dismay of the Black community because only one council seat is guaranteed to be won by a Black in ongoing elections, though four Blacks, all of whom are Democratic, were ultimately elected with C. Ellen Connally (D-9), a retired Cleveland Municipal Court judge, subsequently elected as council president of the majority Democratic council by her peers. (Editor's Note: There are also city councils in Northeast Ohio such as the 19 member Cleveland City Council, a council with nine Blacks, all of whom represent wards on the east side of Cleveland, a city with some 400,000 people).

But Mason has said that political corruption merited the change in county government, and he has mended some fences with Black community leaders since Issue 6.

He did an interview with the Call and Post last week on his leaving, a courtesy not afforded to the Plain Dealer.