

# TARRANT COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S DISTRICT

## SERVING TARRANT, DENTON, JOHNSON & PARKER COUNTIES

### 2012 ANNUAL REPORT







TARRANT COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S DISTRICT  
CURRENT ACCREDITATIONS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS (N.A.M.E.)

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIME LABORATORY DIRECTORS/  
LAB ACCREDITATION BOARD (ASCLD/LAB)

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION (ACGME)

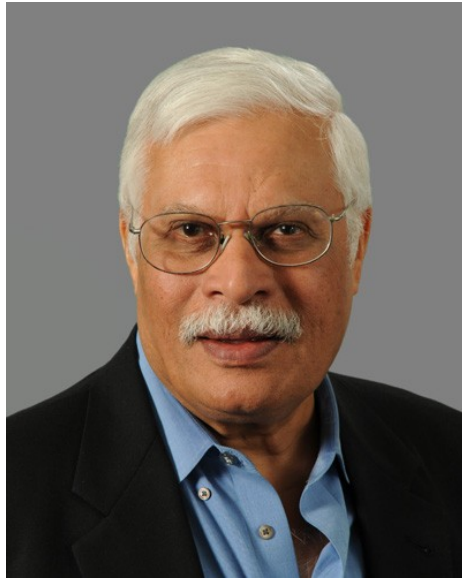
**TARRANT COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER  
AND FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORIES**

200 FELIKS GWOZDZ PLACE, FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76104

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[www.tarrantcounty.com/emedicalexaminer](http://www.tarrantcounty.com/emedicalexaminer)

## FROM THE OFFICE OF THE TARRANT COUNTY CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER



### Our Commitment and Philosophy . . .

*Whenever we are called upon to assist, even if it is outside the defined jurisdiction, out of the scope of our duties, or otherwise removed from our responsibilities under the law, it is our general policy to help the individual reach the appropriate person, agency or organization who can assist.*

### Our Mission Statement . . .

*The primary purpose of the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office is to assist the public and law enforcement agencies to determine the cause of death due to unnatural causes, medically unattended or death due to violence, using state of the art laboratory and forensic science facilities.*

Sincerely,

Dr. Nizam Peerwani  
Chief Medical Examiner

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## **PREFACE**

The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office was originally established in 1965 to serve Tarrant County alone but today it also serves Denton, Johnson and Parker counties with a total district population exceeding 2.8 million. This area is experiencing a dramatic growth, and the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office is committed to continue providing the highest quality of service to the loved ones of the deceased and to the legal system.

Understanding the need to have knowledge in ever-growing subjects of anatomy, physiology, chemistry, and biology, and applying this knowledge to the science of determination of the cause of death has become a routine requirement for the staff at the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office. A combination of staff with outstanding qualifications, sophisticated state-of-the-art equipment, strict compliance with statutes and regulations and accreditation by the National Association of Medical Examiners and the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors Laboratory Accreditation Board make the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office one of the premier medical examiner offices in the nation. In addition to a staff of five highly trained, board certified forensic pathologists, the office boasts a 24 hour investigative staff and a full complement of support services, including Human Identification, Toxicology, Criminalistics, and Forensic Photography laboratories.

The wealth of information available at the office, coupled with an interest to share and educate, prompts the staff to provide educational opportunities such as the Tuesday morning forensic rounds, the annual "Current Trends In Forensic Science" conference, a twelve month forensic pathology fellowship, monthly autopsy classes, periodic training sessions with Physicians for Human Rights and training at the International Forensic Science Center to provide advanced forensic training to scholars from abroad. Members of the staff are often invited to provide services, give lectures, and provide consultation nationally and internationally.

As you review this report, we hope we have imparted an appreciation for the depth of our commitment to excellent quality and service. Every day presents new challenges which this Office strives to meet. We are always seeking to develop and implement new services and procedures to better serve you and the community.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

- 1965 Tarrant County Commissioners Court establishes the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office. T.C. Terrell, M.D. is named Chief Medical Examiner.
- 1969 Feliks Gwozdz, M.D. is named Chief Medical Examiner.
- 1979 After Dr. Gwozdz's unexpected death, Nizam Peerwani, M.D. is appointed Chief Medical Examiner.
- 1980 First County-wide central morgue is established on the campus of Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (Now University of North Texas Health Science Center).
- 1982 Toxicology and histology laboratories are added; shortly after, forensic dentistry is added to the office in order to assist in human identification.
- 1986 Parker County officially joins the Medical Examiner's Office, creating the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District.
- 1989 Denton County joins the Medical Examiner's District.
- The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District moves into a new state of the art facility at 200 Feliks Gwozdz Place, renamed in honor of Dr. Gwozdz. In addition to modern up to date toxicology and histology laboratories, the new facility also includes a full service crime laboratory offering forensic biology, trace analysis, latent fingerprint and firearm/tool mark examinations.
- 1993 The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District provides the death scene investigation and medical examiner services for McLennan County in the aftermath of the Branch Davidian incident at Mt. Carmel, Texas.
- 2003 The position of Forensic Anthropologist, formerly a part-time position within the office, becomes a full-time position, making the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District the only Medical Examiner's Office in Texas with a full-time forensic anthropologist.
- 2007 The Human Identity Section is established, consisting of the Forensic Odontologist, Forensic Anthropologist and one Latent Fingerprint Examiner.
- 2008 Johnson County joins the Medical Examiner's District.
- 2011 Construction is completed on new building expansion.





## 2012 SUMMARY

### NEW HIRES:

**April - Cynthia Esparza** joined the staff as an Autopsy Technician/Evidence.

**April - Leron Warren** joined the staff as an Autopsy Technician/Evidence.

**May - Tiffany Flowers** joined the staff as a Senior Toxicologist.

**May - Heather Torres** joined the staff as a Criminalist/Forensic Biologist.

**July - Richard Fries, D.O.** joined the staff to begin his one year Forensic Pathology fellowship.

**September - Tasha Greenberg, M.D.** joined the staff as a Deputy Medical Examiner.

**September - Vicki Hall** joined the staff as a Criminalist/Senior Trace Analyst.

**November - Anne Koettel** joined the staff as a Criminalist/Senior Trace Analyst.

### RETIREES:

**July - Gary Sisler, D.O.** retired as a Deputy Medical Examiner.

**October - Bill Bailey** retired after serving 18 years as a Latent Print Examiner.

**December - Patricia Elrashid** retired as an Autopsy Technician/Evidence.





# *Tarrant County Medical Examiner*



Cathy Adolph



Linda Anderson



Dana Austin



Jamie Becker



John Briggs



Charles Clow



Andrea Corder



Rob Corley



Christina Coucke-Garza



Glynn Dill



Brittany Dodson



Cynthia Esparza



Tiffany Flowers



Michael Floyd



Mark Fondren



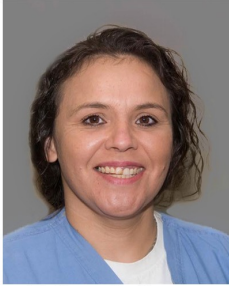
Richard Fries



Tasha Greenberg



James Greenwell



Esther Gutierrez



Vicki Hall



Gloria Hamilton



John Harris



Burshauna Hill



Joyce Ho



Susan Howe



Robert Johnson



Deatra Keele



Marsy D. Key





Anne Koettel



Paul Krieg



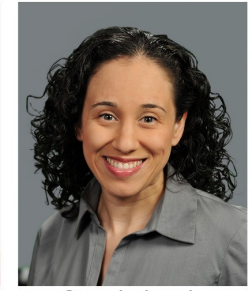
Marc Krouse



Beryl Landry



Carol Lawson



Connie Lewis



Jun Lumadilla



Jimmy McDonald



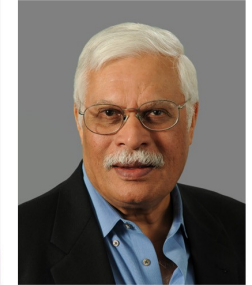
Roger Metcalf



Michelle O'Neal



Connie Patton



Nizam Peerwani



Tracye Poirier



Michael Pollard



Ronnie Redic



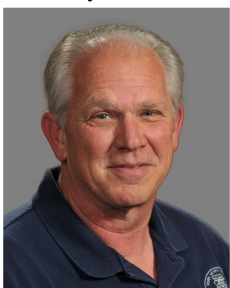
Amy Renfro



Larry Reynolds



Susan Roe



Will Shiro



Ron Singer



Sarah Skiles



Christi Smith



Mike Smith



Larry Steffler



Heather Torres



Jennifer Valentine



Carolyn Van Winkle



Tracy Vancil



Bill Walker



LeRon Warren



Cheryl Wheeler



Lloyd White



Steve White



Tarr J. Wilson



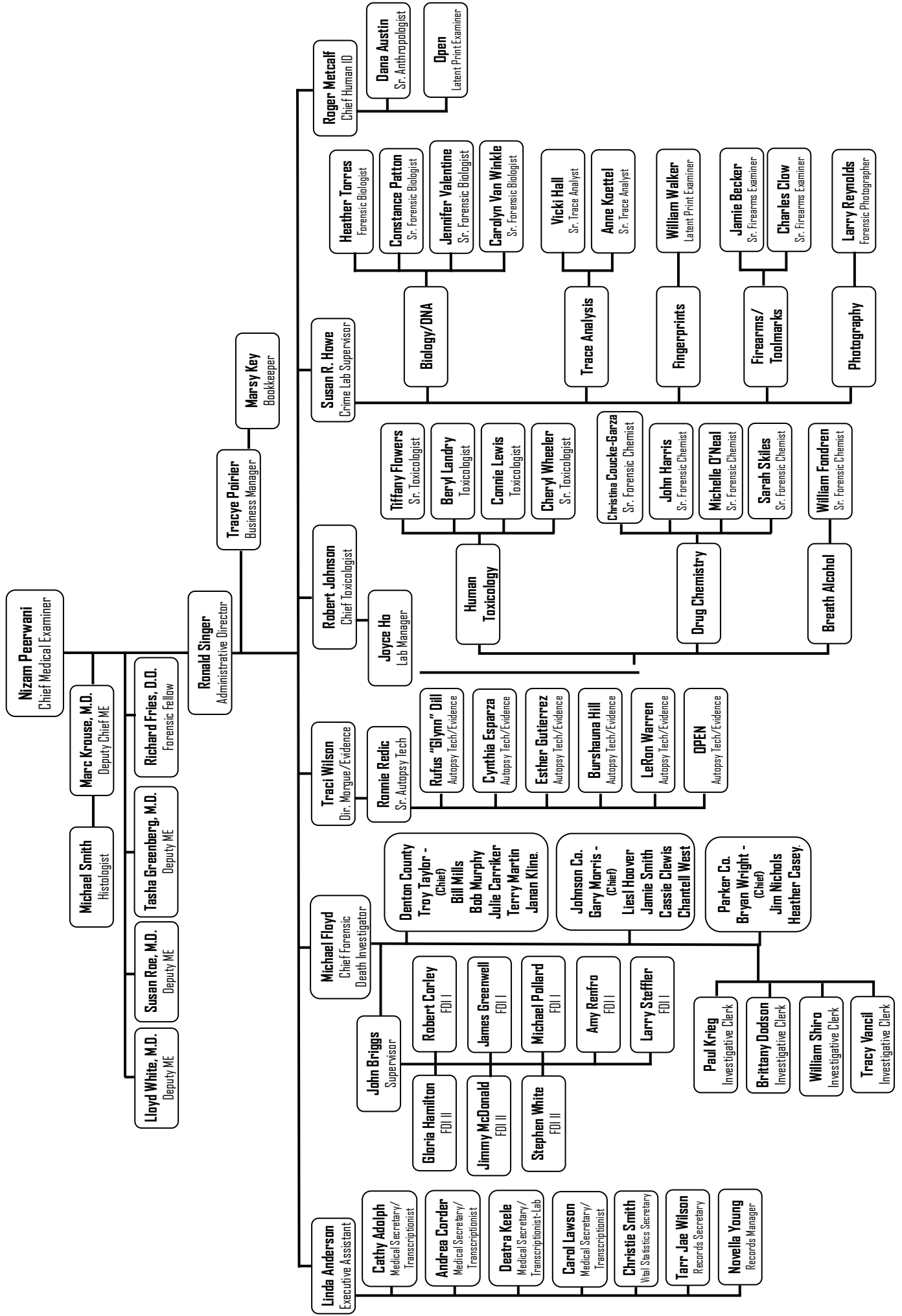
Traci Wilson



Novella Young

# TARRANT COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE AND FORENSIC LABORATORIES

(12-31-2012)





# **Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District Staff**

## **Medical Examiners**

Nizam Peerwani, M.D.	Chief Medical Examiner
Marc Krouse, M.D.	Deputy Chief Medical Examiner
Tasha Z. Greenberg, M.D.	Deputy Medical Examiner
Susan J. Roe, M.D.	Deputy Medical Examiner
Robert Lloyd White, M.D., Ph.D.	Deputy Medical Examiner
Richard C. Fries, D.O.	Forensic Fellow

## **Administration**

Ronald L. Singer, M.S.	Technical Administrative Director
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## **Business Office**

Tracye Poirier, M.B.A.	Business Manager
Marsy Key	Bookkeeper

## **Forensic Death Investigation**

### **Tarrant County**

Mike Floyd, B.S.	Chief Forensic Death Investigator
John Briggs	Supervisory Investigator
Gloria Hamilton, B.S.	Forensic Death Investigator II
Jimmy McDonald	Forensic Death Investigator II
Stephen White	Forensic Death Investigator II
Robert Corley	Forensic Death Investigator I
James Greenwell	Forensic Death Investigator I
Michael Pollard .	Forensic Death Investigator I
Amy Renfro, B.S	Forensic Death Investigator I
Larry Steffler	Forensic Death Investigator I
Brittany Dodson	Investigative Clerk
Paul Krieg	Investigative Clerk
Will Shiro	Investigative Clerk
Tracy Vancil, B.S.	Investigative Clerk

### **Denton County**

Troy Taylor, B.S.	Chief Forensic Death Investigator
Bill Mills, Jr., B.S.	Forensic Death Investigator
Robert Murphy	Forensic Death Investigator
Julie Carriker, R.N.	Forensic Death Investigator
Terry Martin, B.A.	Forensic Death Investigator
Janan Kline	Executive Assistant

## **Johnson County**

Gary Morris	Chief Forensic Death Investigator
Liesl Hoover	Secretary/Forensic Death Investigator
Jamie Smith	Forensic Death Investigator
Cassie Clewis	Forensic Death Investigator
Chantell West	Forensic Death Investigator

## **Parker County**

Bryan Wright	Chief Forensic Death Investigator
Jim Nichols	Forensic Death Investigator
Heather Casey	Forensic Death Investigator

## **Forensic Chemistry and Toxicology Laboratory**

Robert Johnson, Ph.D.	Chief Toxicologist
Joyce Ho, B.S.	Toxicology Lab Manager
Tiffany Flowers, M.S.	Senior Forensic Toxicologist
Cheryl Wheeler, B.S.	Senior Forensic Toxicologist
Beryl Landry, B.S.	Forensic Toxicologist
Connie Lewis, B.S.	Forensic Toxicologist
Christina Coucke-Garza, M.S.	Senior Forensic Chemist
Mark Fondren, M.S.	Senior Forensic Chemist
John Harris, M.S.	Senior Forensic Chemist
Michelle O'Neal, B.S.	Senior Forensic Chemist
Sarah Skiles, B.S.	Senior Forensic Chemist

## **Criminalistics Laboratory**

Susan Howe, D.V.M., Ph.D.	Crime Lab Supervisor
Heather Torres, M.S.	Forensic Biologist
Constance Patton, B.S.	Senior Forensic Biologist
Jennifer Valentine, M.S.	Senior Forensic Biologist
Carolyn Van Winkle, M.S.	Senior Forensic Biologist
Anne Koettel, M.S.	Senior Trace Analyst
Vicki Hall, M.S.	Senior Trace Analyst
William Walker	Latent Fingerprint Examiner
Jamie Becker, B.S.	Sr. Criminalist-Firearms and Tool Marks
Charles M. Clow, M.A.	Sr. Criminalist-Firearms and Tool Marks
Larry Reynolds	Forensic Photographer

## **Histology**

Mike Smith, B.S.	Forensic Histotechnician
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## **Human Identification Laboratory**

Roger Metcalf, D.D.S.  
Dana Austin, Ph.D.  
Vacant

Chief of Identification Services  
Senior Forensic Anthropologist  
Latent Fingerprint Examiner

## **Morgue/Evidence Services**

Traci Wilson  
Ronnie Redic  
Glynn Dill  
Cynthia Esparza  
Esther Gutierrez  
Burshauna Hill  
LeRon Warren  
Vacant

Director of Morgue/Evidence Services  
Senior Autopsy Technician  
Autopsy Tech/Evidence  
Autopsy Tech/Evidence  
Autopsy Tech/Evidence  
Autopsy Tech/Evidence  
Autopsy Tech/Evidence  
Autopsy Tech/Evidence

## **Secretarial Services**

Linda Anderson  
Cathy Adolph  
Andrea Corder  
Deatra Keele  
Carol Lawson  
Novella Young  
Tarr Jae Wilson  
Christie Smith

Executive Assistant/PIO  
Medical Secretary/Transcriptionist  
Medical Secretary/Transcriptionist  
Medical Secretary/Transcriptionist-Lab  
Medical Secretary/Transcriptionist  
Records Manager  
Records Secretary  
Vital Statistics Secretary

## **Building Superintendent**

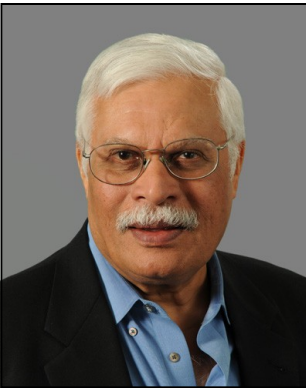
Jun Lumadilla





## **MEDICAL EXAMINER STAFF**

### **NIZAM PEERWANI, M.D. - CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER**



Dr. Peerwani is a graduate of the American University of Beirut (M.D. in 1976). He completed his residency in pathology at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, and is board certified in anatomic, clinical and forensic pathology. Currently he is the Chief Medical Examiner for Tarrant, Denton, Johnson and Parker counties in the state of Texas and has held this position since July 1979. He is an advocate of child safety and served on the Texas Child Fatality Review Committee as an expert in Forensic Medicine. Dr. Peerwani is also an advocate of Human Rights and serves as an expert consultant for Physicians for Human Rights with completed assignments in Rwanda, Bosnia, Indonesia, Cyprus, Afghanistan, Israel and Bahrain investigating genocide and human rights violations under the auspices of the United Nations Tribunal. Appointed by Governor Rick Perry in 2009, Dr. Peerwani currently serves

on the Texas Forensic Science Commission.

### **MARC KROUSE, M.D. - DEPUTY CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER**

Dr. Krouse graduated from Texas A&M University with a B.S. degree (1974) in zoology, and from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School with his M.D. (1977). He completed his pathology residency at Baylor University Medical Center and is board certified in anatomic, clinical and forensic pathology. Dr. Krouse began his career here as a Deputy Medical Examiner (1978 - 1985) and is currently serving as the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner (1985 - present). Dr. Krouse is a member of the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) and served two terms on their Board of Directors, as well as on various committees through the years. He is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Automotive Medicine, and also serves on the Tarrant County Disaster Response Program which assists in planning responses to acts of terrorism, as well as other natural disasters and accidents.



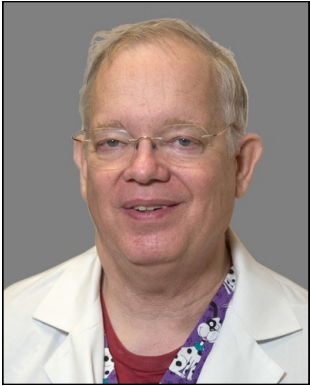
### **TASHA GREENBURG, M.D. - DEPUTY MEDICAL EXAMINER**



Dr. Greenberg earned her B.S. in kinesiology from the University of California - Los Angeles in 1989 after which she attended graduate school at Northwestern University in Chicago, Illinois, where she was majoring in neuroscience prior to her matriculation to medical school. After graduating from the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas (1996), Dr. Greenberg completed a residency in pathology; her first year of study was at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona after which she returned to Baylor for the remaining four years, with the last year concentrated on pediatric pathology at Texas Children's Hospital. She completed a fellowship in forensic pathology under the tutelage of Edmund Donoghue, M.D. at the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office in Chicago, Illinois. She worked in the Medical Examiner's Office in Baltimore, Maryland for over 6

years, and during her tenure there was active in child fatality review at the local and state levels. Dr. Greenberg also conducted lectures and training for local universities and the M.E. office's homicide course, speaking primarily on pediatric forensics. In April 2008, Dr. Greenberg accepted the position of medical director of the autopsy service for the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School at Parkland Medical Center in Dallas, Texas and in September 2012 she was appointed a deputy medical examiner for the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District.

**ROBERT LLOYD WHITE, M.D., PH.D. - DEPUTY MEDICAL EXAMINER**



Dr. White earned a B.S. degree (1965) from the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma and an M.D. (1972) as well as a Ph.D. degree (1976) from the University of Oklahoma. He completed his residency in anatomic and clinical pathology at Baylor University Medical Center in 1976, and completed a fellowship in forensic pathology through the Southwestern Institute of Forensic Sciences, University of Texas, and Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. Dr. White's medical specialty certification includes anatomic, clinical and forensic pathology. He worked with Affiliated Pathologists group in Denton, Texas between 1977 and 1989 as Director of Autopsy Services and also served as Chief of Medical Staff, Lewisville Memorial Hospital, Lewisville, Texas. Between 1989 and 1992 he served as Mississippi State Medical Examiner and visiting Clinical Assistant Professor of Pathology, University of

Mississippi Medical Center. He worked as Nueces County Chief Medical Examiner, Corpus Christi, Texas between 1992 and 2002. He was a consulting forensic pathologist between 2002 and 2005. He joined the TCME staff in February 2005. In addition to his experience as a teacher and a researcher he also has a degree in Theology from the University of Dallas, Texas.

**SUSAN J. ROE, M.D. - DEPUTY MEDICAL EXAMINER**

Dr. Roe graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington with a B.S. in Nursing (1977) and from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Medical School with an M.D. (1983). Post graduate training in anatomic pathology, clinical pathology and forensic pathology at Indiana University, Hennepin County Medical Center, and Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office was completed in 1988. Dr. Roe is board certified in anatomic, clinical and forensic pathology. She worked as a Forensic Pathologist at the Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office, Ramsey County Medical Examiner's Office and Minnesota Regional Medical Examiner's Office from 1988 through 2011. In addition she was a Bush Foundation Medical Fellow, Class of 2003 and worked at the Jesse E. Edwards Registry of Cardiovascular Disease from 2005 through 2011. Dr. Roe joined the Medical Examiner staff in December 2011 as a Deputy Medical Examiner.



**RICHARD C. FRIES, D.O. - FORENSIC FELLOW**



Graduating with honors from the University of Texas Dallas with a B.S. in Biology (2004), Dr. Fries went on to receive his D.O. from the University of North Texas Health Science Center – Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2008. Dr. Fries then completed his residency in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology at the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System, Medical College of Virginia Hospitals in Richmond, VA. In July 2012 Dr. Fries accepted a fellowship in Forensic Pathology at the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office in Fort Worth, TX. Successful completion of this one year program will qualify Dr. Fries to take the board examination in Forensic Pathology. Dr. Fries is a member of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) and the National Association of Medical Examiners

(NAME). He plans to pursue a full time career as a Forensic Pathologist.

## ADMINISTRATION

### **RONALD SINGER, M.S. - TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR**

Ronald Singer received a B.S. degree from Tulane University and an M.S. degree from Loyola University of New Orleans. A forensic scientist since 1972, he has served as President of the International Association of Forensic Sciences, is a Distinguished Fellow and Past President of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, a Distinguished Member and Past President of the Association of Firearm and Toolmark Examiners, an Emeritus Member and Past Secretary of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors, and is a member of numerous other forensic associations and committees. He has been an invited speaker on forensic issues throughout the U.S., Hungary, Bosnia, England, Portugal, Turkey, the Maldives and Sri Lanka. Mr. Singer is a recipient of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences Criminalistics Section Outstanding Service Award, the Association of Firearm and Toolmark Examiners Member of the Year Award, the Gold Medal of the Mediterranean Academy of Forensic Sciences and the Distinguished Fellow Award from the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.



### **TRACYE POIRIER, M.B.A. - BUSINESS MANAGER**

Tracye Poirier received her B.S. degree in Chemistry from the University of Texas at Arlington. She came to work here in 2000 as a Senior Forensic Toxicologist. She also served as a Senior Forensic Chemist before assuming her current role as the Business Manager. Her background in the sciences provides her with unique insight into managing a Medical Examiner office. Ms. Poirier earned her M.B.A. degree with an emphasis in Strategic Leadership in April 2010 from the University of Dallas. Ms. Poirier is a member of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and the Southwestern Association of Toxicologists.



## SECRETARIAL SERVICES

### **LINDA F. ANDERSON - EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT/PIO**

Accepting employment as a medical secretary in 1994, Ms. Anderson is currently the Executive Assistant for the Chief Medical Examiner and she supervises the clerical department. She is responsible for scheduling pathologists for morgue duty, directs scheduling of physicians for court appearances and professional engagements, trains secretarial staff, and interacts with families and the general public. In addition to these responsibilities she acts as the Public Information Officer for the office. Ms. Anderson's previous employment history includes office manager/procurement technician for Harris Methodist Tissue Services and Court Clerk with the City of Fort Worth Municipal Court.



## MORGUE/EVIDENCE SERVICES

### **TRACI WILSON - CHIEF OF MORGUE/LABORATORY SERVICES**

Traci Wilson began her employment with the Tarrant County Examiner's Office as a Forensic Autopsy Technician in 1995. Prior to moving to Fort Worth she had worked as a Forensic Pathologist Assistant in Bossier City, LA. Ms. Wilson attended Northeast Louisiana University Monroe (ULM) where she majored in Business Administration/Business Law. In 2009 Ms. Wilson assumed the duties of Chief of Morgue/Laboratory Services, and has since worked hard to implement new policies to streamline record keeping and evidence handling.





## HUMAN IDENTIFICATION SERVICES

### **ROGER METCALF, D.D.S., J.D. – CHIEF OF HUMAN IDENTIFICATION SERVICES**

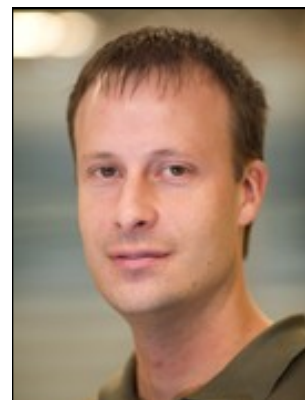
Roger Metcalf is a graduate of Baylor University and Baylor College of Dentistry. He completed a Fellowship in Forensic Odontology at the Center for Education and Research in Forensics at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio Dental School under Dr. David Sinn. He received his J.D. degree from Texas Wesleyan University School of Law in 2009. Dr. Metcalf has been a member of the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Mass Fatality Dental Identification Team since it was established in 1980, and participated in identification of victims from the Delta 191 and 1141 crashes at DFW Airport, and from the Mt. Carmel Incident in Waco, TX. Since joining the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District in 2004, Dr. Metcalf has supervised the forensic identification of more than 300 unidentified bodies per year. Dr. Metcalf is commissioned as a Lt. Colonel in the DFW Medical Ranger Group, Medical Reserve Corps, Texas Medical Brigade, Texas State Guard. He participates as an active member of the Wesleyan Innocence Project, a group that reviews possible exoneration cases for the Dallas County District Attorney's Office.



## FORENSIC CHEMISTRY AND TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY

### **ROBERT JOHNSON, PH.D. - CHIEF FORENSIC TOXICOLOGIST**

Dr. Johnson graduated from The University of Oklahoma with a Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry in 2004. Certified as a forensic toxicologist by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology, he joined the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office in 2011. Additionally, Dr. Johnson is active in several professional societies including the Society of Forensic Toxicologists, the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and the Southwestern Association of Toxicologists. He has published over 50 scientific articles in his career all of which deal specifically with forensic toxicology.



## CRIMINALISTICS LABORATORY

### **SUSAN R. HOWE, D.V.M., PH.D. - CRIME LABORATORY DIRECTOR**



Dr. Howe received a B.S. and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of Illinois, and a Ph.D. in Toxicology from Texas A & M University. A forensic scientist since 1996, she is an active member of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, the Society of Forensic Toxicologists, and the Southwestern Association of Toxicologists. Dr. Howe is currently serving as President of the Southwestern Association of Toxicologists. Dr. Howe is board certified in Forensic Toxicology by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology, and has published a number of scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals in the field of molecular toxicology.

## FORENSIC DEATH INVESTIGATION

### **TARRANT COUNTY:**

#### **MICHAEL FLOYD - CHIEF FORENSIC DEATH INVESTIGATOR**

Michael Floyd began working for the TCME District in 1990 as a Medical Investigator assigned to Parker County and he transferred to Tarrant County in 1993. In 1997 he was promoted to Senior Forensic Investigator, became the Supervisory Investigator in 2009, and was appointed the Chief Forensic Investigator in 2010. Prior to his employment at TCME Michael was a Texas-certified EMT-Paramedic for 16 years. Michael also holds a TCLEOSE Master Peace Officer certificate and Instructor license, and has been a commissioned peace officer since 1981. In 1984 he earned an Associate Degree from Weatherford College and in 1996 a B.S. degree from Texas Wesleyan University. Michael is a Diplomat of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators.



### **DENTON COUNTY:**

#### **TROY TAYLOR, B.S. - CHIEF FORENSIC DEATH INVESTIGATOR**

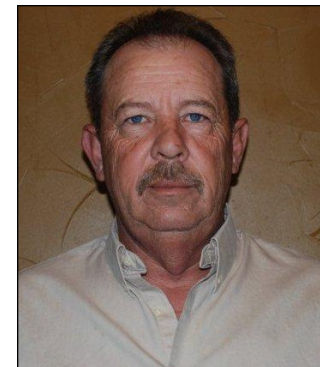
Mr. Taylor started his career in 1990 at the Denton County Medical Examiner's Office. After multi-year tenures in Denton and Tarrant County he transferred back to the Denton office in 2003. Troy teaches medical examiner law, wound patterning, and decompositional changes for intermediate crime scene classes as well as basic peace officer certification classes. He has attended medico-legal death investigation training and psychological profiling schools. Mr. Taylor was promoted to Chief Forensic Death Investigator of Denton County in 2007.



### **JOHNSON COUNTY:**

#### **GARY MORRIS - CHIEF FORENSIC DEATH INVESTIGATOR**

Gary Morris began his service with the Johnson County Medical Examiner's Office as a Reserve Investigator in 2006. Mr. Morris served in several positions, advancing to his current position as the Chief Forensic Death Investigator for the Johnson County office, a position he has held since 2011. He has attended Forensic Death Investigation training in Fort Worth, St. Louis, Arizona and New York.



### **PARKER COUNTY:**

#### **BRYAN WRIGHT - CHIEF FORENSIC DEATH INVESTIGATOR**

Bryan Wright began working with the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District shortly after Parker County became the first member of the district system in 1986, and worked as a Medical Investigator for 13 years. During that time, Bryan was also a peace officer with the Weatherford Police Department, retiring honorably as a Lieutenant in 2009, earning a Master Peace Officer certification among other awards and honors, and completing 60 college hours. During that time he also worked with and administrated the Cross Timbers Narcotics Task Force, comprised of 18 member law enforcement agencies. Upon retiring, Bryan was sought out and hired by the Parker County Sheriff's Office due to his extensive experience and background, and has a cumulative 30 years of peace officer experience.



**TARRANT COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S DISTRICT  
GENERAL STATISTICAL SUMMARY  
2012**

	<u>Number</u>
<b>Reported Deaths:</b>	<b>9,159</b>
Jurisdiction Terminated:	6,514
Jurisdiction accepted:	2,278
Scenes investigated:	1,244
Bodies brought to the facility:	2,278
 <b>Medical Procedures:</b>	 <b>2,278</b>
External:	1009 (44% of deaths certified)
Partial Autopsies:	434 (19% of deaths certified)
Complete Autopsies:	835 (37% of deaths certified)
 <b>Manner of Death:</b>	
Deaths certified as Natural:	1,073 (47% of deaths certified)
Deaths certified as Accident:	673 (30% of deaths certified)
	(Non-motor vehicle: 463)
	(Motor vehicle: 210)
Deaths certified as Suicide:	316 (14% of deaths certified)
Deaths certified as Homicide:	125 (5% of deaths certified)
Deaths certified as Pending:	0 (0% of deaths certified)
Deaths certified as Undetermined:	76 (3% of deaths certified)
Deaths certified as Non-Human Remains:	15 (1% of deaths certified)
 <b>Unidentified Bodies:</b>	
Total Identified:	<b>345</b>
Identified by fingerprints:	265
Identified by anthropology:	21
Identified by odontology:	27
Identified visually:	15
Identified by DNA:	10
Identified by other means:	4
Pending:	3





2012 TARRANT COUNTY DEATHS		
MANNER OF DEATH	CASES	PERCENTAGE
NATURAL	818	13%
ACCIDENT	506	8%
SUICIDE	222	3%
HOMICIDE	104	2%
UNDETERMINED	63	1%
NON-HUMAN REMAINS	9	<1%
JURISDICTION TERMINATED	4644	73%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6366</b>	<b>100%</b>

2012 DENTON COUNTY DEATHS		
MANNER OF DEATH	CASES	PERCENTAGE
NATURAL	136	9%
ACCIDENT	103	7%
SUICIDE	66	4%
HOMICIDE	9	<1%
UNDETERMINED	7	<1%
NON-HUMAN REMAINS	3	<1%
JURISDICTION TERMINATED	1206	79%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1530</b>	<b>100%</b>



2012 JOHNSON COUNTY DEATHS		
MANNER OF DEATH	CASES	PERCENTAGE
NATURAL	73	15%
ACCIDENT	28	6%
SUICIDE	13	3%
HOMICIDE	7	1%
UNDETERMINED	4	1%
NON-HUMAN REMAINS	3	1%
JURISDICTION TERMINATED	354	73%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>100%</b>

2012 PARKER COUNTY DEATHS		
MANNER OF DEATH	CASES	PERCENTAGE
NATURAL	46	11%
ACCIDENT	36	9%
SUICIDE	15	4%
HOMICIDE	5	1%
UNDETERMINED	2	<1%
NON-HUMAN REMAINS	0	0%
JURISDICTION TERMINATED	310	75%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>100%</b>



## FIVE YEAR COMPARISON

### TARRANT COUNTY

Manner of Death	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Natural	818	915	843	804	766
Accidental	506	518	464	517	492
Suicide	222	190	200	163	182
Homicide	104	138	140	94	118
Undetermined	64	57	47	43	38
Non-Human Remains	9	16	11	12	13
Jurisdiction Terminated	4644	4519	4541	4421	4406
<b>Total</b>	<b>6366</b>	<b>6354</b>	<b>6245</b>	<b>6055</b>	<b>6015</b>

### DENTON COUNTY

Manner of Death	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Natural	136	159	140	175	152
Accidental	103	95	90	86	77
Suicide	66	66	58	64	55
Homicide	9	11	15	13	11
Undetermined	7	11	14	11	11
Non-Human Remains	3	4	4	2	1
Jurisdiction Terminated	1206	140	1079	989	1014
<b>Total</b>	<b>1530</b>	<b>1486</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>1339</b>	<b>1321</b>

### JOHNSON COUNTY

(\*Johnson County joined the TCME District on 7/1/2008)

Manner of Death	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008*
Natural	73	57	60	45	26
Accidental	28	26	29	24	26
Suicide	13	12	29	16	10
Homicide	7	4	1	0	1
Undetermined	4	3	1	4	0
Non-Human Remains	3	0	2	1	0
Jurisdiction Terminated	354	323	317	315	161
<b>Total</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>224</b>

### PARKER COUNTY

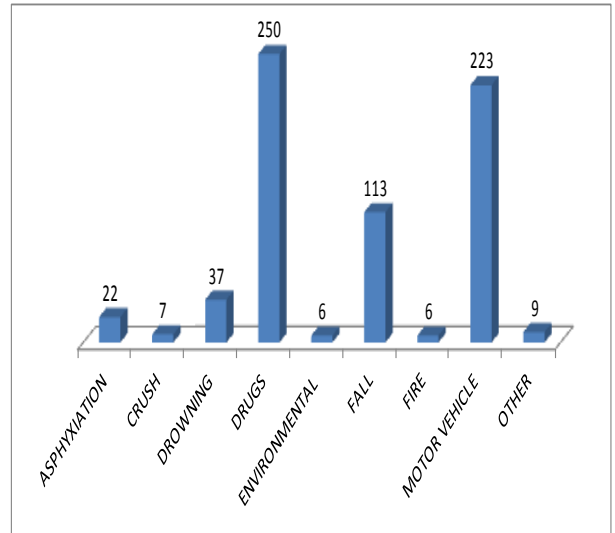
Manner of Death	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Natural	46	72	50	42	50
Accidental	36	29	32	38	37
Suicide	15	25	18	10	11
Homicide	5	0	1	2	4
Undetermined	2	2	1	2	2
Non-Human Remains	0	3	0	2	4
Jurisdiction Terminated	310	312	296	279	244
<b>Total</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>352</b>

# ACCIDENTS, HOMICIDES AND SUICIDES BY METHOD

## ACCIDENTS BY METHOD

TARRANT DENTON JOHNSON PARKER TOTAL

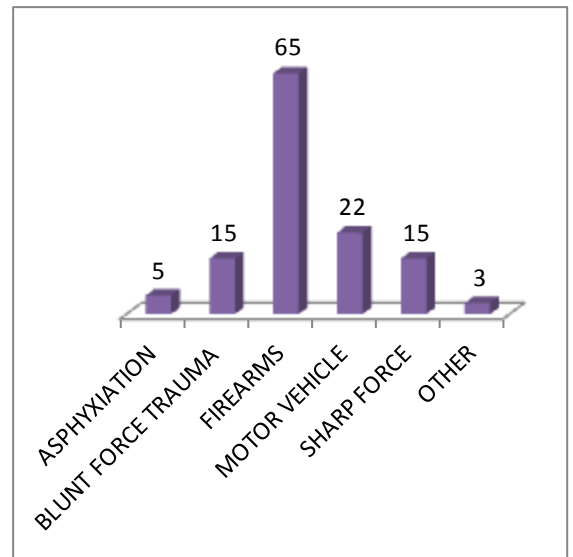
	TARRANT	DENTON	JOHNSON	PARKER	TOTAL
ASPHYXIATION	19	1	1	1	22
CRUSH	7	0	0	0	7
DROWNING	27	9	1	0	37
DRUGS	184	44	11	11	250
ENVIRONMENTAL	5	1	0	0	6
FALL	90	17	2	4	113
FIRE	6	0	0	0	6
MOTOR VEHICLE	162	28	13	20	223
OTHER	7	2	0	0	9
					<b>673</b>



## HOMICIDES BY METHOD

TARRANT DENTON JOHNSON PARKER TOTAL

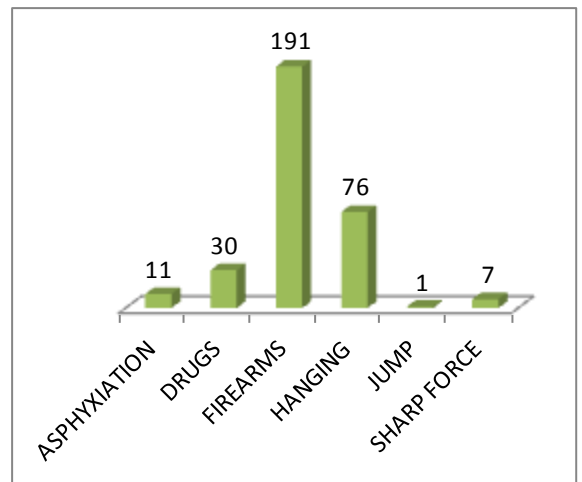
	TARRANT	DENTON	JOHNSON	PARKER	TOTAL
ASPHYXIATION	5	0	0	0	5
BLUNT FORCE TRAUMA	14	1	0	0	15
FIREARMS	50	7	5	3	65
MOTOR VEHICLE	20	0	1	1	22
SHARP FORCE	13	1	0	1	15
OTHER	2	0	1	0	3
					<b>125</b>



## SUICIDES BY METHOD

TARRANT DENTON JOHNSON PARKER TOTAL

	TARRANT	DENTON	JOHNSON	PARKER	TOTAL
ASPHYXIATION	4	7	0	0	11
DRUGS	25	4	1	0	30
FIREARMS	128	40	9	14	191
HANGING	59	14	2	1	76
JUMP	1	0	0	0	1
SHARP FORCE	5	1	1	0	7
					<b>316</b>





## FORENSIC DEATH INVESTIGATION

One of the primary purposes of the medical examiner's office is to conduct inquests or investigations into the cause and manner of deaths occurring within Tarrant, Denton, Johnson and Parker Counties. The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District staffs an around-the-clock investigative division responsible for initiating a formal response to all reportable cases.



Investigators within the district made inquiries into more than 8700 deaths in 2012. Forensic investigators are trained in a multi-disciplinary capacity and possess unique education and abilities, including knowledge of criminal investigation techniques, relevant aspects of forensic medicine, crime scene processing skills, and maintenance of case integrity. Additionally, each investigator must be capable of conducting effective interviews, locating and notifying next-of-kin, and interacting with law enforcement personnel.

Once a jurisdictional death is reported, the investigator attends the scene or hospital where the death occurred. After conducting the initial investigation, the investigator prepares a detailed case report containing biographical data on the decedent, a narrative of the events leading up to



the time of death or discovery of the decedent, and a summation of all investigative analyses and leads. In addition, investigators coordinate with hospitals,



physicians, law enforcement agencies, employers, families, and other pertinent sources to gather information that might be of value to the determination of the cause and manner of death.

# HUMAN IDENTIFICATION LABORATORY

Identification of unidentified remains is a primary function of the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office. In order to more efficiently accomplish this task, the office has created the Human Identification Laboratory. Headed by a full time forensic odontologist, the laboratory staff also includes a full time forensic anthropologist, and utilizes the talents of the fingerprint examiners assigned to the crime laboratory. Unidentified remains are systematically examined using fingerprints, dental records, anthropological studies and DNA technology and making use of local, state and national data bases in an effort to provide identity and closure to the deceased and their families.



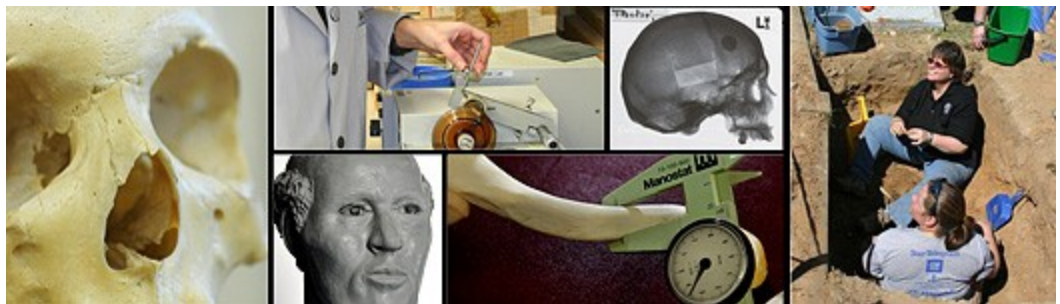
## FORENSIC ODONTOLOGY

Forensic dentists deal with a range of medicolegal problems. Identification of the human remains of natural disasters, terrorist activities, and missing and unknown persons is a central activity. The postmortem dental examination of human remains usually involves charting dental and cranial features, radiographic (x-ray) documentation of these features, and forensic report writing regarding these findings. Dental identification plays a particularly important role in the identification of victims of catastrophic events where there are massive numbers of casualties such as airplane crashes (Pan Am flight 103 and American Airlines flight 587), fires, floods, earthquakes, or terrorist attacks (Oklahoma City Federal Building and the World Trade Center).



## FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Bones comprise the structural framework of the human body. Due to their properties, bones decompose more slowly than many other tissues and organs; thus,



they are often capable of providing clues that assist examiners in determining the cause and manner of death. Skeletal remains can provide information such as the race, stature, weight, age, and gender of the decedent. Evidence of trauma or natural disease may also be identified. X-ray comparisons can help establish scientifically the identity of a body. Samples of DNA can also be obtained from bone; thus, in cases where decomposition is advanced significantly, DNA analysis can still be of value. Tarrant County has the only comprehensive forensic anthropology laboratory attached to a medical examiner's office in Texas.



## THE MORGUE



The main center of activity of any medical examiner's facility is the morgue area. Dedicated in 1989, the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office morgue area employs a design which centralizes all morgue activity, isolating it from the other activities of the building. There are two holding areas, each capable of holding fifty bodies. One of the areas is dedicated to incoming cases only, while the other holds bodies awaiting release. The main morgue consists of four workstations, each of which is designed to be

conducive to a dynamic work environment in which examinations can be carried out with maximum efficiency. The morgue area also contains a separate major case morgue and a teaching morgue capable of seating 45 students. In addition a 2 station isolation/biohazard morgue was included in the new construction.

Classroom instruction is an integral component of any medical education program. The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office regularly participates in the academic and practical training of students from the entire North Texas area by



offering once a month autopsy classes.

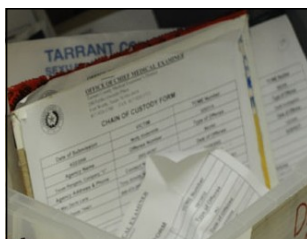


The morgue is staffed by autopsy technicians (deiners) who assist the pathologists with forensic examinations. Each autopsy technician is responsible for obtaining photographs, radiographs (X-rays), fingerprints, and biological samples from the decedent before autopsy.

Because the identification of foreign bodies in or on a decedent is vitally important to a comprehensive examination, the medical examiner's office relies on radiological techniques as a tool. Designed to facilitate easy access to radiographic equipment without moving the body from the transport gurney, the radiology lab incorporates a C-arm fluoroscope, a fixed flat plate device, and articulated dental radiography equipment.



## EVIDENCE HANDLING



In order to preserve evidentiary integrity, each piece of evidence collected by or submitted to the medical examiner's office for processing must be coupled with a detailed chain-of-custody log. To ensure the chain-of-custody is maintained correctly, and that all evidence is handled, cared for, and stored properly, forensic technicians with expertise in evidentiary preservation are utilized.



# FORENSIC CHEMISTRY AND TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY

## FORENSIC CHEMISTRY

Forensic chemists analyze drugs submitted by other agencies. Drug types received commonly range from clandestine chemical substances to therapeutic or prescribed medications. Cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and amphetamines, all drugs of abuse, represent the most common products received for chemical assay. Daily, law enforcement agencies within the medical examiner's district are faced with the challenge of identifying drugs found subsequent to an arrest or search warrant execution.



## INTOXILYZER PROGRAM



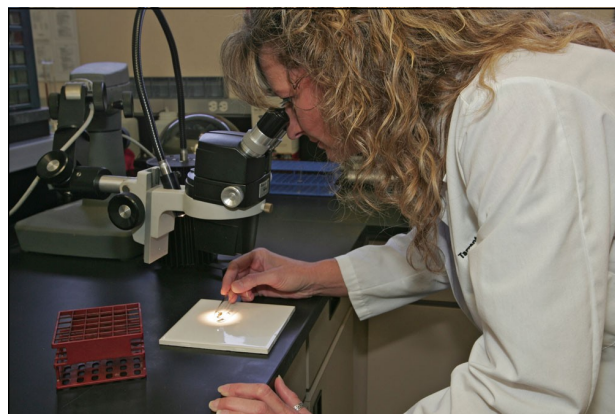
An intoxilyzer instrument provides an objective, scientific means of testing someone who is suspected by police to have been driving under the influence of alcohol by measuring a sample of the suspect's breath for determinable levels of alcohol concentration. Grant funds supplied by the Texas Department of Transportation were used to establish the ME office's intoxilyzer program in 1994. Under the program, forensic chemists establish intoxilyzer test sites, calibrate and maintain equipment, and train intoxilyzer operators, which benefits local police agencies.

## FORENSIC TOXICOLOGY



Forensic toxicological services were established at the medical examiner's office in 1983. Subsequently, the toxicology laboratory has expanded to include mass spectrometry, gas chromatography, and high-pressure liquid chromatography analysis. The toxicology laboratory provides drug testing to assist the medical examiners in determining the cause and manner of death by isolating, identifying, and determining the level of chemicals in specimens. Additionally, the forensic toxicology laboratory participates regularly in established analytical proficiency testing and quality assurance programs.





**2012**

**CHEMISTRY CASES RECEIVED**

	2012 CASES	2011 CASES	2010 CASES	2009 CASES
JAN	191	149	153	215
FEB	218	171	115	198
MAR	139	219	175	197
APR	140	139	169	167
MAY	151	118	183	192
JUN	168	156	230	247
JUL	155	254	178	224
AUG	147	171	170	160
SEP	88	181	177	183
OCT	139	125	148	159
NOV	66	210	181	120
DEC	141	195	141	244
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1743</b>	<b>2088</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2306</b>





## 2012 TOXICOLOGY CASES

	TARRANT	DENTON	JOHNSON	PARKE R	OTHER ME CASES	OTHER CASES	2012 TOTALS	2011 TOTALS	2010 TOTALS
JAN	76	19	3	4	38	99	239	247	221
FEB	84	11	10	7	51	104	267	198	205
MAR	74	14	4	5	40	92	229	245	228
APR	67	21	6	4	33	83	214	215	201
MAY	86	21	3	7	45	99	261	265	259
JUN	77	10	1	2	60	111	261	279	237
JUL	85	21	12	5	53	103	279	259	226
AUG	94	22	11	7	37	97	268	243	226
SEP	82	9	3	6	45	109	254	235	217
OCT	80	20	6	6	40	128	280	243	218
NOV	91	18	6	2	54	99	270	246	203
DEC	83	19	9	6	37	76	230	284	226
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>3052</b>	<b>2959</b>	<b>2667</b>



## 2012 TOXICOLOGY SERVICES BY SAMPLE

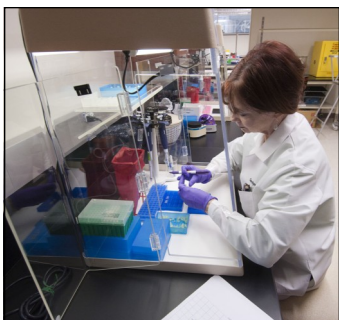
	Acid	Base	Alcohols	Ampheta- mine	Metham- phetamine	THC ELISA	Opiates ELISA	Cocaine ELISA	Benzodi- azepines	Oxycodone ELISA	Carbon Monoxide	2012 TOTALS	2011 TOTALS	2010 TOTALS
JAN	294	294	497	404	404	404	404	404	404	404	10	3923	2160	2006
FEB	240	240	521	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	25	3651	1772	1704
MAR	300	300	387	394	394	394	394	394	394	394	14	3759	2449	1659
APR	239	239	390	470	470	470	470	470	470	470	13	4171	1863	1635
MAY	282	282	656	363	363	363	363	363	363	363	10	3771	2057	1612
JUN	231	231	583	332	332	332	332	332	332	332	7	3376	2292	2115
JUL	290	290	553	467	467	467	467	467	467	467	14	4416	1914	2085
AUG	254	254	518	399	399	399	399	399	399	399	4	3823	2047	2039
SEP	260	260	544	353	353	353	353	353	353	353	11	3546	1839	1979
OCT	272	272	560	337	337	337	337	337	337	337	5	3468	1756	1717
NOV	280	280	517	458	458	458	458	458	458	458	7	4290	1775	2133
DEC	211	211	478	463	463	463	463	463	463	463	6	4147	2396	1856
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3153</b>	<b>3153</b>	<b>6204</b>	<b>4815</b>	<b>4815</b>	<b>4815</b>	<b>4815</b>	<b>4815</b>	<b>4815</b>	<b>4815</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>46341</b>	<b>24320</b>	<b>22506</b>



# CRIMINALISTICS LABORATORIES

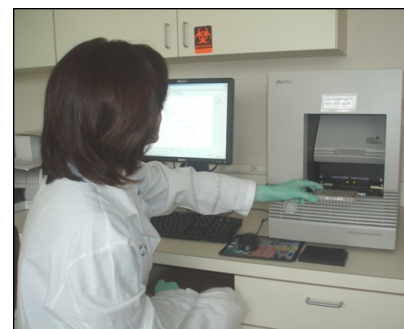
Since 1989, the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's District has operated a full-service crime laboratory, serving the needs of the medical examiner's office, district attorney's offices, and law enforcement agencies in North Central Texas and throughout the United States. Equipped with modern analytical instrumentation, the various sections of the crime laboratory combine scientific technology with an experienced professional staff. Specialized sections of the crime laboratory identify, analyze, and report on various forms of evidence such as DNA, blood spatter, trace materials, chemical compounds, firearms, tool marks and latent fingerprints.

## FORENSIC BIOLOGY



DNA analysis provides the ability to restrict potential populations of persons to which a biological sample might belong to a much smaller subset of suspects. Such a determination is useful in identifying the source and, subsequently, connecting that source to a particular death or crime scene. In addition, the DNA laboratory is a designated CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) laboratory. CODIS is

the FBI's DNA data base that ultimately links all 50 states and 18 countries to provide a means of comparing forensic case work profiles. The data base search may result in linking unsolved cases to a single perpetrator and can provide significant investigative leads.



### 2012 FORENSIC BIOLOGY WORK OUTPUT

- ◆ Reports issued on cases - 589
- ◆ Number of service requests completed - 643

## TRACE EVIDENCE



Trace evidence is that material which, because of its size or weight, can be easily transferred from one individual or object to another. Gunshot residue, hair, glass, paint, and fibers are among the more common materials collected and submitted for examination. Trace analysis utilizes advanced

technology and instrumentation such as the scanning electron microscope coupled with an energy dispersive x-ray analysis spectrometer to obtain chemical profiles of materials in an attempt to relate materials to each other or to a common source. The trace analyst, as other criminalists, must be knowledgeable of relevant and scientifically sound analytical, investigative methodologies.



### 2012 TRACE EVIDENCE WORK OUTPUT

- ◆ Reports issued on cases - 129
- ◆ Number of service requests completed - 136

## FIREARMS AND TOOL MARKS



Examination and analyses of firearms, projectiles, ballistics, and markings imparted by any form of tool, fall within the purview of the firearms and tool marks laboratory.



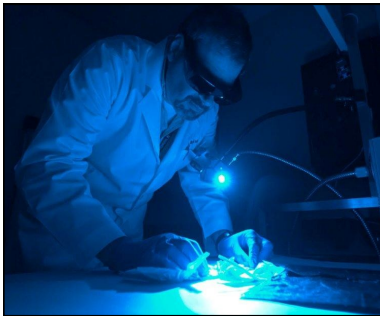
Firearms submitted are examined for inherent characteristics, unique identifiers, and safety-related factors, and can be test fired to obtain reference material that can subsequently be compared to submitted

evidence. Range-of-fire determinations can be carried out on a 40-foot indoor range.

### 2012 FIREARMS/TOOLMARKS WORK OUTPUT

- ◆ Reports issued on cases - 72
- ◆ Number of service requests completed - 84

## LATENT FINGERPRINTS



Latent fingerprint examination is a fundamental tool of the medical examiner's office, with latent prints being utilized as a scientific form of identification on unidentified bodies that come into the medical examiner's office. Fingerprints can also be retrieved from submitted evidence and used to assist in identifying a criminal suspect. Applying the newest technology,



the latent print examiner achieves remarkable results in lifting prints from various substrates.

### 2012 LATENT PRINTS WORK OUTPUT

- ◆ Reports issued on cases - 19
- ◆ Number of service requests completed - 23

## FORENSIC PHOTOGRAPHY

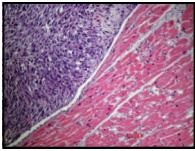
A fully equipped forensic photography laboratory was added to the crime laboratory in 1994. By 2005, the laboratory had replaced all film processing with digital photography. In addition to more traditional photography, the lab is capable of making photographs utilizing ultraviolet and infrared techniques. Image enhancement can also be performed. Pictures, enlargements, and other services are provided to the medical examiner, to the courts, and to individuals for educational or research-based presentations.



### 2012 FORENSIC PHOTOGRAPHY WORK OUTPUT

- ◆ Provided 87,729 services on 2035 cases
- ◆ Provided 4,414 other services (reproductions, enlargements)

## FORENSIC HISTOLOGY



Many cause of death determinations rely upon the examination of a decedent's tissues and organs. Special stains and fixation methods are employed to assist the physician in identifying disease processes and certain tissue changes that occur in response to trauma, lifestyle habits, or other variables.



### **2012 FORENSIC HISTOLOGY WORK OUTPUT**

- ◆ **Provided 35,648 services on 2,120 cases**

## SECRETARIAL SERVICES



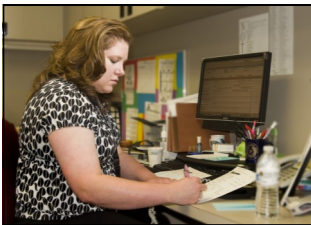
Secretaries for the medical examiner's office provide a diverse complement of administrative support services for the daily operation of business. In addition to performing the usual secretarial tasks, each medical secretary assists in the management of records, complex transcription services, and interaction with bereaved families, law enforcement agencies, hospitals and funeral homes. Included in their responsibilities is

the issuance of death certificates, cremation letters and amended death certificates as well as scheduling pathologists for court appearances.

### **2012 SECRETARIAL SERVICES WORK OUTPUT**

- ◆ **Transcribed 2,922 autopsy reports**
- ◆ **Issued 3,005 cremation permits**
- ◆ **Issued 2,278 death certificates**
- ◆ **Issued 609 Death certificate amendments**
- ◆ **Completed over 3,700 Records requests**

## BUSINESS OFFICE



The Business Office was established to meet the increasing complexities of the day to day management of the business aspects of the Medical Examiner's office. The Business Manager, assisted by the Bookkeeper, comprise the business office, which provides support in the financial aspects of the office including budget preparation and reporting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, personnel matters and other related fiscal issues. The Transportation of Human Remains contract is supervised by the Business Manager. In addition the Business Office is responsible for maintaining inventory of all supplies, computer hardware, office equipment and scientific instruments, and ensuring all service warranties are current.

## BUILDING SUPERINTENDENT

The building superintendent is responsible for all of the general maintenance of the building, including minor repairs and preventive maintenance. He also oversees vendors and contractors and ensures work is properly done, and supervises work release individuals assigned to perform janitorial, grounds and other duties. His role is especially vital in maintaining all of the ventilation and air conditioning needs specific to a facility like the Medical Examiner's Office, with its inherent biohazards and the investment in precision scientific instruments that cannot tolerate temperature changes.



## CHILD FATALITY REVIEW TEAM

Child deaths attributable to illness, birth defect, delivery difficulty, neoplastic disease, and other natural causes account for approximately one out of four child fatalities locally. Although these deaths can be devastating, the larger community is impacted perhaps more by deaths occurring unnaturally. The greatest risk of death from abuse or neglect occurs among the youngest children who, because of their age, have an absolute dependence on their caretakers.

Although there are more than 4,000 child deaths annually in Texas, no single agency tracks all aspects of every death reported. Of particular interest are those deaths that are preventable. In 1995, the Texas Legislature amended Chapter 264 of the Family Code to include language outlining the establishment and continuance of a state child fatality review team committee, local child fatality review teams, and formation of a statewide analytical evaluation of all collected and reported child death information. The ultimate goal of the project is to identify trends and reduce the number of preventable childhood deaths. There are approximately 50 representatives appointed to the Tarrant County CFRT from the following agencies:

- ◆ Tarrant County District Attorney Office
- ◆ Local Law Enforcement
- ◆ Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (CPS)
- ◆ Cook Children’s Medical Center
- ◆ Alliance for Children - Tarrant County
- ◆ Tarrant County Public Health
- ◆ Shaken Baby Alliance

	2012		2011		2010		2009	
<b>Total Child Deaths*</b>	<b>104</b>		<b>99</b>		<b>122</b>		<b>113</b>	
Natural Causes	30	29%	31	32%	35	29%	28	25%
Accident	28	27%	24	24%	38	31%	42	37%
Homicide	13	13%	14	14%	20	16%	17	15%
Suicide	10	10%	8	8%	5	4%	4	4%
Undetermined	23	22%	22	22%	24	20%	22	19%

\* Total Child Deaths refers to deaths occurring within the TCME district that were reviewed by this committee.

# EDUCATION

## **FORENSIC EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Opportunities for education in the forensic sciences are extended to local law enforcement, medical, and higher education agencies through the medical examiner's office. Annually over 600 persons are provided the unique educational experience of witnessing a forensic autopsy. Local agencies served through this educational program include the Fort Worth and Arlington Police and Fire Academies, District Attorney Offices in Hood and Denton County, Weatherford College Nursing School, and both the pre-med and biology honor sciences at Texas Wesleyan University and other colleges.



## **TUESDAY MORNING FORENSIC ROUNDS**

Forensic Rounds meets every Tuesday (except in July and December) at 8:00 am in the 3rd floor annex conference room. A large variety of topics are presented by either the ME staff or an invited speaker. In addition to medical examiner staff the audience includes law enforcement personnel, attorneys, medical personnel, and medical students.



## **ANNUAL CURRENT TRENDS IN FORENSIC SCIENCE CONFERENCE**



Current Trends is a conference organized by the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office that is open to anyone in the medical, law enforcement, judicial or medicolegal professions, or anyone interested in the forensic sciences. As the title suggests, the conference seeks to present topics that are current or new developments in the various forensic disciplines. An award is presented each year to a person who has been nominated by their peers as being someone who exhibits excellence in the field of forensics. The Zachariah Award of Excellence was named after our former Technical Administrator, Dr. Nannepaga Zachariah, who passed away in February 2009.

## **INTERNATIONAL FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTER**



The International Forensic Science Center is a part of the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office and was started during 2006. The purpose of this is to provide education available at the medical examiner's office to forensic scholars and students from abroad. These sessions typically last for two weeks during which the medical examiner staff arranges lectures and practical sessions. A working relationship was established between Texas Wesleyan University and the

Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office to facilitate this education at the international level. TWU has provided housing for our foreign students on several occasions.



## **FORENSIC PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP**

The Forensic Pathology Fellowship was started in 2004 and at the current time is fully accredited by the ACGME. The fellow works with the medical examiners and scientific staff and receives twelve full months of exposure at the medical examiner's office. When the program is completed, the fellow will graduate and become eligible to sit for their board examination in forensic pathology and then to pursue a career as a forensic pathologist.

## **STUDENT VOLUNTEERS/INTERNS**

Any student over the age of 18 who wants to get exposure to the medical examiner's activities can apply for a volunteer position. There are restrictions as to what areas a student may have access to, so the individual student's needs and goals must be evaluated to see if there is a compatible opportunity available at the time. Safety and liability issues must also be considered. Appropriate background checks and immunizations may be required before beginning an assignment.





