

DISTRICT ATTORNEY PAIGE CLARKSON TO CONCLUDE NEARLY 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO MARION COUNTY

News Release from **Marion Co. Dist. Attorney's Office**

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SALEM, OR (September 28, 2026) – Marion County District Attorney Paige Clarkson announced earlier this month that she will retire from her nearly thirty-year career at the Marion County District Attorney's Office on Wednesday, September 30, 2026. She explained it was the right time for her to step aside and expressed confidence that DA-elect Brendan Murphy is fully prepared to take on this crucial role.

"It has been the privilege of my professional life to serve as a prosecutor in Marion County. There is truly no better job in the law and no better place to do it. For nearly three decades, I have been exceptionally fortunate to say that I love who I work with and who I work for – specifically, my DA and Law Enforcement colleagues and our community. I am proud of the incredibly hard work of this office, and I will forever consider it my home."

Clarkson is a 1999 graduate of Willamette University College of Law and a member of the Oregon State Bar since that time. She joined the Marion County District Attorney's Office in 1997 as a law clerk, then became a line attorney, a senior Deputy District Attorney, and was promoted to Trial Team Leader more than a decade before her election as District Attorney. Her entire career has been committed to the Marion County District Attorney's Office, where she has worked tirelessly holding offenders accountable on behalf of the community and victims of crime.

When Clarkson was first elected District Attorney in 2018, she became only the second woman to hold the office in Marion County's history, following Hattie Bratzel Kremen, who served as District Attorney from 1956 to 1964. More than half a century separated the two women's terms in office.

Clarkson served this community during uniquely challenging times, including the implementation of Ballot Measure 110, which decriminalized possession of certain quantities of drugs, as well as the COVID 19 pandemic that shut down court process, the social unrest of 2020, and increased violent crime trends in the community. She served as President of the Oregon District Attorney's Association for three terms from 2019 to 2022 and has regularly worked to promote responsible public safety policy at the State Legislature and through numerous committees, workgroups, and boards. She and two of her colleagues also joined a federal lawsuit as amici ("friends of the court"), to push for

change related to restricted treatment timelines and civil commitment at the Oregon State Hospital.

One of Clarkson's proudest accomplishments is co-founding Marion County's Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program, which connects low-level offenders with treatment and support services as an alternative to prosecution. She began this program in 2018, and it is now the foundational program for drug deflection models throughout the state. She also helped start Marion County's first Mental Health Court and championed HB 4002 (2024), which re-criminalizes certain drug possession offenses. Clarkson is also an enthusiastic supporter of Liberty House, the Center for Hope and Safety, and veterans' causes.

Marion County Sheriff Nick Hunter said, "The mark of a great leader is to leave a profession better than they found it. The mark of an exceptional leader is to not only leave the profession better, but to passionately teach and mentor the next generation to continue betterment and improvement. DA Paige Clarkson, for over a quarter century (her words), has been dedicated to the communities she served, a staunch advocate for victim's rights, and an outstanding partner to law enforcement. DA Clarkson leaves framework, a legacy, and a mission we will continue, always striving to make her proud."

"The State of Oregon is better because of Paige," said District Attorney-elect Brendan Murphy. "I can't overstate the positive impact she's had on public safety through her work at the State Capital. However, despite her numerous state-wide successes, such as LEAD and the recriminalization of controlled substances, I know Paige will want to be remembered for the work she's done for local victims and local families. She will be missed at all levels. We were lucky to have her as a leader in Marion County."

Clarkson looks forward to this next chapter and plans to spend time with her husband who is a police lieutenant in Central Oregon and a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Marine Corps, and their four adult children.

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