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Justice is not served: Saratoga County is not safe with Karen Heggen as District Attorney.

On May 25, 2022, following the sentencing of James Garafalo, a 28-year-old bar room bully, who last August caused the death of Mark French, a 56-year-old retired corrections officer on vacation in Saratoga Springs, Saratoga County DA Karen Heggen pronounced that she "hoped James Garafalo's sentence sends a message to this defendant that he will finally choose to make better decisions." She also stated that with Garafalo's 4-and-a-half-year prison sentence "justice had been served."

"I had to read the story several times because I did not believe that *any* district attorney could say those words in this context, much less one charged with protecting the people of Saratoga County," said Michael Phillips, the Democratic candidate for Saratoga County District Attorney. "A man died. A 28-year-old bar room bully caused a retired corrections officer's death. And after this, long term incumbent DA Heggen, who has never faced a general election contest in her career, called a 4 and a half year sentence a 'message that she hopes the defendant will make better choices'?"

Garafalo pleaded guilty to second-degree assault last March after he and his brother, started a fight with French at Clancy's Tavern in August 2021. French died after he was knocked to the pavement, hit his head and then went into cardiac arrest on Caroline Street.

Staring straight ahead in the courtroom, Garafalo showed no emotion as Angela French, the dead man's widow, spoke remotely saying that French was "the love of her life, her husband and best friend for 31 years."

Phillips also made the following statement on the case:

"Karen Heggen sounded more like a schoolteacher chastising an 8-year-old for bad behavior in a classroom, than addressing a vicious assault that resulted in a man's death. "Does our District Attorney understand that a man died? Does she comprehend those lives have been shattered? Does Heggen have the capacity for empathy with the victim's family? Does she understand her failure?"

"French was a family man who died when he stepped in to defend his son who had been 'sucker punched' from behind by Garafalo. This 58-year-old cancer survivor died because a bar room bully started a fight. Heggen's statement completely devalued the life of the victim and dismissed the family's incredible grief and loss.

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Justice is not served: 2 2 2

“4 and 1/2 years for causing a homicide is a clear message that there is no justice for crime victims in Saratoga County while Karen Heggen is DA. This is just another example of unacceptable job performance from the top law enforcement official in Saratoga County.

“From allowing the predatory NXIVM cult to abuse women for years in the towns of Halfmoon and Clifton Park while she was either DA or an assistant DA, to failing to prosecute ballot fraud in Saratoga Springs, to not properly investigate the death of Ian Gerber last year, Karen Heggen has consistently proven that she is incapable of protecting and serving the people of Saratoga County.

“Heggen has never faced a general election contest since becoming District Attorney in 2014. She has never been held accountable.

“This year, the people of Saratoga County have a choice. A lawyer for 31 years, I intend to establish a "Center of Excellence" at the Saratoga County District Attorney's office and to build and lead the best team of prosecutors in New York State. Our global destination point deserves a county prosecutor who strives to be the best, not consistently fails at the basic responsibility of holding criminals responsible for their actions.”