

Kristen Kane—Queens County District Attorney’s Office

Kristen Kane is the Chief of the Elder Fraud Unit in Queens County, which has one of the largest elder populations in New York City, and monitors all complaints county-wide. As a prosecutor at the forefront of this growing area of criminal investigation and prosecution, with its interrelated social issues, Ms. Kane has initiated a unique multi-disciplinary approach to dealing with financial crimes perpetrated on the elderly. By conducting long term financial exploitation investigations and utilizing cooperators, search warrants and subpoenaed records and documents, she has developed pattern cases where defendants are prosecuted for repeatedly targeting multiple elderly victims. Additionally, Ms. Kane is innovatively and successfully utilizing the Hate Crime Statute for the protection of the elderly who are victimized by financial crime and is responsible for the first conviction in New York State under the protected attribute of age covered by the Hate Crime Act, thereby ensuring greater penalties for those found guilty of intentionally targeting elderly victims.

Even when a criminal investigation or prosecution is not warranted, Ms Kane goes to great lengths to ensure that the senior citizens who come into her office obtain the help they need, whether it involves finding the proper forum for their complaints or making referrals to appropriate agencies. Depending on the facts of the situation, Ms. Kane and her staff arrange for counseling, as well as other services, including assistance in procuring credit reports, alerting financial institutions, contacting distant family members. She also works closely with guardians of seniors, in the event that they discover possible financial exploitation, and to ensure that the senior is in a safe, secure environment and that their assets are protected. Ms. Kane often coordinates with various state and city agencies that work with senior citizens and has helped in the development of a training curriculum for the prosecution of elder abuse. Ms. Kane regularly participates in community outreach to senior centers, hospitals, and the like, to raise awareness of potential scams. She has testified before legislative bodies and governmental agencies on legal issues relating to the protection of senior citizens and is a frequent lecturer on topics relating to financial exploitation of the elderly.

For her ground-breaking work in the investigation and prosecution of financial exploitation cases involving senior citizens and her development of a multi-disciplinary approach for such cases, it is my honor to present Kristen Kane with the Dewey Medal.