

**Stephen Zawisky**  
**Silver Spring Township, PA**

Steve Zawisky has dedicated over twenty years to serving as a prosecutor in Central Pennsylvania, specializing in violent crimes with a particular focus on homicides. As a supervisor of homicide investigations and prosecutions, he has taken a hands-on approach, responding to crime scenes in the middle of the night to advise police detectives in their pursuit of truth and justice.



Steve's approach to prosecution and lawyering is motivated by a deep desire to do the right thing for the right reason and he has applied that slogan in every one of the thousands of cases he has litigated. His aim is to utilize the unique set of skills that he has developed over the past two decades as a judge of the Court of Common Pleas in the county he now calls home.

Born and raised in a blue-collar family in a small town in Northeast Pennsylvania, Steve's upbringing instilled in him the values of hard work, resilience, and the courage to stand up for those who cannot defend themselves. His ancestors immigrated to the United States from Slovenia in the late 1800's, finding work in the anthracite mines and the railroad industry that dominated coal country.

Steve's mother worked as a dress factory seamstress and later as a bank teller at a community bank in Forest City, Pennsylvania while his father was employed as a laborer for over thirty years at the local Endicott Johnson shoe factory. Although his family faced financial challenges, Steve enjoyed a childhood filled with lessons in determination, competitiveness, and compassion. He utilized these traits at an early age and excelled in both academics and athletics at a tiny rural high school – Forest City Regional.

Steve's academic journey began at Elizabethtown College, where he studied history and lettered in baseball. He later transferred to Bloomsburg University, graduating cum laude with a B.A. in History. With a longstanding goal of becoming a trial attorney, he pursued his law degree at Temple University, where he excelled in trial advocacy. Steve paid for his education with minimal assistance, a testament to his work ethic and determination.

Steve's career as a prosecutor began in 2002 under the mentorship of Dauphin County District Attorney Ed Marsico. It is in Dauphin County where Steve also met another veteran prosecutor – current Cumberland County District Attorney Sean McCormack – who first

interviewed Steve for the job. Early in his tenure, he demonstrated his skill and commitment by securing a conviction in a domestic violence jury trial just months into his role. Over the next two decades, Steve litigated thousands of cases which encompassed the entirety of the crimes code. From heroin dealing and illegal guns to domestic violence, robbery, burglary and theft, Steve has prosecuted virtually every type of crime possible.

Steve's experience as a career prosecutor has provided him with a deep understanding of the various issues that confront judges daily. From evidentiary and constitutional issues to procedural and fundamental fairness matters, Steve has seen and litigated it all. The goal of any judge is to provide due process and to avoid the unnecessary and expensive relitigation of cases – these are things that Steve is extremely familiar with as very few of his cases have been disturbed on appeal.

Steve's expertise in handling the most serious cases led him to specialize in homicide prosecutions. He currently coordinates the investigation and prosecution of homicides in Dauphin County, often responding to crime scenes and advising law enforcement on case strategy. Over the course of his career, he has advised police on or directly prosecuted approximately one-hundred homicide cases and has tried twenty-four homicide cases before a jury, achieving exceptional results.

Murder cases are among the most challenging in the legal field, requiring a deep knowledge of criminal procedure, evidence, and search and seizure. The cases are also emotionally taxing, as they involve navigating the complexities of grief and trauma with the families of victims. Steve takes immense pride in the trust and relationships he has built with the families of homicide victims, and all victims of crime, ensuring they feel heard and supported throughout the legal process.

Beyond the courtroom, Steve has made significant contributions to legal education. As an instructor at the Harrisburg Area Community College Municipal Police Academy, he has trained hundreds of police officers who now work in Dauphin, Cumberland and other Central Pennsylvania counties. He likewise has taught prosecutors statewide through the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association, sharing his expertise in areas such as search and seizure, drug delivery resulting in death, homicide prosecution, and trial advocacy - key competencies for any judge.

Steve has lived in Central Pennsylvania since 2002, residing in Harrisburg, Derry Township, and now Silver Spring Township, where he lives with his wife, Jenise Harris, and his stepdaughter, Adelyn, a student at Cumberland Valley High School. A resident of

Cumberland County since 2020, Steve is eager to bring his extensive experience and commitment to justice to the bench, serving the community he now calls home.

While venue for his criminal prosecutions has been concentrated in Dauphin County, Steve has worked on numerous cases with ties to Cumberland County. From multi-county criminal prosecutions such as robbery and burglary sprees, to representing Cumberland County residents as victims, witnesses, or defendants, he has demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the legal issues that cross county lines. Simply stated, criminal behavior does not stop at the Susquehanna River. Additionally, his time as a defense attorney with Abom and Kutulakis in Carlisle further deepened his connection to the Cumberland County legal community.

When he is not in the courtroom, Steve is a judge on the diamond, umpiring baseball both as an amateur and as a professional. He began umpiring high school baseball as an additional part-time job in 2013 in both Cumberland and Dauphin Counties. Steve then began umpiring college baseball games in all three NCAA divisions and he regularly is assigned to local colleges including Messiah University, Dickinson College and Shippensburg University.

In the Spring, it is common for Steve to work weekend games in the Ivy league, America East, MAAC, Big Ten, Big East, and other division one conferences. In the summer, he works professional baseball in the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball and the MLB Draft League and is often seen calling balls and strikes in night games in Lancaster, York, State College and Williamsport.

Steve Zawisky's career is defined by his dedication to justice and his ability to lead with integrity and compassion. He is prepared to bring these qualities to the judiciary, where he will continue to uphold the principles of fairness and accountability for the people of Cumberland County.

## **Major Cases Prosecuted:**

Commonwealth v Laquincy Watson (2009-2010): Prosecuted serial burglar in complicated multi-count lengthy burglary jury trial which involved victim homeowners in Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster and York counties. Defendant sentence to decades behind bars.

Commonwealth v. Jabri Brown (2015): Prosecuted serial robber for armed robbery spree which involved both Cumberland and Dauphin counties. Defendant convicted of robbing the Silver Spring Diner in Silver Spring Township. Defendant sentenced to up to twenty years in state prison.

Commonwealth v. Brian McCullough (2021): Convicted defendant after jury trial of first-degree murder in domestic violence murder.

Commonwealth v. Jerry Reeves (2020): Re-tried defendant for the 2006 robbery/murder of HACC student and convenience store clerk Hitender Thakur who immigrated to the United States from India for a better life. Successfully convicted defendant in a jury trial fourteen years after the initial crime. Defendant currently serving a life sentence.

Commonwealth v. Kara Hartmoyer; Commonwealth v. Andrew Shirk (2021): Obtained murder convictions and lengthy state sentences for both defendants in separate jury trials in the murder of a Cumberland County resident.

Commonwealth v Ronald Bricker (2003): Prosecuted defendant in lengthy jury trial against home improvement fraudster who stole thousands from numerous homeowners in Central Pennsylvania, obtaining a guilty verdict with defendant being sentenced to a lengthy state prison term.

Commonwealth v. Ryan Luckenbaugh (2015): Successfully prosecuted terminated state trooper in jury trial for lying on an affidavit of probable cause and assaulting an arrestee in Harrisburg.

Commonwealth v. Wyatt Rickrode (2022): Was approached and volunteered to try murder case in Adams County, PA. Obtained murder conviction after week-long jury trial in Gettysburg.

Commonwealth v. Felipe Vega; Commonwealth v. Carlos Lopez-Malave; Commonwealth v. Ronald Whitstyne; Commonwealth v. Angel Rivera; Commonwealth v. Lebron Johnson (2006): Successfully prosecuted five men for the home/business invasion robbery and murder of Vietnamese immigrant. Two defendants sentenced to life imprisonment, others received lengthy state sentences depending on cooperation/role. Johnson, a county prison guard at the time, received a 12-24 year state sentence.

Commonwealth v. Michael Holston (2011): Obtained first degree murder verdict and life sentence in jury trial related to the execution style murder of seventeen-year-old boy by gang member from New Jersey.

Commonwealth v. Adante Smith (2021): Achieved first degree murder verdict in jury trial related to the robbery/murder of eighteen-year-old boy in Harrisburg.

Commonwealth v. Born Master Lahme Perkins; Commonwealth v. Joseph Woodens (2008): Obtained first degree murder convictions against two men for the broad daylight assassination of 19-year-old boy in a Harrisburg park.

Commonwealth v. Tyrese Randolph; Commonwealth v. Nathan Acevedo (2021): Convicted Randolph of second degree murder after a jury trial obtaining a life sentence. Acevedo subsequently pleaded guilty to first degree murder receiving a life sentence. Both defendants robbed and kidnapped an eighteen-year-old boy prior to his execution style murder by Acevedo.

Commonwealth v. Dolly Hendrickes (2021): Convicted defendant of first degree murder after jury trial for the domestic violence murder of her boyfriend.

Commonwealth v. Shawn Marroquin (2005): Convicted defendant of first degree murder in domestic violence homicide (guilty plea for life imprisonment).

Commonwealth v. Nicole Davis (2005): Third degree murder conviction after jury trial in domestic violence homicide.

Commonwealth v. Lemuel Marrero-Juarbe (2009): Third degree murder conviction after jury trial in retaliation homicide.

Commonwealth v. Torrence McCarthy (2005): First degree conviction after jury trial in drive-by shooting homicide.

Commonwealth v. Thomas Boyer (2018): First degree conviction after jury trial in neighbor killing neighbor homicide.

Commonwealth v. Calvin McKinney (2017): First degree conviction after jury trial in ambush shooting homicide.

Commonwealth v. William Sanchez (2019): First degree conviction after jury trial in execution style homicide.