



Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

Birgit Fladager
District Attorney

Assistant District Attorney
David P. Harris

Chief Deputies
Marlisa Ferreira
Jeffrey M. Laugero
Wendell Emerson
Michael D. Houston
Mark Zahner

Bureau of Investigation
Chief Terry L. Seese

PRESS RELEASE

Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that she will not seek a fifth term as District Attorney in the 2022 election and plans to retire in January 2023.

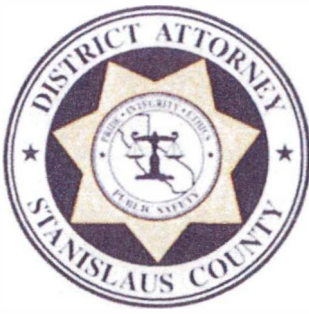
“It has been the honor of a lifetime to work with the men and women in the Stanislaus County District Attorney’s Office and our law enforcement and community partners,” said District Attorney Birgit Fladager. “It has been a pleasure to serve as your District Attorney for over 15 years. I am proud of everything we have accomplished thus far and I know the office is well situated for the future. After 31 years as a prosecutor, it is time for me to retire and allow others to continue the tradition of serving justice, protecting victims and keeping our community safe.”

Please see the attached letter and the video message posted on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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<https://www.facebook.com/StanislausDistrictAttorney/>



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September 14, 2021

To all the amazing and wonderful people in the District Attorney's Office,

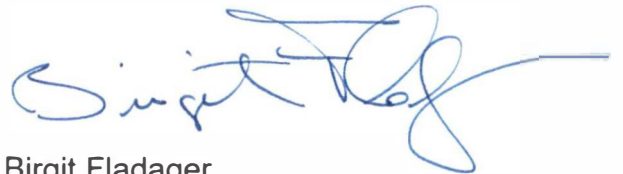
It has been an extraordinary privilege to work in the Stanislaus County District Attorney's Office for the past 31 years and to have had the incredible honor of leading this office as the elected District Attorney since 2006. As I approach the last year of my fourth term, I have decided that I will not seek re-election for a fifth term. That still leaves me with over a year to serve as District Attorney and to ensure a smooth transition when the time comes for a new elected DA to take over.

We have accomplished quite a lot in the last 16 years and faced many challenging obstacles. Our many accomplishments include: creation of the Stanislaus Family Justice Center to better serve victims in our community; establishment of the Fire Investigation Unit to ensure professional arson investigations; use of technology to make the office more efficient, capable, productive and safe from cyber-attacks; and, of course, hiring the most dedicated and competent prosecution team anywhere. The obstacles included: a multi-year major economic recession that led to a 25% reduction in staffing; massive and ongoing changes to the criminal justice system which many of us fear are going too far and too fast without allowing a meaningful assessment of their effectiveness and consequences. Finally, there is the COVID pandemic which created unexpected challenges--and opportunities--for the criminal justice system. While we face major backlogs as a result of court closures and limitations on the number of cases that can be heard, there has been some positive impact. Our justice partners became even more efficient in using technology to submit cases and discovery to us and the courts began to allow electronic filing and permitted some court appearances to be done virtually. These changes increased efficiency and should help offset the delays that we are continuing to see in contested court matters.

I look forward to completing the remainder of my fourth term. One of my remaining priorities is to continue working with Dave Harris to ensure the appropriate resolution in the Laci Peterson case. Our goal is to bring the habeas petition to a successful conclusion as soon as possible. If, however, court proceedings continue beyond my last day in office in January 2023, I intend to make myself fully available to assist in ongoing litigation if the next elected District Attorney will allow me to do so. I have already discussed this with Laci's family.

The voters of Stanislaus County have supported me in four elections and I am very appreciative. It has been a pleasure to serve as the elected DA and especially to have been able to collaborate with all of you to make our office second to none. I have no doubt that the Stanislaus County District Attorney's Office will continue to perform as a highly effective and efficient prosecutorial agency achieving our goals of securing justice for crime victims and enhancing the safety of our entire community. I am very proud of, and want to thank, each and every member of the District Attorney's Office. From our clerical staff to IT, paralegals, victim advocates, investigators, prosecutors, and management support staff, I cannot imagine a finer group of people to be entrusted with the important work we do each and every day. You are truly inspiring.

With gratitude and great respect,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Birgit Fladager", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Birgit Fladager
District Attorney