

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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**Statement by Solicitor Duffie Stone regarding investigation
of deaths of Maggie and Paul Murdaugh**

The 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office recognizes the high degree of public interest regarding the recent deaths of Maggie Murdaugh and her son Paul. However, it is neither prudent nor proper for me to comment on particulars of this or any case while it is under investigation. To do so would risk interfering with the S.C. State Law Enforcement Division's investigation.

I have maintained contact with S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson and SLED Chief Mark Keel. My office is available to SLED for legal advice and investigative support, as it would be to any law-enforcement agency leading an investigation of this type in the 14th Circuit.

To my knowledge, there is no clear suspect in this case at this time. As such, speculation about the propriety of my office's involvement is precisely that – speculation. Conflicts of interest are a matter of legal ethics, An expert on that subject – former University of South Carolina law dean Robert Wilcox – recently told the Charleston Post and Courier, “The mere fact that the Murdaugh name is closely associated with the solicitor's office doesn't cause me any concerns at this point. We have no idea who the solicitor will ultimately be engaged in prosecuting.”

Additionally, S.C. Attorney General's Office spokesman Robert Kittle recently told The Island Packet newspaper, “Until the investigation is complete, any decision on a prosecutor is premature. No one has been charged yet so there's no one to prosecute.”

That was not the situation when I recused my office in the aftermath of the 2019 boating crash for which Paul Murdaugh was eventually charged. In that case, it was immediately apparent Mr. Murdaugh would be a suspect, that his father owned the boat in which those involved were travelling and that other passengers were related to employees of my office. Thus, any comparison of these cases simply is not apt.

Suffice it to say, ethical conduct is paramount to me and to those who serve the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office. We will act promptly and ethically should conflicts arise in this case, as we always have.