



**STEVE OTTO**

*Too often,  
we don't see  
shades of gray*

Danny Alcantaro was one of those guys judges hate to see.

We're talking bad news here.

The first time Danny went to prison he was a teenager. He was maybe 15 or 16 when he found himself in the same cell with older men, the kind who would prey on the likes of Danny.

It was in prison that Danny really learned his drug habits and he learned them well. It was there that he moved on up the ladder to cocaine and heroin and whatever exotic combinations that became available.

So addicted that Danny's record would become a refrain. There would be a few years here, release, and then maybe a few months — maybe only a few weeks — later there would be a robbery and Danny Alcantaro would be back in another prison.

Ralph Fernandez remembers the first time he saw Alcantaro.

"I suppose he was in his 50s by then," says the Tampa lawyer. "He had a history as long as anyone I've ever seen. He told me that he had hit all the big houses since he was a kid. He said he had even been to Sing Sing and Alcatraz.

"He told me had done all the drugs around. He said he had requested drug treatment on a couple of occasions but that the places he was sent either didn't have a program or didn't seem interested in one.

**Fast track to nowhere**

"As a client he wasn't the sort of guy you would seek out to defend. If you looked at his arms you could see the scars from the needles. He had no money, no prospects and a history that suggested he was on a fast track to nowhere.

**Panel backs castration**

The chemical procedure is legally used on rapists in Canada, Sweden, Denmark and West Germany.

By **VICKIE CHACHERE**  
Tribune Staff Writer

TALLAHASSEE — For all the jokes prompted by state Sen. Robert Wexler's proposal to chemically castrate rapists, no one was laughing as the measure cleared its first legislative hurdle Tuesday.

Instead, tears flowed from the eyes of a



rape victim and the mother of a rape victim, while a state senator choked with emotion when recounting how the crime had become a personal issue.

The proposal was approved by the Senate Criminal Justice Committee on a 6-2 vote, with the two senators who dissented saying they supported harsh penalties for repeat rapists but were uneasy with castration.

**2nd vote turns over USF deal**

Hospital officials said TGH couldn't afford to bail out the university program.

By **DANIEL BERGER**  
Tribune Staff Writer

TAMPA — Further weakening already shaky town-gown relations, Tampa General Hospital's board Tuesday nixed a \$1.5 million deal with University of South Florida faculty anesthesiologists.

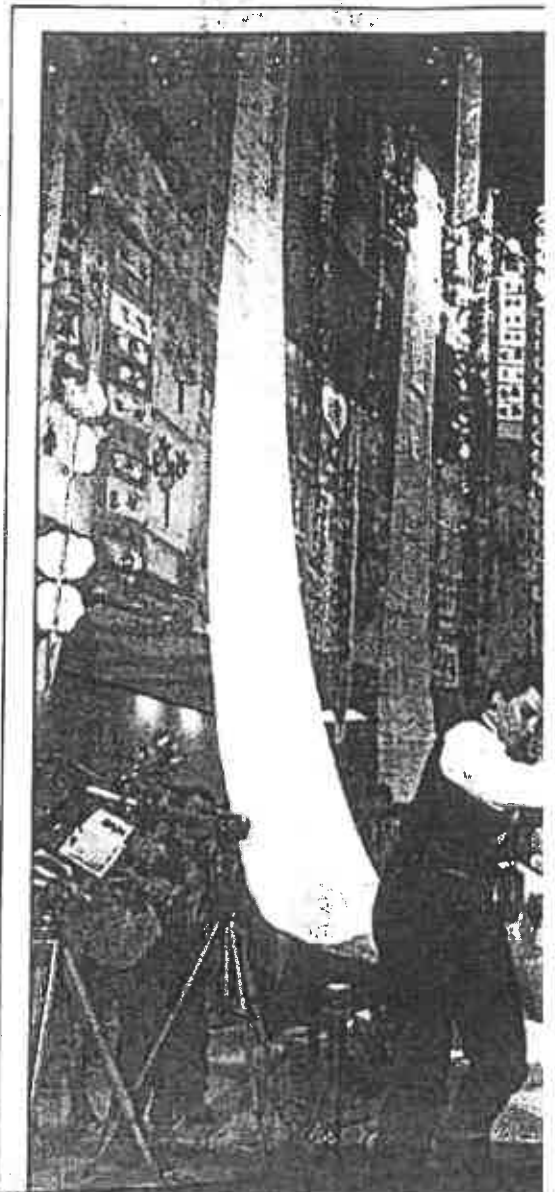
The move comes only two months after the hospital terminated an orthopedics residency program USF wants to take back. Hospital and USF leaders say their relationship must be re-examined.

"I thought this was a committed teaching hospital," said Marvin Dunn, USF medical school dean. "I was surprised at the outcome."

Dunn said he didn't know if 56 anesthesiology residents might stay at Tampa General or when their program might end.

Dunn was one of three top USF health officials falling this week to persuade hospital trustees to help cover a \$2.5 million deficit in the anesthesiology department.

Trustees attacked the university for trying to...



on a fast track to nowhere.

"But you know," Fernandez says, "there was something about him. He told me he never really wanted to do a bad thing; that once he got started he could never find a way out.

"I saw something in Danny Alcantaro, well what we did was call in somebody from DACCO [Drug Abuse Comprehensive Coordinating Office] and got him some real treatment."

Fernandez saw something that nobody else did. In 1980, serving 20 years for robbery and breaking and entering, plus 15 years for attempted robbery, kidnapping and resisting arrest, Alcantaro and nine other inmates rushed the wall at the Florida State Prison and bolted into the swamp. He got caught. This time it appeared Alcantaro had really done it.

A few years went by and eventually in 1988 Fernandez and his client showed up in the courtroom of Judge Ed Ward.

"It was an emotional hearing," recalls the judge. "Fernandez had done his homework. There would be a risk in letting this man out, but he had a strong support group of family. And when you looked at his record you could see that the drug addiction was the overwhelming problem. When he would hold up a store he would use a squirt gun. Some of those he had held up even showed up to testify on his behalf.

"His addiction was so great that he had no sense of what he was doing. He didn't rob small stores late at night or ATM machines. He would go into a crowded grocery store where he was almost certain to be arrested.

## Out on a limb

"When I looked at him I believed that here was a situation where, if you ever believe in going out on a limb or taking a chance, this was it."

And so, 5½ years ago, Judge Ward took a chance. Danny Alcantaro was out.

"Every time I would run into the judge," Fernandez laughs, "the judge would look at me nervously and ask me how Danny was doing."

For five years Alcantaro worked to get back on track. He took a job in a laundry and another as an upholsterer, trying to support his family. He stayed out of trouble and slowly became a contributor.

On Dec. 27, Danny Alcantaro died. Knowing that he was about to die, he told his wife Lydia to "tell the judge and the lawyer that I didn't let them down."

The race is on to build more prisons, maybe enough prisons to put us all away. We want to throw away the keys, to say that rehabilitation is a waste and that the penalty is time.

These are scary, often desperate times. But just maybe it isn't all black and white. Just maybe there are times when — if the circumstances are right — you can reach out and salvage a Danny Alcantaro.

Trustees attacked the university for trying to squeeze money from another public institution facing the same financial pressures.

Approval might put hospital books in the red and force layoffs, hospital President David Bussone told his board in four hours of debate at an earlier meeting Monday.

The measure passed then by one vote. But Trustee Burt Lowe, who voted with the winners, forced a special meeting Tuesday when he said he misunderstood its wording and meant to oppose it.

And after two more hours of

See TGH, Page 2



## A long wait

Karen McCoy of Fort Walton Beach helps ur third floor of the Capitol to the plaza level Day news conference in Tallahassee. The about 25,000 children on a waiting list for care advocates called for lawmakers to a proposed \$16 million increase in the budge

## Tampa Tribune photographer wins competition

A Tribune Staff Report

ST. PETERSBURG — A Tampa Tribune photographer has captured first-place honors in the 51st annual Picture of the Year competition.

John R. Stanmeyer finished first in the newspaper portrait/personality category with a photograph of an elderly Dinka woman in the Atepl relief camp in war-torn southern Sudan.



Stanmeyer

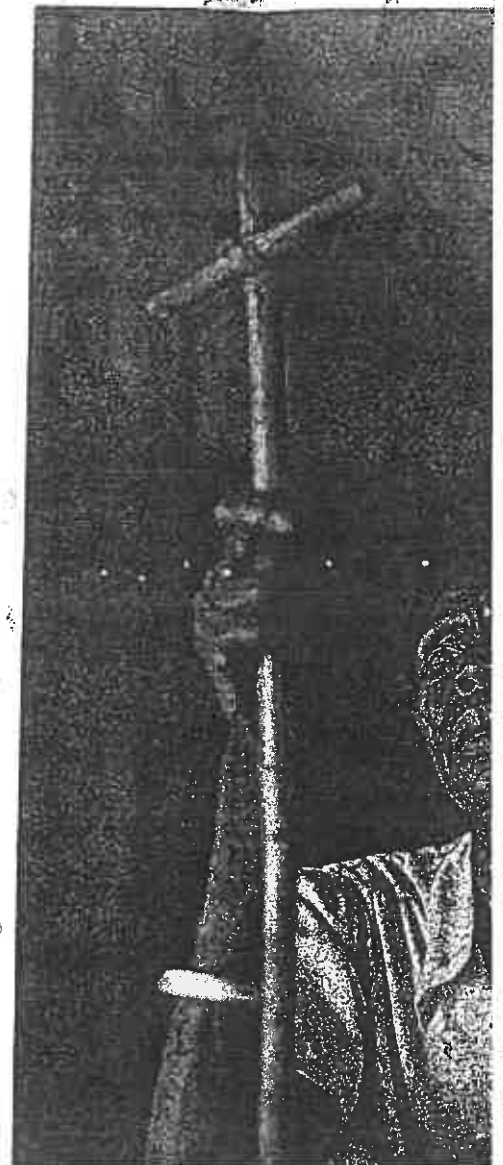
Stanmeyer, 29, photographed the woman as she was kneeling in the doorway of a mud hut and holding a cane in the shape of a cross.

The five-year veteran of the Tribune was on a working vacation at the time for a project that appeared in the newspaper in November entitled, "Sudan, A Silent Struggle to Survive."

"The plight is awful there right now," Stanmeyer said of the embattled region. "They have no food. And the Somali situation has overshadowed everything in the Sudan."

Stanmeyer also has traveled in Uganda, Kenya, India, Nepal and in the Amazon for projects that have appeared in the Tribune. He also worked for three years in Milan, Italy, as a fashion photographer.

Results of the competition were announced last week at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, which co-sponsors the event with the National Press Photographers Association.



JOHN

Tampa Tribune news photographer John Stanmeyer captures the plight of a Dinka woman who tolls survival to reach a feeding camp in southern Sudan.



# CITY OF TAMPA

— OFFICE OF THE MAYOR —

**Jane Castor, Mayor**

February 14, 2024

Clay High School  
Distinguished Hall of Fame Committee  
Toledo, Ohio

Dear Committee Members,

This letter is to offer my support for The Honorable Edward H. Ward's nomination to the Clay High School's Distinguished Hall of Fame. I have known Judge Ward for many years, and he is worthy of this honor.

I graduated from the prestigious University of Tampa, and I credit my successes in life largely to the education I received there and the professors who taught and inspired me. Judge Ward was one of those educators who influenced my direction and dedication toward a career in law enforcement that resulted in my tenure with the Tampa Police Department and service as its Chief of Police. My University of Tampa experiences and the valuable knowledge I received from the outstanding professors has guided me over the years and has been valuable in my role as Mayor. Through that teacher/student relationship, Judge Ward and I became friends over the years, and he has continued to support my efforts as I support his.

After receiving his law degree, Judge Ward served our country in the United States Navy as a lieutenant and he later became a well-known and effective Hillsborough County Circuit Judge here in Tampa, Florida. He is dedicated to the legal system and is supportive of others, including his children in their endeavors. Judge Ward is committed to the Tampa Bay area community as an involved citizen such as donating countless hours doing pro bono work.

Again, I am pleased to support the nomination of The Honorable Edward H. Ward for the Clay High School's Distinguished Hall of Fame and appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Jane Castor



CHAMBERS OF  
**CIRCUIT JUDGE**  
THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
February 22, 2024

**RONALD N. FICARROTTA**  
CHIEF JUDGE

Clay High School – Distinguished Hall of Fame

Re: Hon. Edward Ward

To Whom it May Concern,

I am pleased and honored to write this letter in support of the Honorable Edward Ward for consideration in the Clay High School Distinguished Hall of Fame.

I have known Judge Ward for forty years. He was the very first judge I appeared before when I was a very young Assistant State Attorney. Judge Ward was a major influence in my development as a lawyer and later on as a judge.

Judge Ward served the citizens of Florida with distinction and honor. His demeanor both on and off of the bench displayed a natural empathy and caring for all who appeared before him be they lawyer, litigant, or courtroom personnel. He touched many lives and helped many people throughout his legal and judicial career.

I learned much from Judge Ward, and I tried to model myself after him in many ways. I know I would not have had the career I have had without his influence.

Judge Ward is most deserving of this recognition and acknowledgement of a lifetime of service and dedication. He is certainly a credit to Clay High School and a graduate of which they can be most proud.

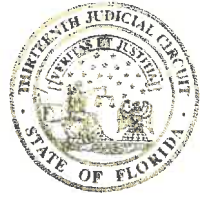
I strongly and without hesitation recommend the Honorable Edward Ward for the Clay High School Distinguished Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald N. Ficarrotta". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "R".

Ronald N. Ficarrotta

Chief Judge - Retired



CHAMBERS OF  
**CIRCUIT JUDGE**  
THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**NICK NAZARETIAN**

To Whom it May Concern:

RE: Clay High School Hall of Fame Nomination

02/22/2024

Dear Nomination Committee:

I am writing this letter to nominate retired Circuit Judge Ed Ward for admittance into the Clay High School Hall of Fame. He is an honored Judge, stellar family man, and a great friend. He is very deserving of this recognition. Let me tell you a little about Ed Ward.

#### Judicial Experience

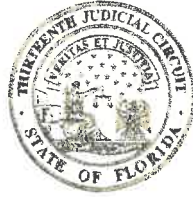
Judge Ward was a Judge in Tampa for nearly two decades. I had the opportunity to work in his court division for several years. It was there, I cut my teeth as a young prosecutor. Judge Ward was extremely intelligent and hard working. His wit and dry humor was often a relief in the daily grind of a busy court docket. Judge Ward ran his courtroom efficiently, fair, and just. He always exercised patience and treated both legal sides with the utmost respect.

I am currently a Judge in Tampa. I am entering my twenty-third year. I learned many things working with Judge Ward. I utilize those traits today in my courtroom. In addition to me, Judge Ward passed his wisdom to many other lawyers in Tampa.

#### Family Man

Besides excellence as a jurist, Judge Ward is even a better family man. Since I have known him, he has demonstrated what a great father he is to his children. They are all he ever talked about. I currently work with his daughter, Laura Ward. She is also a Judge, following in her father's footsteps. Judicial life and service to others is the Ward's family line.

Judge Ward also is also connected with my family. My father and Judge Ward had worked together prior to Judge Ward becoming a Judge. I had worked on Judge Ward's campaign to become a Judge. When my parents died, Judge Ward reached out to me on both occasions. His kind words and support were extremely comforting. This was years later after my court experience with him.



In conclusion, as a 35-year attorney (23 years as a judge) it is without a doubt that Judge Ed Ward is worthy of this nomination to the Clay High School Hall of Fame. For his work as a Judge, family man, and best of all, friend, he is most deserving of this commendation.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

Nick Nazaretian

Circuit Court Judge

**February 21, 2024**

**To Whom It May Concern:**

***My name is Joseph Lundy and I met Edward Ward (Judge Ward) in the late 1980's when I was transferred from the Morgan Street Jail to the Hillsborough County Courthouse. I was assigned as a bailiff to his courtroom. While being Judge Ward's bailiff, I learned that no matter the case or the circumstance, he always presided over the courtroom in a professional manner, which in turn made my position effortless. While forming a working relationship, we realized that we also had a common interest. That interest was playing racquetball at a competitive level. Thus, we began three times a week racquetball matches for over ten years.***

***Even when I was promoted and moved on to another position within the Sheriff's Office, our friendship continued. Our friendship extended to our families as well. My youngest daughter was playing basketball in high school at the time and Judge Ward would attend many of her games. In the beginning, he did not know anyone at the games, but me, but he still became a big fan of the Lady Knights. Before long, the other fans, parents, and teammates knew him because of the enthusiasm he brought to the games. After a while, my daughter and her teammates adopted him as a part of the team and looked forward to him being at each and every game.***

***Around the beginning of the year 2000, I founded a mentor organization for young boys ages 13 to 18. On many occasions, I would ask Judge Ward to come and speak to the males about various topics, which he always obliged. The males enjoyed the talks they shared with him and took away life-long lessons. Even through our retirement and the fact that we are not able to continue our racquetball matches due to our bodies not having the same will as our minds, we continue to keep in touch and meet for lunch. I have met many judges throughout my career, and I place Judge Ward at the top of my list. Not only was Judge Ward top-notch in the courtroom, but he is top-notch as a husband, father, and a well-respected man in the community. For this, I will always call Judge Ward my friend.***

***If you have any question, please feel free to contact [me:jaic42@msn.com](mailto:me:jaic42@msn.com)***





Laura Ward &lt;laward@gmail.com&gt;

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**I hope this is good, Judge. Let me know. Thank you for asking.**

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**PAUL VENTRONE** <paulv52@yahoo.com>

Sat, Feb 17, 2024 at 7:47 AM

To: "laward@gmail.com" &lt;laward@gmail.com&gt;

I first met Judge Ward in 2014. He became a customer of mine when I was the service manager for an air conditioning company in Tampa, Florida, and have since retired. We connected quickly because he was a University of Michigan graduate, and I am from Michigan. Go Blue. He was always a bit feisty, but we got on well. Again, Go Blue. Through the years we had great conversations about life and family and shared pictures of our grandchildren. A while back when I was assaulted, the case went to the State, and I called Judge Ward for advice. He was more than happy to help me, and he didn't have to. The proceedings took over a year and he was at every hearing with me and my wife. The end result was not great, but that is another story. The point is, he was there with me, and we talked almost daily. This kind of support almost never exists in today's world. The last thing I want to say is our Michigan Football Team won the National Championship. I was able to get an official National Championship shirt for Judge Ward, (I know a guy), LOL. Congratulations, Judge, for having a beautiful life and being a great friend. You deserve this award.