

On 25 May 2020, George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis by four on-duty police officers. The video of George Floyd slowly but surely losing his life over 9 minutes and 29 seconds as bystanders begged the officers to stop rocketed around the world. Minnesota Attorney-General Keith Ellison assembled a team to prosecute the most famous murder of the modern era. The team needed to cope with the tremendous pressure arising from the notoriety of the case, the race issues involved, and the impact the verdict might have on public safety across the United States.

To obtain a conviction, prosecutors had to prove not only that the assault that the officers committed against George Floyd was a substantial causal factor in his death but also that it was unreasonable from the perspective of a reasonable police officer to use such force. A team was assembled by Keith Ellison, including senior prosecutors from within his office as well as current and former prosecutors working elsewhere, and also a paralegal and victim services manager.

After months of preparation, the team was ready to prosecute the first officer, Derek Chauvin, who was found guilty by the jury on charges of second-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter on 20 April 2021. On 18 May 2022, defendant Thomas Lane pleaded guilty to the charge of second-degree manslaughter. On 24 October 2022, defendant J. Alexander Kueng also pleaded guilty to the charge of second-degree manslaughter, and the remaining defendant Tou Thao agreed to a stipulated bench trial on the charge of second-degree manslaughter for which a verdict was rendered in April 2023.

The IAP congratulates the team and awards it a Special Achievement Award in respect of their prosecution of this case.

The team members are:

Minnesota Attorney General's Office

Attorney General Keith Ellison
Deputy Attorney General David Voigt
Assistant Attorney General Matthew Frank
Assistant Attorney General Erin Eldridge
Assistant Attorney General Zuri Balmakund Santiago
Assistant Attorney General Eric Miller
Former Assistant Attorney General Natasha Robinson (now in private practice)
Paralegal Dionne Dodd
Legal Assistant Jillian Sully

Blackwell Burke

Former Founder and CEO Jerry Blackwell,
named a Special Assistant Minnesota Attorney General
(now a United States District Court judge)
Paralegal Desweon Hinds
Partner G. Tony Atwal
Partner Corey Gordon
Partner Mary Young

Maslon LLP

Partner Steven Scheicher, named a Special Assistant Minnesota Attorney General

Hogan Lovells

Partner and former Deputy and Acting United States Solicitor
General Neal Katyal, named a Special Assistant Minnesota Attorney General
Sundeep Iyer
Nathaniel Zelinsky
Danielle Stempel
Victoria Joseph
Harrison Kilgore
Johannah Walker
Dana Raphael
Patrick Valencia
Darryl Williams

Hennepin County Attorney's Office

Former County Attorney Michael O. Freeman (now retired)
Former Assistant County Attorney Jean Burdorf (now a Hennepin County Court judge)
Assistant County Attorney Joshua Larson
Manager of Victim Services Vernona Boswell

Medtronic

Lead Counsel Lola Velazquez-Aguilu, named a Special Assistant Minnesota Attorney General

