

ON THE RADAR

Wisconsin Tops List on Drug Take-back Day

Wisconsin finished the fall 2023 national Prescription Drug Take-Back Day with the top ranking in the nation, according to a Wisconsin Department of Justice press release.

Wisconsin collected 53,122 pounds – 26.5 tons – of unwanted medications on Oct. 28.

It was the fifth time that the Badger State topped the nation for the event, which is sponsored by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.

Since 2010, Wisconsin ranks third in the nation for most medications collected (more than 1 million pounds) since the inception of the event.

There are nearly 500 permanent drug disposal boxes located at police stations, hospitals, pharmacies, and health clinics across Wisconsin.

Source: Spectrum News 1 **WL**



GOOD IDEA

Saying Goodbye to a Trailblazer

Retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor died Dec. 1, 2023, at age 93.

O'Connor was the first woman to serve on the nation's high court.

When she was appointed by President Ronald Reagan in 1981, O'Connor was serving on the Arizona Court of Appeals.

O'Connor had previously served in the Arizona State Senate, where she became the first woman to serve as any state's senate majority leader in 1973.

O'Connor began her legal career in the 1950s. She worked her first legal job for no pay and had to share an office with another attorney's secretary.

After O'Connor retired in 2005, she traveled the world, speaking out about threats to an independent judiciary. She was a featured speaker at the State Bar of Wisconsin's Annual Meeting & Conference in 2010.

Source: NPR **WL**



Photo: Dane Penland, Smithsonian Institution, courtesy the Supreme Court of the United States.

BY THE NUMBERS

40.5

–The average age of people in Wisconsin state prisons

The average age of people in Wisconsin state prisons is 40.5, according to the Wisconsin Department of Corrections' (DOC) prison population dashboard.

Of the 21,792 people incarcerated in the DOC's 24 facilities, 93.3% are male and 6.7% are female.

Here's how the DOC population breaks down by race: American Indian/Alaskan, 5.2%; Black, 40.8%; Asian or Pacific Islander, 1.2%; White, 52.7%; Unknown, 0.1%.

According to a report issued by The Sentencing Project in 2021, 1 of 36 Black adults in Wisconsin was in prison – the highest rate in the nation.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Corrections, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* **WL**

DID YOU KNOW?

MPD Settles Records Lawsuit

In November, the Madison Police Department (MPD) settled a public records lawsuit brought by journalist Bill Lueders.

Lueders filed the lawsuit after the MPD told him he'd have to wait 14 months for copies of records of internal investigations, and after he discovered that requests for disciplinary records are handled differently from other records requests.

Under the Wisconsin public records law, records custodians must produce requested records "as soon as practicable and without delay." According to the *Wisconsin Public Records Law Compliance Guide*, most records requests should be met within 10 working days.

As part of the settlement, the MPD released the records and paid \$3,000 in attorney fees.

"These are important records to which the public has the timely right of access," Lueders said.

Source: wispolitics.com **WL**

QUOTABLE

"Are you a pastor or a deputy?"

– Attorney David Belfield III

A Louisiana woman, Peggy Valentine, was convicted of attempted murder after the confession she made to her church pastor was presented as evidence in the trial.

Valentine's lawyer, David Belfield III, argued that the confession should be thrown out because its use as evidence was barred by the "priest-penitent privilege."

But the pastor was also a deputy with the Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office. Valentine confessed to him in the presence of another deputy.

Belfield argued that the pastor, who advised her to talk to the police, didn't make clear whether he was acting as her pastor or a deputy.

"He never once told her, 'Peggy, you have to be careful in what you say because I'm working as a police officer, what you say will be used against you,'" Belfield said. "There was no question that she was seeking spiritual guidance."

Source: wby.com **WL**