Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald announced Tuesday that he would be choosing former Judge and Democratic nominee for Prosecutor, Tim McGinty, as the acting Prosecutor, to begin upon the resignation of Bill Mason.

By JAMES W. WADE III
Staff Reporter

After 14 years, Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Bill Mason will be resigning effective Sept. 30, 2012. Mason, who is the third longest Cuyahoga County Prosecutor, will be taking a job with theClevelandoffice of Bricker & Eckler LLP.

Mason has worked hard to make the Prosecutors Office a team environment for all. His team holds a 92 percent conviction rate, compared to the national average of 68 percent.

In his resignation letter, Mason said, "*Serving the community in this position has been a deeply humbling and rewarding experience. It has been an honor and privilege to work with the*

thousands of police officers and law enforcement agencies, hundreds of assistant prosecutors, countless community groups and leaders and the 57 municipalities of our great county
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Mason graduated from Kent State University and got his law degree from Cleveland State's Cleveland-Marshall School of Law. He became an assistant county prosecutor. He also served as a Parma City Councilman and its law director/prosecutor for six years before becoming Cuyahoga County Prosecutor.

Since taking office, Mason has been protecting the elderly and even solving cold cases due to a grant he received. He has worked tirelessly with various leaders to reformCuyahogaCountycriminal justice system.

In an interview with the Call & Post, Mason talked about his many accomplishments while in office. Over his time in office he has vowed to take a tough stance on violent crime and is most proud of combining various law enforcement agencies to combat Internet Crime against children. “I have a soft spot for kids and have had over 100 meetings in the community, educating the public,” said Mason.

Mason shared with the Call & Post that when he ran for reelection asCuyahogaCountyprosecutor in 2008, he knew it would be his last term. But that meant he could keep his job until the end of this year, then a great opportunity opened for him and he decided to leave early.

“It’s a good, natural fit for me,” said Mason. He was appointed prosecutor in 1999 after his predecessor, the late Stephanie Tubbs-Jones, was elected to Congress. Mason has had many Black Prosecutors become Judges over the years.

Recently, Judge Pinkey Carr who prosecuted serial killer Anthony Sowell, Judge Gayle Williams Byers who became South Euclid’s first Black Judge and Judge Michelle Early who was appointed by Gov. Ted Strickland in 2009 and then elected for a full six year term.

“My time is up, everyone knew it. Some days I feel like a lame duck guy sitting in office, it’s really hard to accomplish things while you’re sitting, waiting to leave,” Mason said. His 14-year span has covered all areas of crime and bringing the right people to justice.

While in office he saved millions on various projects and even created a Crime Lab with part of the money he saved. He also has invested in Wind Turbines which has been a great benefit toCuyahogaCounty.

In case you are wondering what green energy has to do with the Prosecutors Office, the clear picture is that Mason was creating jobs. “When people have a job and are working they are more unlikely to commit crimes,” said Mason.

The Lake Erie Wind Turbine Project he became interested in is the Great Lakes Winner and will become a pilot project on Lake Erie. Mason was also instrumental in setting up a Truncey project withEast Cleveland.

Mason chairs the Great Lakes Energy Development Task Force which aims to create jobs by bringing renewable energy industries to Northeast Ohio. The first project he is spearheading is the Great Lakes Wind Energy Center, a pilot project of several offshore wind turbines on Lake Erie.

Having an office of 320 employees, he recently set in place an internal audit to give an account of the employee’s performance and launched a fact-finding mission to see if the County’s employees are being paid fairly.

With part of the many millions of dollars he saved, Mason took time to upgrade all of the technology in his office, giving them an advantage over criminals and setting his office apart from various other Prosecutors’ offices across the nation.

One area that Mason smiled about as he talked was his effort to crack down on the Mortgage Fraud scenes in the county. In 2006 he hired Michael Jackson and set up Mortgage Fraud Unit who went after those who were taking advantage of people. “Sad to say, the County became an

epicenter of the foreclosure crisis in America," Mason said.

Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald announced Tuesday that he would be choosing former Judge and Democratic nominee for Prosecutor, Tim McGinty, as the acting Prosecutor, to begin upon the resignation of Bill Mason.

"I am pleased to appoint Judge Tim McGinty to serve as Acting Prosecutor, effective upon the date of Bill Mason's resignation," said FitzGerald. "I look forward to working together with Judge McGinty to continue to reform and moveCuyahogaCountyforward.'

Judge Tim McGinty said, "I am honored by the appointment of County Executive Fitzgerald and look forward to working with him to makeCuyahogaCountyan even better and safer place to live and work."

Now it's up to the Democratic Party with 5 to 45 days to ratify the McGinty appointment.