

FIGHTING CRIME IN THE BIG CITY

Stu Dornan described to Club members his efforts combating the consequences of drug use and crime in the Omaha area. As Attorney of Douglas County, NE, he is in the front line of law enforcement efforts there. Dornan, a native of Long Island, NY, has lived in Omaha for over 20-yr. He explained he came to Omaha as a FBI agent expecting to move from city to city, but decided to stay in Omaha to raise a family.

Dornan stated the proliferation of drugs, guns, and gangs in Omaha can be traced to the 1980s when The Bloods and Crypts gangs expanded from California. Drugs are their commodity and they initially give it away to get customers hooked. Gangs expand their territory by intimidation and threats and guns are primary instruments. Dornan stated that is not hard to identify drug dealers, but it is hard to convict them because most of the witnesses are also criminals. Witnesses need a motivation to testify. That could be a deal with the prosecutor on their charges. They could be put in a witness protection program, but they often have no marketable skills with which to earn income and establish a new life and often revert to crime.

Dornan said his goal is to get any gang member off the street, if even for minor crimes. A child who spends his life in crime costs society about one million dollars. It costs nearly thirty thousand dollars for one year in jail. Substance abuse and mental health problems are better treated in shelters and health facilities than in jails.

Dornan encouraged each of us to mentor youth who lack parental guidance. Many youth who use drugs come from single-parent or un-involved parent families. He urged more support for stricter laws related to domestic violence. Currently something drastic has to happen before the police can respond. Dornan also urged more training requirements on the use of firearms