



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 9, 2011

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NEWS RELEASE
ATTORNEY GENERAL RECOGNIZES
DISTRICT OF UTAH EMPLOYEES AT CEREMONY
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, FBI,
AND SALT LAKE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EMPLOYEES HONORED FOR EFFORTS

WASHINGTON – Six employees of the U.S. Attorney's Office in the District of Utah, a Special Agent from the FBI's Salt Lake Field Office, and an Assistant Salt Lake District Attorney were among individuals recognized by U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and Executive Office for United States Attorneys Director H. Marshall Jarrett at the 28th annual Director's Awards Ceremony Friday morning in Washington D.C.

The ceremony was held in the Great Hall at the Robert F. Kennedy Department of Justice Building.

Seven Utah award winners were recognized for their efforts in the successful prosecution of Brian David Mitchell. Receiving the award for Superior Performance by a Litigative Team at this morning's ceremony were Assistant U.S. Attorneys Felice John Viti, David F. Backman, and Diana Hagen; Victim Witness Coordinator Cecelia Swainston; and Supervisory Litigation Support Specialist Yvette G. Laughter, all of the U. S. Attorney's Office; FBI Special Agent Eric Lerohl; and Salt Lake Assistant District Attorney Alicia Cook, who is also a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney.

The award recognized the prosecution team's professional excellence and commitment to securing justice for Elizabeth Smart in a case that had stalled in state

court. The trial team convinced the federal district court that Mitchell was competent to stand trial; proved beyond a reasonable doubt that he was guilty of kidnapping and transporting a minor to engage in illicit sexual conduct; successfully advocated for Mitchell to be confined to prison for life; and secured a measure of justice for Ms. Smart.

In a second award at today's ceremony, Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert C. Lunnen of the U.S. Attorney's Office was honored for his work as the Justice Attache and senior Department of Justice official in Afghanistan from October 2009 through March 2011. The Justice Attache represents the Attorney General and the Department of Justice as the senior DOJ representative.

Lunnen was recognized for his leadership, courage, and personal sacrifice while performing one of the most challenging positions that the Department offers its career professionals. Lunnen was initially detailed to Afghanistan in 2006-2008 where he served as an attorney mentor to the Afghan-led Counternarcotics Task Force. In late 2009, after a brief return to the United States, the Department of Justice requested that he serve a second tour of duty in Afghanistan. He was then deployed as the first Justice Attache in Kabul. Lunnen operated in a war-zone at great risk to his personal health and safety. He mentored the Afghan Attorney General and worked to build the knowledge base of Afghan investigators, prosecutors and judges doing counter-corruption work in Afghanistan.

In his prepared remarks today, Attorney General Holder told the awardees that they "represent the very best that this Department has to offer" and that their "work embodies our ongoing commitment – not merely to win cases, but to do justice; to protect our fellow citizens; to empower the most vulnerable among us; and to uphold the rule of law."

U.S. Attorney for Utah David B. Barlow praised the efforts of those from Utah recognized at today's ceremony. "These employees are very deserving of the awards they are receiving today for their significant accomplishments. I have been deeply impressed with the commitment, excellence, and professionalism of the dedicated public servants working in federal law enforcement in Utah. I am grateful to each of them for their service and dedication."

"Each day the members of the U.S. Attorneys' community go to work for the citizens of this country with one goal in mind – to do everything they can to protect the rights of all Americans," said Director Jarrett. "I am continually humbled by their resiliency, dedication, and unparalleled work ethic to accomplish this noble mission. Today's awardees exemplify what it truly means to be a patriot and it is an honor to recognize them for their extraordinary service."

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