



Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Laura E. Duffy
Southern District of California**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2011

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/cas/index.html>

CONTACT: DEBRA HARTMAN

PHONE: (619) 557-5610

EMAIL: debra.hartman@usdoj.gov

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RECOGNIZES FOUR
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA ATTORNEYS**

SAN DIEGO, CA – United States Attorney Laura E. Duffy today announced that John B. Owens, Chief of the Criminal Division; Thomas Stahl, Chief of the Civil Division; David Leshner and Todd W. Robinson, Assistant United States Attorneys, of the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Southern District of California were four of 163 members of the Department of Justice recognized by Attorney General Eric Holder and Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys (EOUSA) Director H. Marshall Jarrett at the 28th annual Director's Awards Ceremony today in Washington, D.C.

The Southern District of California was one of 40 districts represented at the ceremony which was held in the Great Hall at the Robert F. Kennedy Department of Justice Building.

In his prepared remarks, 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."

"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 EOUSA 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."

John B. Owens will receive the Director's Award for Superior Performance in a Supervisory Role. Mr. Owens is being recognized for his leadership role in managing one of the busiest criminal divisions in the nation. In this role, he directs and supervises the work of more than 100 attorneys who carry demanding reactive and investigative case loads.

Tom Stahl will receive the Director's Award for Contributions that Enhance the Missions of the Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys and the U.S. Attorneys' Offices. Mr. Stahl is being honored for his work for the EOUSA as a mentor, audit team evaluator, an advisor on ethics and professional responsibilities and as a member of the Civil Chiefs Working Group. As the chief of the civil

division, Mr. Stahl manages and directs the affirmative and defensive work of the attorneys in the Civil Division.

David Leshner will receive the Director's Award for Superior Performance by an AUSA – Criminal. Mr. Leshner is being recognized for prosecuting the individuals charged in the death of Border Patrol Agent Luis Aguilar. Agent Aguilar was run down while one of the defendants was attempting to flee to Mexico in a marijuana-laden Hummer. Following a two-week trial, the lead defendant was sentenced to life in prison.

Todd W. Robinson will also receive the Director's Award for Superior Performance by an AUSA – Criminal. Mr. Robinson is being recognized for prosecuting seven members and associates of the Mexican Mafia charged with racketeering conspiracy. Following a four-month trial, the defendants each received life sentences.

United States Attorney Duffy stated, "I am proud that Attorney General Holder and Director Jarrett have chosen to recognize four of our outstanding attorneys with one of the Department of Justice's highest honors - it is well deserved."

EOUSA provides oversight, general executive assistance, and direction to the 94 United States Attorneys' offices around the country. For more information on EOUSA and its mission, visit <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao>.

###