

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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## ***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA***

***San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney  
Laura E. Duffy***

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***For Immediate Release***

### **NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY** – July 25, 2012

United States Attorney Laura E. Duffy today announced the appointments of Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) Jill L. Burkhardt as Director of Community Outreach and Kelly Thornton as Public Affairs Coordinator. “Effective crime prevention requires consistent and holistic community engagement. Strong community partnerships will help us counter violent extremism, facilitate grant applications, and develop an effective reentry program. These appointments reflect my commitment to devote needed resources to these goals.”

U.S. Attorney Duffy noted that AUSA Burkhardt has made significant contributions to the U.S. Attorney’s office and the greater San Diego area throughout her legal career. “In her role as tribal liaison, Jill developed effective working relationships with tribal leaders by increasing communication and enhancing our working understanding of the unique law enforcement situation faced by each tribe,” Duffy stated. “She also has an impressive record of community work, including several high level leadership roles in both the Lawyers Club and the San Diego Bar Association.” Currently, Jill serves on the Board of Directors of Women of Color in Law, a non-profit organization that arranges networking sessions designed

to empower diverse law students by introducing them to role models who have traveled the same path. In addition, Jill has frequently volunteered at the Women's Resource Fair, Constitution Day presentations, mock trial competitions, and Project Facelift (a group that renovates homes). The San Diego County Bar Association and Lawyers Club have formally recognized Jill for her outstanding community service contributions, and she also received the Pan Asian Lawyers of San Diego President's Award for her vision, leadership and commitment to diversity.

"Jill's innovative outreach vision, which is designed to reduce crime and improve public safety, will complement our criminal prosecutions. I am confident that she will bring the resources and energies of our office to bear on multiple fronts, resulting in a collaborative, responsive, and effective community engagement program," Duffy commented.

Kelly Thornton spent almost two decades at the former San Diego Union-Tribune newspaper, where she covered topics including city government, the military, law enforcement, transportation, politics and business. She eventually specialized in criminal justice and legal affairs, winning numerous awards for breaking some of the region's biggest stories, including the exclusive details of the lives of San Diego-based Sept. 11th terrorists and their associates, the Heaven's Gate mass suicide, and the San Diego killer of fashion designer Gianni Versace. In the Fall of 2010 Kelly joined the Investigative Newsource, which focuses on "data-driven journalism" that seeks to illuminate government actions, account for public monies, provoke a search for solutions, and strengthen democracy in the region. "Kelly will work hand in hand with Media Liaison Debra Hartman and the community outreach team," Duffy stated. "Kelly's outstanding communication skills will help deliver our crime prevention message to an expanded audience."

"We have a strong criminal enforcement record in this district but our law enforcement goals require that we do more than prosecute federal crimes," Duffy emphasized. "To prevent crime, we must foster synergistic partnerships, give voice to the concerns of San Diego and Imperial County residents, and to ensure full access to federal law enforcement resources. The appointments announced today will enhance those efforts."