



Department of Justice

**Acting United States Attorney Bruce D. Brandler
Middle District of Pennsylvania**

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U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE HONORS 14 INDIVIDUALS FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC SAFETY IN 2020

Harrisburg –Acting U.S. Attorney Bruce D. Brandler recently honored 14 members of law enforcement for their outstanding contributions to public safety in 2020. These awards are made each year to a select group of individuals who perform in an exceptional manner and who make significant contributions to our Office's efforts to promote public safety.

The following individuals received the United States Attorney's Award For Distinguished Service for their exceptional work in significant criminal prosecutions:

- ATF Special Agent Jamie Markovchick
- Weatherly Police Department Sgt. Michael Bogart

These two awards recognized the recipients work in U.S. v. Robert Torner, et. al., a significant drug and firearm case where the defendants received lengthy periods of incarceration after a 13-day trial that involved over 20 witnesses and approximately 200 exhibits.

- FBI Special Agent Alan Jones
- FBI Task Force Officer George Carado
- FBI Task Force Officer Chris Keppel

These three awards recognize the recipients work in two cases. U.S. v. Rhashean Strange, et. al., and U.S. v. Anibal Rodriguez, et. al. The Strange case was a multi-defendant heroin trafficking conspiracy that involved distributing multi-kilogram quantities of heroin. The Rodriguez case was a multi-defendant methamphetamine trafficking conspiracy, whose members were particularly violent. All the defendants received lengthy terms of imprisonment.

- Deputy U.S. Marshal (Anonymous)
- Deputy U.S. Marshal Robert Lenahan
- FBI Special Agent Alan Jones
- U.S. Secret Service Special Agent Michael Armstrong

These four awards recognized the recipients for their work in U.S. v. Shawn Christy, a case dealing with an armed and dangerous fugitive who was ultimately sentenced to 20 years in prison.

- FBI Special Agent Joseph F. Noone

This award recognized Special Agent Noone's exceptional work spearheading public corruption investigations in Northeastern Pennsylvania for more than a decade. Agent Noone has achieved spectacular results in helping to obtain over thirty public corruption convictions during his tenure.

- Luzerne County Detective Charles J. Balogh
- Luzerne County Detective Lieutenant Daniel G. Yursha

These two awards recognized the recipients for their exemplary work in U.S. v. Mark Icker, a sexual assault case involving a police officer who assaulted females in custody. The defendant received a 15-year term of imprisonment.

Two individuals received the United States Attorney's Award For Outstanding Contributions to Cooperative Law Enforcement:

- Bureau of Prisons Supervisory Attorney Jonathan Kerr

This award recognized Mr. Kerr's exemplary work in the production of documentary evidence for prisoner litigation during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Attorney Kerr's immediate response to requests for medical, disciplinary, and other records on an expedited basis was of invaluable assistance to the U.S. Attorney's Office in responding to the hundreds of inmate requests for release.

- Pike County District Attorney Raymond J. Tonkin

This award recognized District Attorney Tonkin's exceptional work in cooperative law enforcement activities over many years. District Attorney Tonkin vigorously works to maintain a strong working relationship with federal, state, county and local law enforcement to investigate and prosecute criminals who pose a danger to the citizens of Pike County, Pennsylvania.

"As we see in the newspapers every day, and most recently in the tragic events that occurred in Florida, law enforcement officers put their lives at risk every time they put on their uniforms," said Acting U.S. Attorney Brandler. "All too often their tremendous sacrifices go unnoticed and unrecognized. I am therefore very pleased to recognize a few of these heroes who contributed so much to promoting public safety in 2020. On behalf of the entire U.S. Attorney's Office, I congratulate them and thank them for their service."

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