

# Jackie Lacey

District Attorney  
<http://da.lacounty.gov>



NEWS RELEASE

## Media Contact:

Sarah Ardalani  
Public Information Officer  
213-257-2000  
[SArdalani@da.lacounty.gov](mailto:SArdalani@da.lacounty.gov)  
Twitter: @LADAOoffice

Aug. 3, 2016

## District Attorney Jackie Lacey Presents Courageous Citizen Awards

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey today honored four women and two men who aided victims and helped capture and prosecute violent criminals in Long Beach and Willowbrook.

“What our honorees did was not easy,” District Attorney Lacey said during today’s Courageous Citizen Award ceremony in Long Beach. “These brave people chose to act. They saved lives and helped stop criminals. By honoring them today, we repay their courage in a small way.”

District Attorney Lacey recognized two Long Beach women for saving a neighbor who was bludgeoned by a bat-wielding man; two women and a man for aiding an elderly victim and then helping police catch the assailant in the violent attack in Long Beach; and a Metro employee who risked his own personal safety to thwart an assault on a woman at a Green Line station in Willowbrook.

The District Attorney’s Office presents these awards three times a year to recognize ordinary people who have performed extraordinary acts of valor and selflessness in assisting in the prosecution of criminals, saving victims, preventing crimes or even capturing suspects. Today’s luncheon ceremony was held as part of the Rotary Club of Long Beach meeting aboard the Queen Mary.

The honorees were:

**Debbie Carr, 66, of Lakewood; and Noelle van Deursen, 45, of Long Beach (Case no. NA097487)**

Ms. Carr and Ms. van Deursen rushed to the aid of a Long Beach woman after she was beaten in her home on Oct. 11, 2013, by a man wielding a baseball bat. The woman was the target of a murder-for-hire plot by her daughter and her daughter’s boyfriend. Ms. Carr and Ms. van Deursen heard the woman’s cries for help and found her severely beaten. They assisted the victim while she told them about the attack. Their quick action helped save the woman’s life, and their statements helped police arrest the daughter, her boyfriend and the man hired to kill the victim.

A jury convicted the daughter and her boyfriend of conspiracy to commit murder, attempted murder and robbery. In spring 2015, each was sentenced to 31 years to life in state prison. The man who beat the victim was convicted of first-degree robbery and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

The case was investigated by the Long Beach Police Department.

**Laura Astrin, 37, of Seal Beach; Amber Goebel, 38, of Long Beach; and Luis Enrique Vieyra, 39, of Long Beach (Case no. NA101802)**

Ms. Astrin, Ms. Goebel and Mr. Vieyra came to the aid of a 74-year-old man who was struck in the head and knocked down by a 24-year-old man for no apparent reason. The senior, who was blind in one eye and using a walker, was walking on a Long Beach train platform on May 7, 2015, when he was attacked. Ms. Goebel and Mr. Vieyra witnessed the incident and told Ms. Astrin, who called 911 and followed the defendant. Ms. Goebel and Mr. Vieyra stayed with the victim until paramedics arrived. Officers apprehended the assailant based on information Ms. Astrin provided. Ms. Astrin, Ms. Goebel and Mr. Vieyra were crucial in securing a conviction in the case.

On Feb. 22, 2016, the defendant pleaded no contest to battery with serious bodily injury and was sentenced to four years in prison.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

**Lawrence Sears, 57, of Los Angeles (Case no. TA137363)**

Mr. Sears was working as a custodian at a Green Line Metro station on June 4, 2015, when he saw a man struggling with a woman over her purse. As the man began to punch the woman in the face, Mr. Sears intervened, placing himself between the woman and her assailant. The defendant continued his assault, trying to fight off Mr. Sears while also attempting to grab the victim's purse. The man then focused on attacking Mr. Sears, who used a trash-picker to protect himself. Ultimately, Mr. Sears tackled the defendant and held onto him until a sheriff's deputy arrived at the scene.

On Aug. 4, 2015, the defendant pleaded no contest to two counts of assault by means of force likely to produce great bodily injury and one count of assault and battery. Three months later, he was sentenced to two years in state prison.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

**[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)**

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.