

Jackie Lacey

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NEWS RELEASE

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District Attorney Jackie Lacey Honors Three for Helping Stop Violent Crimes

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey today recognized two brave individuals who intervened in violent attacks, one against a peace officer, and a third person whose quick thinking helped capture a serial home invasion robber.

“I am encouraged by the actions of these selfless honorees who, in some instances, put themselves in harm’s way for strangers,” District Attorney Lacey said. “Any of these cases could have had deadly outcomes if not for the courageous actions of these local heroes.”

The honorees were a Bellflower woman who saw a man getting attacked with a golf club and jumped in the middle; a Detroit retiree who stopped a criminal who was viciously beating a sheriff’s deputy outside a Lakewood mall; and a Redlands man who put his fear aside in the middle of a home invasion robbery and did not rest until the defendant was held to answer for all of his crimes.

District Attorney Lacey recognized the honorees this afternoon at a Courageous Citizen Awards ceremony hosted by the Rotary Club of Long Beach.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office presents these awards several times a year to people who have performed extraordinary acts of valor and selflessness in assisting in criminal prosecutions, aiding victims, preventing crimes or even capturing suspects.

Awards were presented to:

James Gutierrez, 34, of Redlands (Case no. BA443707, presented by Deputy District Attorney Grace Rai)

During the 2013 holiday season, a man was responsible for a series of violent, deadly home invasion robberies in Long Beach, Torrance, Westchester, Covina, Los Angeles and Sylmar. His last home invasion robbery was in Riverside. In that robbery, the defendant rang the doorbell and when James Gutierrez answered, the man forced himself into the home at gunpoint. Mr. Gutierrez yelled to his wife

who was in their bedroom to call police and lock herself inside. Mr. Gutierrez continued warning his wife while he was struck several times with the gun. As the wife was on the phone with police, the defendant kicked down the door and forced both victims to the ground. Mr. Gutierrez jumped on top of his wife to protect her and was pistol-whipped again. The defendant fled as police arrived and was quickly captured, ending his crime spree.

On April 5, 2018, the defendant was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles, Long Beach, Covina, Torrance and Riverside Police Departments and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Richard Fredrick, 70, of Detroit (Case no. VA136455, presented by Deputy District Attorney Robert Serna)

A Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy was escorting a man involved in a domestic dispute out of the Lakewood Mall on Aug. 15, 2014. The man, who was not under arrest, suddenly sucker-punched the deputy and knocked him unconscious. The defendant kicked and stomped the deputy on his head and neck. Richard Fredrick was sitting at a table when he saw the attack. He immediately got up, ran toward the defendant and tackled him. The deputy's partner, who had been with the defendant's girlfriend, responded and took the defendant into custody.

On Aug. 3, 2017, the defendant pleaded no contest to assault on a peace officer, attempted murder and other charges. He was sentenced to 14 years and eight months in prison and waived credit for three years in custody.

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

Luz Arias, 65, of Bellflower (Case no. VA143112, presented by Deputy District Attorney Suzanna Friedman)

On Oct. 16, 2016, a woman went to her ex-boyfriend's house in Bellflower with a male friend to retrieve her property. The friend and the ex-boyfriend got into an argument that turned into a violent attack on the friend, who was struck in the head with a golf club. Luz Arias was driving through the area when she saw the attack. Even though both men were younger, Ms. Arias stopped her vehicle, yelled at them to stop fighting and physically intervened when the attack continued. Ms. Arias was pushed to the ground, but she once again got between the victim and assailant until the violence ended.

The defendant pleaded no contest to assault with a deadly weapon, a golf club. He was sentenced on May 17, 2017, to two years in state prison.

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

[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.