



Los Angeles County
District Attorney's Office

2025 COURAGE AWARDS

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The University Club

175 N. Oakland Avenue, Pasadena CA 91101

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Pasadena

Award Recipients

JORGE RAMÍREZ GALDAMEZ

Case BA514748, presented by Deputy District Attorney Michael Belcher

Jorge Ramírez Galdamez and a colleague were working in the parking lot behind a restaurant in the early morning hours of May 6, 2023, when the defendant—a violent felon who was on probation—pulled in and parked. After parking, the defendant began brutally beating his girlfriend in the backseat of his car. Two women who were parked nearby saw the attack, yelled for help and Mr. Galdamez and his co-worker heard and decided to intervene. Mr. Galdamez approached the defendant and tried pulling him off his girlfriend, who by that point was unconscious and bleeding. The defendant pulled out a gun and pointed it at Mr. Galdamez. Mr. Galdamez tried to pry the gun from the defendant, but the man shot Mr. Galdamez, causing life-altering injuries. After Mr. Galdamez was shot, his colleague attempted to disarm the defendant, but the suspect fled and was later found and arrested.

On July 14, 2025, a jury convicted the defendant of two counts of assault with a firearm, possession of a firearm by a felon, and possession of ammunition by a felon. The defendant faces a maximum potential sentence of 30 years in state prison.

ALANNA RUSSELL

Case KA127323, presented by Deputy District Attorney Brendan Gibson

On April 13, 2021, Ms. Russell was leaving a fast-food restaurant in Azusa when she had to drive around a man in a car who was talking through his window to a woman outside of the vehicle. As Ms. Russell drove away, she heard a gunshot. Instead of fleeing she looked back and noticed that the woman she had previously seen was no longer visible. She made a U-turn and drove toward where she heard the gunshot and saw the woman lying on the ground bleeding after being shot in the neck by the man. Ms. Russell then got out of her car and immediately began caring for the victim by using her first-aid training to keep her conscious as they waited for an ambulance. She also asked the victim for contact information and called the victim's loved ones to tell them what had happened. The victim survived but her injuries were severe, and she was paralyzed because of the attack. Despite attempted intimidation from the defendant's family, Ms. Russell testified against the man who turned out to be the victim's ex-boyfriend.

The defendant was found guilty of attempted murder and injuring of a spouse or girlfriend and is now serving a 29-year-to-life prison sentence.

KENNETH HWANG AND JONATHAN LEYVA

Case GA110915, presented by Deputy District Attorney Richard Gallegly

Late at night on May 7, 2022, Kenneth Hwang and Jonathan Leyva were having a conversation as they rode the Metro Gold Line in Pasadena when they saw a flash of light coming from behind them. When they turned around, they saw a man on fire screaming for help. In that moment, while others ran from the flames, Hwang and Leyva ran toward the victim who was now on the ground as the flames began to die down. It was then that they saw a woman pour flammable liquid on the victim and light him on fire again. They immediately took off their jackets and used them to extinguish the flames. They then helped him up and made sure the woman, who did not know the victim, couldn't get close enough to try lighting him on fire a third time.

In June 2025, the woman pleaded no contest to one count of arson causing great bodily injury with use of an accelerant and was sentenced to 14 years in state prison.