



*Los Angeles County
District Attorney's*

*Courageous
Citizen Awards
Ceremony*

Friday, October 4, 2019

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Los Angeles

AWARD RECIPIENTS

AMY D'AMBRA

Presented by Assistant Head Deputy Alva Lin

Ms. Amy D'Ambra was driving in Rolling Hills on June 11, 2018, when she saw a car approaching. She witnessed the other driver's vehicle strike a man who was getting mail from his mailbox and then drive away. Ms. D'Ambra checked on the victim who asked her to go after the man who hit him. Ms. D'Ambra made a U-turn and pursued the man, forcing him to pull over. Soon after, police arrived and arrested the man. Ms. D'Ambra was ready and willing to testify for the prosecution, prompting the defendant to plead no contest.

VIRIDIANA MENDEZ AND ESPERANZA MENDEZ

Presented by Deputy District Attorney Ashley Rosen

Ms. Viridiana Mendez and Ms. Esperanza Mendez were cleaning a house northwest of downtown Los Angeles on Feb. 1, 2018, when they heard a commotion outside. The sisters looked out and saw an elderly man being physically assaulted by his niece. The man was trying to go into the house where he was living and retrieve his belongings. The sisters ran to help the man. They took him into the house they were cleaning and tended to his wounds. They called police and cooperated with the criminal investigation. They also testified in court and helped secure a guilty verdict.

JOEL ORTUNO JR.

Presented by Deputy District Attorney Brendan Gibson

Joel Ortuno Jr. was at his West Covina home with his 1-year-old sister, his mother and her fiancé on Feb. 6, 2018, when the couple began arguing. The fiancé attacked Joel's mother as she tried to leave the house with the children. Joel, who was 12 at the time, stepped in and told him to stop. The man struck the boy, knocking him unconscious. Joel was awakened by his mother who picked him up and locked herself and the children in the bathroom as the defendant paced the hallway holding a machete. Joel crawled out of a window and ran to a neighbor's house for help. Joel also testified in court against his attacker who eventually pleaded no contest.