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NEWS RELEASE

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Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey Honors Four Individuals for Courageous Acts

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey today presented Courageous Citizen Awards to four individuals who intervened to stop violent crimes against others and then assisted prosecutors by agreeing to provide crucial eyewitness testimony in court.

The honorees were a West Hollywood woman who came to the aid of a man who was stabbed outside her home; two motorists who helped a bicyclist knocked to the ground and threatened by a man wielding two long sticks in South Los Angeles; and a limousine driver who stopped a man from kidnapping a 19-year-old in Pasadena.

“The four individuals being honored today cast aside fear and risked their own personal safety to help victims of violent crime,” District Attorney Lacey said. “Justice prevailed because they stood up for victims who were vulnerable and then agreed to provide essential eyewitness testimony in court.”

The honorees were recognized this afternoon at a Courageous Citizen Awards ceremony in Los Angeles. It was hosted by the Rotary Club of Westchester.

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:

Sabrina O’Hara, 42, of West Hollywood (Case no. SA099360, presented by Deputy District Attorney Lucrecia Boado)

Ms. Sabrina O’Hara heard a man screaming outside her West Hollywood home on Nov. 7, 2018, and went to help him. She was aiding the man, who had a large gash on his palm and blood on his arm, when she saw the assailant across the street threatening to stab the man again. Ms. O’Hara told the man to go away and called 911. While she was on the phone, the man threatened to kill her and then

fled. Despite the threat, Ms. O'Hara continued to help the man. Authorities located the assailant nearby, and Ms. O'Hara identified him. She later testified in court, and the defendant was convicted.

On June 17, 2019, the defendant was convicted of one felony count each of criminal threats and carrying a dirk or dagger. He was sentenced on June 24, 2019, to six years in state prison. The case was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Maria Nunez, 27, of Los Angeles, and Selestino Penalzoa, 38, of Huntington Park (Case no. VA149175, presented by Deputy District Attorney Monique Preoteasa)

Ms. Maria Nunez and Mr. Selestino Penalzoa came to the aid of a bicyclist who was knocked to the ground and threatened by a man wielding two long sticks. Ms. Nunez and Mr. Penalzoa saw the Nov. 1, 2018, attack from separate vehicles in South Los Angeles. Mr. Penalzoa checked on the bicyclist, then followed the assailant, stopping two police officers along the way, who arrested the man. Meanwhile, Ms. Nunez assisted the bicyclist until first responders arrived. Ms. Nunez and Mr. Penalzoa identified the defendant for police. Through their testimony at trial, they helped deputy district attorneys secure a conviction.

On May 20, 2019, the defendant was convicted by a jury on one felony count of assault with a deadly weapon. He was sentenced on Nov. 4, 2019, to 18 years in state prison. The case was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Brandy Mayes, 50, of Riverside (Case no. GA101634, presented by Deputy District Attorney Melanie Drew)

On July 29, 2017, Ms. Brandy Mayes was driving a limousine in Pasadena, when she saw a man dragging a woman by the hair toward his vehicle. She parked her limousine in order to intervene, causing the man to release the 19-year-old woman and flee. Ms. Mayes walked with the victim to a nearby market, called police and stayed at the scene until authorities arrived. Police later located the man and arrested him. Ms. Mayes cooperated with prosecutors and was willing to testify in court, prompting the man to plead no contest to the charges.

On Sept. 20, 2018, the defendant, plead no contest to one felony count of kidnapping. He was sentenced on Oct. 24, 2018, to five years in state prison. The case was investigated by the Pasadena Police 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.