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March 18, 2026

Ordinary People Showing Extraordinary Courage Honored by District Attorney Hochman in Long Beach

LONG BEACH, CA – Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan J. Hochman today honored two individuals at the Courage Awards whose remarkable bravery helped bring justice in the face of fear and danger.

The honorees include a man who witnessed a deadly mobile home arson and helped authorities track down the suspect, and a woman who, as a child, saw her mother kill her father — and years later, despite threats, found the strength to come forward and help secure a conviction.

“These honorees didn’t just witness horrific acts — they chose to selflessly act when it mattered most,” District Attorney Hochman said. “They stepped forward despite fear, despite pressure, and because of that, justice was possible. Their courage sends a powerful message that no matter how difficult or dangerous, doing the right thing can change lives and protect our communities.”

The pair were honored today at a ceremony hosted by the Rotary Club of Long Beach.

The Courage Awards, formerly known as the Courageous Citizen Awards, were launched in 1986 and are given to individuals who demonstrate exceptional bravery and selflessness — whether by assisting in criminal prosecutions, helping victims, testifying under pressure, preventing crimes or helping to apprehend suspects.

Additional ceremonies will be held later this year in Westchester, Pasadena, Los Angeles, and Covina, in partnership with local Rotary Clubs.

Awards were presented to:

Daniel Edwards, 44, (Case BA511730), presented by Deputy District Attorneys Joy Roberts and Richard Gallegly.

In December 2022, defendant Danny Reece repeatedly targeted a former friend and her RV in Exposition Park. On the night of the crime, he went to the RV and tried to take a bike that was placed on the rear bumper area of the mobile home. A confrontation took place between the defendant and the RV owner. He shattered a window

that led to his arrest for vandalism. Shortly after his release, the mobile home was set ablaze. Inside, Jerry Israel — who had sought shelter after Reece trashed his tent and stole his bike — was trapped and died in the fire. Witness Daniel Edwards saw Reece holding a torch to the mobile home and igniting the curtains. Daniel shouted, called 911 and chased Reece through dark alleys, updating police on his location. Daniel waited for officers and later identified Reece as the arsonist. Daniel's quick action and courage helped secure Reece's conviction for voluntary manslaughter and his 11-year state prison sentence late last year.

Maxxy Lopez, 24, (Case BA516740), presented by Deputy District Attorney Paul Thompson

On Sept. 14, 2014, as part of a plan to kill the estranged father of her children, Miguel Lopez, Heidi Juarez tricked him into her home by claiming their 12-year-old daughter, Maxxy, was sick. Once he arrived, 19-year-old Melquin Juarez, Heidi's eldest child, tied him to a chair and strangled him. Maxxy and her younger sister witnessed the act. For years afterward, Heidi threatened Maxxy to keep her silent. On Father's Day 2022, then 20-year-old Maxxy bravely told authorities what she witnessed and fully cooperated with the investigation, testifying at both the preliminary hearing and trial while her mother and half-brother glared at her from counsel table. Her bravery enabled Miguel's brother and parents to finally have closure about the death of Miguel and secured the convictions for special circumstance murder. Both received life in prison without the possibility of parole.