



NEWS FROM:
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Annual Meeting of Public Defender's Office Features Inspirational Presentation, Staff Awards

Jacksonville, FL -- "I would just tell them to dig, and dig hard at what they are doing because that's what it's going to take....," said William Dillon to a staff assembly of the Office of Fourth Circuit Public Defender Matt Shirk. The man who spent 27 years of a life sentence in Florida prison before being freed because of DNA evidence explained that it was relentless 'digging' and uncompromised passion for justice by his attorney that eventually cleared him of the conviction for a murder he did not commit.

"I just wanted to have him here to explain to the lawyers and other staff to keep their mission, to keep true to the mission and be inspired by it," said Public Defender Matt Shirk. "His incredible presentation really illustrates why we do what we do as attorneys in the Public Defender's Office."

The Friday (1/29) afternoon appearance by Mr. Dillon was part of the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Fourth Circuit Public Defender's Office. Most of the staff of nearly 150 people, including attorneys, secretaries, investigators and paralegals from the Duval, Clay and Nassau County offices was present. Due to the national interest in the story of William Dillon, Mr. Shirk opened the second half of the Annual Meeting to outside parties; individuals from the local legal community, students, media and others attended to hear the inspirational presentation.

Other business conducted at the Annual Meeting of the Office of Fourth Circuit Public Defender Matt Shirk included an inter-office awards ceremony. Recipients of the various distinctions are as follows:

Clay County Employee of the Year: Investigator Clarence "Buddy" Tyrell

Nassau County Employee of the Year: Assistant Public Defender Tom Townsend

Duval County Employee of the Year: Investigator Holly Ayers

Trial Lawyer of the Year: Assistant Public Defender William Tedford

Exemplary Team Performance of the Year: Defense Team in *State vs. Victoria Roberts*

Lead Attorney: APD Christina Romero, Second Chair: APD William Tedford

Investigators: Kendall Anderson, Andrew Ewing, Hal Bennett, Greg Strickland, Holly Ayers, Denis Sanchez; Paralegal: Lori Frank

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(L-R) William Dillon,
PD Matt Shirk



(L-R) APD Stephanie Schaap, Dillon,
Director Cynthia Hunold



Staff had opportunity for question/
answer period with Dillon

AWARD RECIPIENTS



*Clay County Employee
Of the Year...*
Investigator Buddy Tyrell



*Nassau County Employee
Of the Year...*
APD Tom Townsend



*Duval County Employee
Of the Year...*
Investigator Holly Ayers



Trial Lawyer of the Year
APD William Tedford



Exemplary Team Performance Award: State vs. Victoria Roberts
(L-R) Holly Ayers, Kendall Anderson, Christy Romero, Hal Bennett, PD
Matt Shirk, Greg Strickland, William Tedford, Andrew Ewing NOT
PICTURED, Lori Frank, Denis Sanchez