



NEWS FROM: Office of the Public Defender Matt Shirk, Fourth Judicial Circuit www.MattShirkPublicDefender.com

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Assistant Public Defenders Post August Courtroom Victories

Jacksonville, FL (September 7, 2011): Justice prevails in Northeast Florida courtrooms in August 2011. Assistant Public Defenders (APD's) in the Law Offices of Public Defender Matt Shirk are committed to providing clients with effective legal representation and in numerous August trials attained a victorious outcome.



Capital Crimes Unit The jury in The State vs. Lothario Phillips found the Defendant guilty of a lesser offense in his murder trial, thus sparing the 20 year old a life sentence. Lead APD Greg Messore (r) along with co-counsel APD Todd Niemczyk (l) credit the win to their cross-examination of two problematic State witnesses. They also credit PD Investigator Paula DeLuca for her work in the case. The attorneys noted that all parties involved in this case worked very efficiently to bring it to trial in five months – something rare for a client facing a murder charge. The trial concluded on August 30th in Duval County.

Felony Court Unit

APD Sandra Young (pictured, right) tried The State vs. Reginald Sears on August 18th in which her client was charged with Armed Sexual Battery, an offense with a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. Mr. Sears was accused of attacking a woman as she rode her bike in the area of Mayport Road and Atlantic Boulevard back in October 2008. Through her own investigative work, Ms. Young concluded, and successfully argued to the jury, that the alleged victim's altered bike routes that evening supported the Defense's argument that she was not attacked, rather she consented to sexual contact with Mr. Sears in exchange for money to catch the bus home.



County Court Unit

The trial of The State vs. Juan Singleton concluded on August 25th in Duval County Court. APD Ronnie Roberts (pictured, left) served as lead defense attorney, APD Cassidy Keshavarsi (right) in her first trial served as second chair. Their client was charged with Driving Under the Influence, however the defense argued that he was not impaired during the September 2010 traffic stop. His blood-alcohol level was under the legal limit and he passed all field sobriety tests. The jury ruled Not Guilty.

Juvenile Court Unit

On August 23rd, APD Markus Sermons (left) tried In the Interest of TS, a Child in a Juvenile bench trial. His client who was charged with Grand Theft Auto in the case of a stolen All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) was cleared of the 3rd Degree Felony. Mr. Sermons cited Florida Statute to show that an ATV is not considered a motor vehicle and therefore the felony charge did not apply. Also relevant to the decision was the fact that the ATV was inoperable. Mr. Sermons' client was found guilty of the lesser, misdemeanor charge of Petite Theft.

