



NEWS FROM:
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For Immediate Release

January 13, 2010

Newcomer to Juvenile Defense Wins Trial Verdict

Shirk office brings balance in representation pairing veteran APD's with newer attorneys

Jacksonville, FL: Just shy of six months serving as Assistant Public Defender in the Juvenile Court Unit, Diana Johnson has demonstrated an artful ability for criminal defense, according to Fourth Circuit Public Defender Matt Shirk. Teaming with veteran APD Jenna Love in a case involving a teenager accused of possessing a controlled substance, Johnson presented a strong defense asserting that her client was wrongfully accused because arresting officers lacked evidence in the case. On January 7th, the judge in the proceeding agreed and issued a judgment of involuntary dismissal.



“Criminal cases involving juveniles are incredibly sensitive,” said Matt Shirk. “A young person found guilty of a criminal charge can certainly rebound after serving a sentence, but unfortunately for some, they embark on what can become a lifetime mired in the criminal justice system. I commend APD’s Johnson and Love for understanding the critical nature of handling juvenile cases and in this most recent trial, for the persistence to show that their young client was wrongfully arrested.”

(L-R: APD Love, PD Shirk, APD Johnson)

APD Diana Johnson started with the Public Defender’s Office in July 2009 following time spent on staff with the Florida Guardian Ad Litem, a program that provides advocacy for abused and neglected children. Jenna Love was appointed Assistant Public Defender immediately following law school back in 2001, she was promoted to become a Division Chief in the Juvenile Unit just last month. Both are graduates of Florida Coastal School of Law and share a commitment of helping Northeast Florida youth.
