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**Office of Public Defender**  
**Matt Shirk, Fourth Circuit**  
[www.MattShirkPublicDefender.com](http://www.MattShirkPublicDefender.com)

**Contact: Matt Bisbee**  
**Public Information Officer**  
**Tel: (904)630-7350**  
[MPB@PD4.COJ.net](mailto:MPB@PD4.COJ.net)

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## **Juvenile Unit Earns Victories through Persistent, Unflappable Representation** *Director Mason, APD Johnson Win Not Guilty Verdicts for Clients in May*

Jacksonville, FL: Young people who make mistakes in Duval County have justice on their side. Attorneys from the Juvenile Unit in the Office of Public Defender Matt Shirk work tirelessly defending clients and during a ten-day period within the month of May earned two difficult 'not guilty' verdicts in trials and various other legal victories.



In a trial before a judge on May 18<sup>th</sup>, APD Diana Johnson (pictured, right) led the defense where her client was charged with marijuana possession. Assisting her as a second chair in that trial was Juvenile Unit Director Rob Mason (pictured, left). Together, the defense team convinced the judge to rule 'not guilty' because the State used a flawed process of identifying the 'substance' which the client was accused of possessing giving reasonable doubt that it was indeed marijuana.

Director Mason tried another case the following day that that involved a Juvenile charged with loitering. The client was found 'not guilty' when Mr. Mason successfully asserted that all elements of the said crime were not met.

In addition to earning not guilty verdicts for clients, the Juvenile Unit fought and won various other significant victories in the month of May.

- Ms. Johnson, assisted by APD Jenna Love (pictured, left) was involved in yet another victory when the two teamed up to earn their client a Judgment of Dismissal on felony drug charges.
- APD Johnson helped a client avoid prosecution as an adult for burglary. With Investigative help finding a concurring witness, she convinced the



State to dismiss a case because the client had a credible alibi.

- In a case which involved a teenage girl charged with battery against her mother, Director Mason provided an effective cross-examination of the victim which led the State to drop the case mid-trial.
- Newcomer to Juvenile, APD Robert Bowers had a case dropped minutes before the trial began.
- Attorney Elizabeth Webb prompted a client's release after successfully petitioning the Appellate Court.

“The commitment to justice found among the attorneys in our Juvenile Unit is fierce,” said Public Defender Matt Shirk. “Director Mason provides a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience in juvenile justice for all the attorneys; we are privileged to have him in this office. Diana is a very thoughtful and gifted attorney who repeatedly excels on behalf of our clients.”



*Fourth Judicial Circuit Juvenile Unit: (L-R) APD Anthony Barney, APD Rachel Schumont, Attorney Elizabeth Webb, Paralegal Nicola Page, Division Chief Jenna Love, Paralegal Butch Tanner, Director Rob Mason, Public Defender Matt Shirk, Legal Assistant Nicole Butler, Juvenile Mentor Sylvester Black, APD Diana Johnson, APD Rob Bowers.*

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