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**Local APD Tapped by U.S. Attorney General to Represent Florida at National Symposium**  
***Rob Mason, known for work in juvenile justice, participates in discussion on indigent defense***

Jacksonville, FL: There is a renewed, national interest in issues involving indigent defense and one Assistant Public Defender from the Fourth Judicial Circuit is encouraged by the rekindled discussion of the complex subject matter. Director Rob Mason leads the Juvenile Unit in the Office of Public Defender Matt Shirk and has recently returned after attending the two-day event, *The National Symposium on Indigent Defense* which took place in Washington, D.C.



The United States Department of Justice organized and financed the February program which included two designees from every State identified by U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder. One designee from each state was chosen for their expertise in juvenile justice issues. From Florida, Director Mason (pictured, left) who is a nationally-known expert on juvenile justice issues was chosen to participate along with Carlos Martinez, Public Defender for the 20<sup>th</sup> Circuit. Two others from Florida were invited by Mason and Martinez to round out the delegation; William Cervone, State Attorney 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit and Dale Landry, Tallahassee Chapter President for the NAACP.

“There’s clearly recognition in Washington that our present system of indigent defense isn’t working properly and needs improvement,” said Mason. “It’s especially encouraging that there was such a strong emphasis on juvenile justice in particular. The National Symposium was a tremendous opportunity to share innovative ideas and to learn from other experts around the country about different methods of practice.”

This latest honor afforded to APD Mason is yet another noteworthy accomplishment in his legal career. Other recent accomplishments include convincing the Florida Supreme Court to ban indiscriminate shackling of juvenile defendants and getting published in Florida Juvenile Law and Practice where he authored a chapter called “*Disposition in Delinquency Cases.*”

“Attorneys like Rob Mason are a very rare quantity these days,” said Public Defender Matt Shirk. “To have someone with his ability, commitment and experience on our staff is an amazing benefit to our clients and to the Fourth Judicial Circuit. We are dedicated to providing dedicated, effective representation, but with Rob we go far beyond by providing true expertise.”

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