



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

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

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APD's Schaap, Messina Earn Prestigious Legal Honor

Jacksonville, FL: Fourth Judicial Circuit Public Defender Matt Shirk is recognizing two Assistant Public Defenders in his Jacksonville office who were recently invited to become Associates in the Chester Bedell Inn of Court. **APD Stephanie Schaap** and **APD Coral Messina** begin their one-year terms in September and will work locally to advance the movement of the organization in the Jacksonville legal community.

"It is with great pride that I formally congratulate two Assistant Public Defenders on accepting nominations to the Chester Bedell Inn of Court," said The Honorable Matt Shirk. "It is a prestigious, national organization of attorneys and the representation by APD's Schaap and Messina reflects very well upon the Public Defender's Office."



Stephanie Schaap has served as APD since February 2009 and presently represents clients in the Felony Court Unit. The Tallahassee native graduated from Florida Coastal School of Law in 2008 and was admitted to the Florida Bar that same year. She gained legal experience with Jacksonville firm Pajcic & Pajcic where she was a law clerk. Additionally, she holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Florida State University and a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Central Florida.

"Serving Jacksonville's indigent-accused has been a privilege for me," said Ms. Schaap. "As a child, I can recall setting a life ambition to become an attorney; now in my first job as a practitioner I am honored to be named an Associate on the Chester Bedell Inn of Court and am excited to begin my term."



Coral Messina was appointed APD in April 2010 following a year and a half as a civil litigator with Jacksonville firm Camerlengo & Brockwell. She is a 2008 Honors graduate of Florida Coastal School of Law where she was a member of the Moot Court Honor Board. Mrs. Messina holds a B.S. in Public Relations from the University of Florida where she also graduated with Honors. The Jacksonville Beach native is an active member of the Junior League where she serves on the Community Research and Project Development Committee.

"The practice of law is a privilege and I greatly appreciate the opportunity to protect our Constitutional Rights," said Mrs. Messina. "It is humbling to have gained the notice of my peers and receive the nomination to the Chester Bedell Inn of Court; I anticipate it will be a tremendous, educational experience."

The Chester Bedell Inn of Court was the first American Inn of Court established in Florida and the fourteenth in the nation. There are now more than 125 Inns in the United States. The American Inns of Court are modeled after the English Inns of Court. By encouraging collegiality among law students, lawyer and judges, the movement promotes professionalism, ethical conduct and competent advocacy.
