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NEWS RELEASE

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District Attorney Jackie Lacey Honors Three for Courageous Acts

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey today honored three people for their courage in coming to the aid of crime victims and then testifying against the assailants in court.

The honorees helped the victim of a fatal gang-related attack in the Antelope Valley desert, came to the rescue of a 5-year-old girl being molested by a stranger in a San Fernando Valley mall parking lot and stopped an assault on a security guard inside a Valley Village supermarket.

“We are honored to recognize these heroes who put themselves in danger to help others and then made sure that justice was served in each of these cases,” District Attorney Jackie Lacey said. “Their actions remind us that we all can make a difference in helping to stop crime in our neighborhoods.”

District Attorney Lacey recognized the honorees this afternoon at the last Courageous Citizen Awards ceremony of the year. It was hosted by the Kiwanis Club of Northridge.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office presents these awards several times a year to people who have performed extraordinary acts of valor and selflessness in assisting in criminal prosecutions, aiding victims, preventing crimes or even capturing suspects.

Awards were presented to:

John R. Eldridge, 63, of Lancaster. (Case no. MA057518, presented by Deputy District Attorneys Carolyn Yeh and Stephen Morgan)

On March 5, 2012, a couple tricked a man into joining them on a ride into the Lancaster desert. Unbeknownst to the victim, a criminal street gang had ordered the man’s death because he was believed to have spoken to police about their activities. The couple shot and brutally beat the victim and left him for dead. John R. Eldridge was trail-riding his motorcycle nearby when he heard the badly injured man yell for help. Mr. Eldridge called for help and told authorities what the victim had said

about the attack. The victim died nine days later, but, thanks to Mr. Eldridge, he had an opportunity to be with his family again. Mr. Eldridge also testified as part of the prosecution's case at trial.

Both defendants were found guilty of murder. On March 16, 2017, the man was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole and the woman was sentenced to 48 years to life in state prison.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Daniel Ayard, 23, of Pasadena. (Case no. PA086183, presented by Deputy District Attorney Julie Kramer)

A 5-year-old girl became separated from her grandmother at the Panorama City Mall on April 21, 2016. The girl was approached by a man, who offered to help her find her grandmother. Instead, the man took her to the parking lot and sexually assaulted her. Daniel Ayard heard the little girl's cries for help and came to her rescue. As Mr. Ayard approached, the man fled. Mr. Ayard chased the man for several blocks before catching him. They fought, then the man ran into a supermarket and hid. Mr. Ayard called 911 and waited until police arrived and arrested the man. Mr. Ayard's testimony at the preliminary hearing and his willingness to testify at trial helped prosecutors secure the man's conviction.

The defendant pleaded no contest to lewd conduct on a child and admitted kidnapping the victim. On Feb. 13, he was sentenced to 15 years to life in state prison.

The Los Angeles Police Department, Mission Division, investigated the case.

Donald Shaw, 71, of Studio City. (Case no. LA084821, presented by Deputy District Attorney Ranna Jahanshahi)

A security guard spotted a woman shoplifting from a supermarket in Valley Village on Nov. 21, 2016. When the guard attempted to stop her, the woman screamed and her boyfriend charged the guard. The security guard yelled for help, and Donald Shaw, who was drinking coffee nearby, heard his cries and responded. Mr. Shaw hit the man to try to stop the attack. However, the man fought back, pulling out a knife and stabbing Mr. Shaw several times. The guard grabbed the attacker and handcuffed him until authorities arrived. After the incident, Mr. Shaw assisted in the prosecution of the case. He testified at the preliminary hearing, helping ensure that justice was served.

On Sept. 26, 2017, the man pleaded no contest to one felony count of assault with a deadly weapon, a knife, and admitted inflicting great bodily injury. His girlfriend pleaded no contest to one felony count of assault by means of force likely to produce great bodily injury. He was sentenced to seven years in state prison; she was sentenced to two years in prison.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department, North Hollywood Division.

[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.