

Office of the State Attorney
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LAW ENFORCEMENT HONORED DURING SAO4'S 7TH ANNUAL OLEO CEREMONY

The State Attorney's Office hosted the 7th Annual Daniel E. Watts Outstanding Law Enforcement Officers (OLEO) Awards, a recognition of exceptional law enforcement work in agencies throughout Clay, Duval, and Nassau counties. In all, 12 awards were presented, including in categories such as Investigative Excellence, Bravery, and K-9 Valor. This year, recipients were nominated and presented by prosecutors and staff of the State Attorney's Office who worked hand-in-hand with agencies on cases.

These awards were made possible by Stellar and the Foster family, long-time sponsors of the OLEOs and the work of law enforcement and prosecutors.

Congratulations to the recipients who made a difference in changing and saving lives throughout the Fourth Circuit.

Medal of Valor Award

- **JSO Corrections Officer Brad McNew**, who was shot and killed after protecting a woman while off duty at a Northside gas station. McNew's wife and son accepted the honor on his behalf. McNew's killer, Demaurea Grant, was apprehended and is currently being prosecuted for First-Degree Murder.

Citizen and Volunteer Partnership Award

- **Brooke Curry**, a local high schooler, was the victim of a peer who created a generative AI nude image of her and disseminated it online, where it quickly spread. The teen who created the image was eventually arrested. In the aftermath, Curry shared her story and became an advocate who worked with Florida lawmakers to create "Brooke's Law" that forces websites to take down harmful images.

K-9 Valor Award

- **JSO K-9 Handler Officer Anthony Yannuzzi and K-9 Patriot**, who are specialists at finding lost and missing people. The two recently found their 18th person, including an 11-year old who went missing and required more than a half mile of tracking.

Investigative Excellence

- **JSO Officer Jason Ingham and Detective Diane McLennon**, for their efforts in the investigation of Giovanni Johnson. In April 2021, Johnson ambushed and raped at gunpoint a University of North Florida student in her apartment as she moved out. Ingham recalled a “Be on the Lookout” report and stopped Johnson, who was riding the same scooter he fled the scene the previous day. McLennon followed suit with key investigative work that led to [Johnson’s successful prosecution](#) and sentence of life in prison.

- **JSO Patrol Officer Carl Whitt**, whose work responding to a Lane Avenue convenience store burglary and follow-up investigation led to the eventual arrest and prosecution of a serial rapist, Brandon Ricketson.

- **Clay County Detective Ryan Ellis**, who in 2024 arrested Frederick Hildenbrand after a thorough investigation into child sexual abuse. Hildenbrand abused multiple children across the country and produced child sexual abuse material that he stored in a Clay County storage unit. He has been federally indicted.

Leadership Award

- **JSO Officer Malik Daricaud**, whose work in the agency’s Real Time Crime Center tracked down a boy who went missing. Daricaud’s work uncovered that the boy was taken by his non-custodial father, who then overdosed at a bus stop. The boy was taken to the hospital but had not been identified until Daricaud tracked him down and reunited him with his family.

Prosecutorial Award

- **FBI Special Agent Lauren Regucci and the FBI’s Emergency Response Team**, for their efforts and results in recovering the body of Susan Mauldin in the Chesser Island Landfill. Mauldin, a Clay County woman, went missing and it was quickly determined a contractor, Corey Binderim, was behind her disappearance. Binderim disposed of her body, which eventually made its way to the Georgia facility. After nine days of an intensive search with law

enforcement partners, Mauldin's body was found. [Binderim was prosecuted](#) and sentenced to life in prison.

State Attorney Award

- **JSO Marine Unit Officers Charlie Mays and Tim Leathers**, who helped a group of teenage boys camping at Goat Island on the St. Johns River return home after being trapped for hours by the tide during a frigid winter night.

Lifesaving Award

- **Nassau County Deputy Justin Haire**, for his quick-thinking efforts while driving off-duty in Duval County that led to saving the life of a woman who had suffered an overdose on the side of the road.

Bravery Award

- **Clay County Fire Rescue Lieutenants Joseph Hutchins and Thomas Gill**, who in August 2024 quickly responded to a capsized boat containing a family of five on Black Creek. Four of the five family members made it out, while the fifth — a baby — was trapped underneath. Gill went into the water and was submerged for several minutes until he was able to pull the child above water. The infant had been underwater for 10 minutes and was in cardiac arrest, but was revived and is alive today because of their quick actions.

Meritorious Service Award

- **JSO Undercover Officer**, who was lead investigator into a long-term narcotics trafficking investigation that initiated in November 2023. Labeled "Operation Jacob's Ladder," the results disrupted a prolific illegal drug distribution ring in Jacksonville with ties to Mexico and Texas. More than a dozen people were arrested, kilos of deadly drugs were seized, and numerous firearms confiscated.