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SAO4 HONORS AREA LAW ENFORCEMENT AT 5TH ANNUAL OLEO AWARDS

An officer who did not know how to swim but saved a drowning baby. A brave K9 shot in the line of duty. And numerous criminals taken off the streets through great investigations.

Those were just a few of the efforts honored during the State Attorney's Office 5th Annual Daniel E. Watts Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer Awards on April 19 at the Duval County Courthouse. The event brought together law enforcement and first responder agencies throughout Clay, Duval, and Nassau to recognize extraordinary efforts and results from the past year. In all, 20 awards were presented across seven categories.

"In a time when newsfeeds are filled with bad news, these stories — of courage, selflessness, service, and a commitment to justice — often do not get the recognition they deserve," said State Attorney Melissa Nelson. "I think it's important to highlight the exceptional work of our partners because, without them, we would not be able to do our jobs."

The awards are named after Dan Watts, a Jacksonville Beach Police Department sergeant who passed away in September 2020 from COVID-19. The idea for the awards originated when Watts met State Attorney Melissa Nelson in 2017 and discussed the concept. Watts served on the inaugural awards committee.

Nominations come from Fourth Circuit law enforcement agencies and are vetted by a committee comprising members from organizations in all three counties. The ceremony and awards again were sponsored by Ron Foster, his family, and the team at Stellar, all of which have been longtime supporters of law enforcement in our community.

The 2022 awards:

Leadership Award

- Sgt. Simon Robb, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office
- FBI Crimes Against Children and Human Trafficking Taskforce & FBI Jacksonville Community Outreach Program

Citizen and Volunteer Partnership Award

- Vincent Jones, Orange Park Hospital

Civilian Public Safety Award

- Alonda Oates, Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department

Investigative Excellence Award

- April Cobb, JSO; Special Agent Kacie Collins, U.S. Secret Service; Detective Christal Gause, JSO; Special Agent Scott Gore, USSS; Detective Cheyenne Kroul, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office; Analyst Emily Raymor, JSO; Detective Anastasia Scott, JSO; Sgt. Gene Tolbert, SJSO
- Special Agents Nareman Ebeid and Brent Fisher, DEA; Christina Rosario del Valle, DEA Task Force Officer
- Special Agent Molly Brown, DEA; Meho Custo, DEA Task Force Officer
- Trooper Tariq Tber, Florida Highway Patrol
- Detective Heather Rojas, Nassau County Sheriff's Office
- Detective Bill Abbott, JSO
- Deputies Kourtney Bowles and Halston Jones, Clay County Sheriff's Office
- Special Agent Josh "Tanner" Vittatoe, FBI; Detective Jeremy Easterly, JSO
- Intelligence Research Specialist Lyndsey Butler, ATF
- Detective Michael Gibson, JSO

Lifesaving Award

- Corp. Morris Ingle, Jacksonville Beach Police Department
- Deputy Philip Hagan, NCSO
- Special Agent Michelle Ross, NCIS

- Detective Robert Bassler, CCSO

Bravery Award

- Detective Me'Atia Sanderson, JSO