

April 15, 2011  
For Immediate Release

[Watch Video](#)

Contact: [Steve Walker](#)  
(619) 843-7977

## DA Honors Local Crime Victims For Bravery During Annual ‘Citizens of Courage’ Awards

San Diego County District Attorney [Bonnie Dumanis](#) today honored five recipients with the Citizens of Courage Award during the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual event, which is held as part of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week.

This year’s awardees were diverse in age and background with the youngest victim being 9-years-old at the time of crime and the oldest being 86-years old when she was attacked. One honoree suffers from Cerebral Palsy and another has a learning disability, making them particularly courageous victims.

“Nothing held these inspiring individuals back,” DA Dumanis said. “Despite their ages and their disabilities, they showed extraordinary courage and bravery in the face of serious crime.”

This year’s recipients include survivors of molestation, attempted sexual assault, and carjacking. Also being honored is a brave woman who convinced a suspected killer to confess to his crime. The victims were honored in front of more than 300 invited dignitaries, elected officials, community leaders and guests.

This year’s Citizens of Courage recipients include:

**Adriana Camacho:** A former spouse of a suspected murderer. When the suspect tried to rekindle a romance, he revealed to Adriana that he had killed someone. She called law enforcement and agreed to be secretly taped to obtain a full confession from the suspect in a hotel room.

**Viola Contreras:** Was threatened by a man with a box cutter who attempted to stab her in the stomach after she got off the bus. Viola demonstrated incredible courage throughout the prosecution, despite being terrified of the defendant, who was acting as his own attorney in court.

**Malissa Sorn:** This brave victim was 9-years-old when a registered sex offender attempted to kidnap her by forcing her into his van as she walked to school in Chula Vista. She fought off her attacker with bites and scratches. In the process she collected a DNA sample that eventually identified him, leading to his conviction.

**Mary Brugger:** Mary, a retired nurse, was sitting in her car at the post office when a serial bank robber opened her door and began beating her face, head and body while demanding her car. The 86-year-old fought off her attacker and didn’t hesitate to testify against him at trial.

**Candace Torian:** A college student whose conscience led her to report multiple sexual assaults by her father’s caretaker, years after it happened.

Each recipient received a trophy from DA Dumanis, as well as proclamations from Congressman Brian Bilbray; State Assemblyman Joel Anderson and the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.

The District Attorney’s Office is committed to assisting crime victims through its [Victim Assistance Division](#). In the aftermath of violent crime, Victim Advocates respond as “emotional paramedics.” Last year Victim Advocates reached out to more than 14,000 victims of crime and provided almost 2,000 crisis interventions.

###