

July 27, 2017
For Immediate Release

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District Attorney's Conviction Review Unit Recognized with National Award

NACo Awards Recognize Visionary Leadership of County Programs

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) today announced her office has been honored with an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo) for its innovative Conviction Review Unit. The Unit reviews convictions in which credible and verifiable evidence of innocence exists or new technology can be used to test or re-test remaining evidence.

“As prosecutors, we have an ethical duty to search for the truth and protect the innocent before, during and after a conviction,” said District Attorney Summer Stephan. “I’m very proud of our office’s Conviction Review Unit and our commitment to fair and smart justice for all.”

The public, attorneys, or convicted persons can apply to have a conviction reviewed via [a page on the DA’s public website](#). The program is providing unprecedented communication between the public and the DA’s Office regarding innocence claims. The unit is named for the late Honorable George “Woody” Clarke, who was a prosecutor in the San Diego District Attorney’s Office before being named to the bench. Clarke, along with Deputy DA Lisa Weinreb, was among the first prosecutors in the nation to initiate this type of work.

The San Diego DA’s Office has been a national leader in the area of conviction review. In 2000, the DA sent letters to hundreds of sentenced prisoners, offering to test DNA evidence in their closed cases. The Office is also one of the first in the nation to track DNA hits within its electronic case management system, making it possible to discover a wrongful conviction when a DNA hit belongs to someone other than the individual prosecuted.

In 2011, the DA appointed a liaison to the California Western School of Law Innocence Project. That attorney facilitated DNA testing, searches for remaining evidence in closed cases, reviewed convictions, and fielded numerous post-conviction related questions.

Claims of innocence must meet the following prerequisites:

- The conviction must have occurred in San Diego County Superior Court.
- The applicant must still be in custody, serving time on the sentence for which he or she was convicted.

- The conviction must be for a violent and/or serious felony as defined by [Penal Code sections 667.5 \(c\) and 1192.7 \(c\) \(1\)-\(42\)](#) (e.g. murder, rape, robbery, etc.).
- The application for review must be based on credible and verifiable evidence of innocence.
- The applicant agrees to fully cooperate with the District Attorney's Office, which includes providing disclosure of all relevant information during the review process.

Applications are accepted in writing only via fax at (619) 531-3428 or email at CRU@sdcd.org. For more information [click here](#).

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