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DA Prosecutor Recognized with MADD “Prosecutor of the Year” Award

DDA Edith Flores Awarded as Prosecutor of the Year

San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan announced today that Deputy District Attorney Edith Flores was recognized as *Prosecutor of the Year* for her work in the DA’s DUI Homicide Unit by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) at the annual MADD San Diego Law Enforcement and Prosecutor Recognition Awards held June 6 at Tom Ham’s Lighthouse.

“We often focus on driving under the influence of alcohol, but we are seeing many cases involving driving under the influence of drugs or a combination of alcohol and drugs and the results are often deadly,” said DA Stephan. “This recognition by MADD speaks to Deputy District Attorney Edith Flores’ dedication to delivering justice for victims and their families. Edith successfully prosecutes difficult drug-DUI cases and overcomes challenging defenses by educating jurors on the signs and symptoms of drug use. I am very proud to have Edith on our team and I know this award is very well-deserved.”

In 2023, 28 people were killed in 26 DUI-related crashes in San Diego County. So far in 2024, there have been nine people killed. In 2023, the DA’s Office filed 4,805 DUI cases, including 234 DUI drug cases and 153 combined alcohol and drug impairment cases. Between January and March 2024, the DA’s Office filed 1,459 new DUI cases, including 76 DUI drug cases and 24 combined alcohol and drug impairment cases.



Recipients of MADD’s awards are chosen through a call for nominations process. The organization reaches out to community partners, law enforcement agencies, local officials and their internal victim advocates asking them to

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nominate individuals who stand out in the community with regards to DUI-related work. Every year, MADD honors law enforcement officials for their continuous efforts in driving under the influence enforcement. This year, in person, the event recognized law enforcement with awards for the number of DUI arrests made annually.

Deputy DA Flores was nominated by Deputy DA Hailey Williams, the Director of the DA's DUI Homicide Unit. Edith is one of the original members of the DA's specialized misdemeanor drug DUI prosecution team since 2023, when she volunteered to join the drug DUI team in El Cajon and handled a caseload of almost entirely drug DUI cases. As the sole member of the El Cajon drug DUI prosecution team that year, Edith handled almost all misdemeanor drug DUI cases in her jurisdiction - everything from issuing charges through jury trial.

Although jurors are familiar with alcohol intoxication, it can be difficult for them to grasp the sometimes more subtle signs and symptoms of someone impaired by drugs and to understand how those drugs impact the ability to be safe behind the wheel of a car. Edith took it upon herself to become as educated as possible on all things drug DUIs so she could best present her cases to a jury. She attended trainings alongside officers, she went on ride-alongs and observed DUI checkpoints to learn how to make the sometimes-nuanced information gathered by officers in the field relevant to a jury's decision.

Edith's dedication to successful prosecution of these cases has removed dangerous drugged drivers from San Diego's roadways. With each DUI drug case filed, Edith worked to hold these drivers fully accountable for their actions. In 2023, Edith secured guilty verdicts on each drug DUI case she tried before a jury, including defendants impaired by alprazolam, cocaine, methamphetamine, and inhalants. She also paved the way for this year's expanded specialized misdemeanor drug DUI team which has grown to include six attorneys who continue to build upon her work from last year.

Other award recipients included Deputy City Attorney Anthony Esquibel of the San Diego City Attorney's Office, who was also awarded *Prosecutor of the Year*; Victor Grewal was awarded *Outstanding Volunteer*; California Highway Patrol Officer Anthony Alvarez, San Diego Sheriff Deputy Alfredo Lozano, California Highway Patrol Officer Drew Knowles, and La Mesa Police Officer Marcus Williams were all awarded the *Outstanding Rookie Award*; California Highway Patrol Officer Joshua Ketcher and California Highway Patrol Officer Malik Lanus were both awarded the *Outstanding Officer Award*; the *MADD Century Award* went to California Highway Patrol Officer Steven Rutledge, who made 100 DUI arrests, Carlsbad Police Officer Matt Taira, who made 106 DUI arrests, San Diego Sheriff Corporal Jason Malson, who made 108 DUI arrests, and San Diego Sheriff Corporal Eric Rader, who made 116 DUI arrests; and finally the *MADD Top Cop* awardee was Escondido Police Officer Timothy Hamilton who made 144 DUI arrests.

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About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office

The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.