

PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Attorney's Office Honors Law Enforcement Partners and "Hometown Heroes" During National Police Week

Monday, May 18, 2026

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS- On May 15, 2026, United States Attorney Tom Wheeler recognized more than 160 individuals from 33 federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies during the Office's annual awards ceremony at the Indiana War Memorial & Museum in downtown Indianapolis. Held during National Police Week, the ceremony honored law enforcement professionals whose exceptional work safeguarded communities across Indiana in cases concluded in 2025.

In commemoration of America's 250th anniversary, the U.S. Attorney's Office named Matt and Laurie Shahnnavaz—Founders of the [Remember Officer Noah Foundation](#)—as the 2026 **Hometown Heroes**. This award honors the enduring American ideals of liberty, service, and civic responsibility. Matt and Laurie were recognized for their extraordinary service, unwavering devotion to their community, and steadfast support of law enforcement in carrying forward the mission and legacy of fallen Elwood Police Officer Noah Jacob Shahnnavaz.

Case Awards:

Outstanding Collaborative Investigation

Recognizes cases demonstrating exceptional teamwork and the ability to overcome significant challenges through multi-agency coordination.

Awarded to: [U.S. v. Carranza, et al](#) and [U.S. v. Patients Choice Labs](#)

Project Safe Childhood – Shield of Innocence

Honors those who provide extraordinary assistance to victims of federal child sexual abuse crimes, including sustained emotional support, extensive off-duty dedication, detailed financial analysis to secure restitution, and resolving complex investigative challenges.

Awarded to: [U.S. v. Austin Ryan Laules](#), [U.S. v. Bryan Lee Fish](#), and [U.S. v. Moises Bojorquez](#)

L.E.A.T.H Heroism Award

Presented to a case demonstrating extraordinary commitment and fortitude in pursuing justice for domestic violence victims. The award honors IMPD Officer Breann Leath, who was killed in the line of duty while responding to a domestic disturbance. The LEATH Initiative—led by ATF, IMPD, and the U.S. Attorney’s Office—focuses on domestic violence offenders who illegally possess firearms or have significant violent criminal histories.

Awarded to: [U.S. v. Pedro Zuniga-Lopez](#)

Investigative Excellence Award

Recognizes cases that significantly advanced the mission of the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the Department of Justice through complex, thorough, and proactive evidence analysis.

Awarded to: [U.S. v. Julian Green, et al](#) and [U.S. v. Freire-Pifferrer, et al](#)

Excellence in the Pursuit of Justice

Presented to a case in which local, state, and federal officials achieved extraordinary results in preventing crime, enhancing community safety, and seeking justice.

Awarded to: [U.S. v. James Henley, et al](#)

Community Impact

Recognizes a case that produced widespread, positive impact on constituents, strengthened law enforcement relationships, and contributed to the lasting legacy of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Indiana.

Awarded to: [U.S. v. Desha Morris](#), [U.S. v. Aaron Strong](#) and [U.S. v. Kristopher McDonald](#)

Outstanding Agency Service

Presented to cases that substantially contributed to the mission of the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Department of Justice.

Awarded to: [U.S. v. Lawrence Taylor](#), [U.S. v. Otha Watkins II](#), [U.S. v. Jeremy Mack](#), [U.S. v. Mitchell Gibson](#) and [Quaylan Anderson v. United States](#).

Excellence in Appellate Practice

Recognizes an appellate case exemplifying excellence in legal writing, issue preservation, and advocacy before the appellate courts, contributing meaningfully to the development of the law and the protection of the United States' interests.

Awarded to: [U.S. v. Fenner, et al](#)

Participating Agencies

Honorees represented the following 33 agencies:

- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
- Drug Enforcement Administration
- Federal Bureau of Investigation – Indianapolis and Tampa
- Federal Bureau of Prisons – FCC Terre Haute
- Homeland Security Investigations – Indianapolis and Cleveland
- IRS–Criminal Investigation

- U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Maryland
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Frauds Section
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division
- U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General
- U.S. Postal Inspection Service
- Indiana Attorney General's Homeowner Protection Unit
- Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
- Indiana State Police
- Charlestown Police Department
- Clarksville Police Department
- Cleveland, Ohio Police Department
- Evansville Police Department
- Fishers Police Department
- Hamilton County Sheriff's Office
- Henry County Sheriff's Office
- Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department
- Jeffersonville Police Department
- Lawrence County Prosecutor's Office
- Morgan County Sheriff's Office
- New Castle Police Department
- Plainfield Police Department
- Princeton Police Department
- Richmond Police Department
- Vanderburgh County Sheriff's Office
- Zionsville Police Department

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