

SUMMER STEPHAN, District Attorney for San Diego County: Bio and Curriculum Vitae



District Attorney Summer Stephan has devoted her life to protecting children and families, providing justice to the most vulnerable, and is a national leader in the fight against human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Summer rose through the ranks fighting for justice in the trenches before San Diego County voters overwhelmingly elected Summer as District Attorney in 2018 and again in 2022. As District Attorney, she leads the second-largest DA's Office in California, and the fifth-largest in the United States, managing a professional staff of 1,000 employees, serving as the People's Prosecutor for San Diego County and its more than three million residents. Summer leverages her extensive courtroom, management, and leadership experience to set clear public safety priorities in collaboration with law enforcement and the community, keeping San Diego County one of the safest urban regions in the United States. In 2022, Summer was named one of "*The Five Best Prosecutors in America*," utilizing evaluation factors of integrity, fidelity to the rule of law, responsible innovations, and community relations.

As a trial prosecutor, she tried more than 100 jury trials, including cases of complex homicides, sexually violent predators, child molestation, sexual assaults, school shooting, and human trafficking-related cases. She served as Chief of the DA's North County Branch and Chief of the Sex Crimes and Human Trafficking Division, a special victims unit she pioneered.

As the District Attorney, Summer opened a state-of-the-art Family Justice Center in the North County for victims of domestic violence and elder abuse. Summer launched a juvenile diversion program that diverted hundreds of kids away from the school to prison pipeline. Summer fulfilled her commitment to test every rape kit with over 2000 rape kits tested. Her office tripled the prosecutions of hate crimes and doubled down on the prosecution of deadly fentanyl dealers. Summer formed a specialized team to effectively combat Organized Retail Crime. Summer is implementing innovations to help address the intersection of crime and homelessness.

DA Stephan holds leadership positions in public safety nationally and locally, including serving as President-Elect of the National District Attorneys Association, and co-chair of the National Association of Women Judges Human Trafficking committee. Summer served on the Governor's Task Force for High-Risk Sex Offenders and Sexually-Violent Predators. She spearheaded the innovative "*Know the Price*" campaign, which focused on reducing sexual assaults on college campuses. She also led the award-winning "*The Ugly Truth*" human trafficking awareness campaign as well as the "*San Diego Opioid Project*," aimed at reducing opioid and fentanyl overdoses. Summer led a coordinated effort to protect the community from targeted mass violence with a School Threats Task Force that implemented a unified protocol with all 42 school districts in San Diego County. In addition, she began an effective Veterans Treatment model in North County inspired by a heroic Marine Corps veteran.

Summer is the recipient of numerous local, state, and federal awards, including an FBI commendation for organized crime prosecution, outstanding achievement award from the Deputy District Attorneys Association for the complex prosecution for the rape and murder of an elderly woman. She was named an "Angel of Anti-Human Trafficking" and a "Modern Day Abolitionist." In 2022, she received the Bernard E. Witkin Esq. Award for Excellence in the Practice of Law, for her extraordinary contributions, leadership, and accomplishments as District Attorney. She was selected as the 2017 *Southern California District Attorney of the Year* by Crime Victims United, was awarded the

Pathbreaker Award by Shared Hope International, and received the 2019 *Humane Award* for her work in fighting animal cruelty.

Summer received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California, Davis and her Juris Doctor from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS DISTRICT ATTORNEY (2018 to present)

Summer and her team adopted a new and enhanced DA Mission: Our Mission is to pursue an equal and fair justice for all and build safe neighborhoods in partnership with the communities we serve, by ethically prosecuting crime, protecting victims and preventing harm. The following are highlights. (For a more complete list, please go to www.SanDiegoDA.com for the 102-page Mid-Term Report.)

- Spearheaded a regional strangulation protocol for domestic violence victims that translated into a reduction DV homicides.
- Tripled Hate Crimes prosecutions and launched a first-of-its-kind online hate crimes and incidents reporting tool to increase access and combat rising violence.
- Led and funded an initiative to clear San Diego County's rape kit backlog with 2,700 rape kits tested and two criminal cases already filed.
- Led a multi-disciplinary effort to reform mental health systems as they intersect with criminal justice to provide more compassionate and effective treatment and lower recidivism thus improving public safety outcomes. Ten concrete solutions are in various phases of implementation with a Crisis Stabilization Center already open and more on their way.
- Led and funded a regional and comprehensive de-escalation and crisis management training aimed to reduce officer involved shootings and in custody deaths and enhance understanding of interactions with persons experiencing mental health crisis and addiction with 4,000 officers trained already.
- Launched a Sentence Review Unit to reverse disproportionate sentences pursuant to a new law. The ongoing work by the unit culminated in becoming one of the few counties to receive a grant to expand the work.
- Launched the Community Justice Initiative that diverted non-violent, low-level misdemeanors to cognitive behavioral therapy and community service with a consistent 5 percent recidivism rate.
- Launched a Juvenile Diversion Initiative countywide to interrupt the school to prison pipeline through pre-filing diversion to restorative community services that are culturally competent. 350 youth have already been diverted with outcomes being tracked.
- Launched an innovative public-private partnership that educated thousands of teachers and students on the prevention of human trafficking and exploitation.
- Expanded the Cold Case Division with receiving a prestigious national grant based on work that helped solve and prosecute homicides and serial rapes.
- Opened a North County Family Justice Center, One Safe Place, with one stop services to promote hope, healing and justice for victims of crime of any age to prevent and intervene in cycles of violence for domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, hate crimes and human trafficking. Since it opened July 2022, a record 3,500 plus victims have walked through the door and received lifesaving services.
- Worked with the DA Interfaith Advisory Council to create a Cultural Awareness App that promotes enhanced respect of different cultures and races through understanding for police officers contacting diverse communities.

- Supported the creation of a DA Committee on Racial Equity to promote internal and external dignity and equity.
- Collaborated with FBI and US Attorney on fighting elder scams through a first of its kind Elder Justice Task Force led by FBI.
- Collaborated with DEA and US Attorney to enhance overdose response especially fentanyl related in San Diego County.
- Led the creation of a regional protocol to address targeted school threats with all 42 school districts in 2018. In 2021, collaborated with the US Secret Service to update the 2018 School Threats Protocol and collaborated with the FBI to enhance the school threat protocol and training in 2022.
- Formed a specialized DA Team to combat Organized Retail Crime working with the San Diego Organized Retail Crime Alliance.

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

District Attorney for the County of San Diego, elected 2018, 2022

District Attorney for the County of San Diego, appointed, 2017-2018

Chief Deputy District Attorney, San Diego County District Attorney's Office, 2012-2017

Served in Executive Management.

Deputy District Attorney V, San Diego County District Attorney's Office, 2006-2012

Served as Chief and handled and tried complex felony cases.

Deputy District Attorney IV, San Diego County District Attorney's Office, 2000-2006

Served as felony Team Leader, Assistant Chief and Chief, and tried complex felony cases.

Deputy District Attorney III, San Diego County District Attorney's Office, 1993-2000

Tried felony cases in the South Bay Branch and the Superior Court Division.

Deputy District Attorney II, San Diego County District Attorney's Office, 1991-1993

Tried misdemeanor cases and served as Misdemeanor Team Leader.

Deputy District Attorney I, San Diego County District Attorney's Office, 1990-1991

Tried misdemeanor cases and worked on legal motions.

Research Attorney, San Diego County Superior Court, 1989-1990

MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

District Attorney, 2018-present

Responsible for setting policy, managing and leading the internal team of over 1,000 employees comprised of Deputy District Attorneys and professional staff. Manages an operational budget of \$200 million. Responsible for public safety and fair and ethical prosecution for the County of San Diego, and its population of over 3.3 million residents. Serves as top public safety official for state law in San Diego County in collaboration and partnership with local, state and federal prosecutors and law enforcement.

Chief Deputy District Attorney, 2012-July 2017

Appointed to this executive position by the District Attorney, Served as an integral part of the Executive team, and shared responsibility for the internal and external operations of the Office as a whole, with direct responsibility for every division at various times. Managed the Juvenile Branch with dramatic innovations and collaborations, and with justice partners reduced juvenile incarceration by 48 percent. Responsible for compliance with the county's General Management System of fiscal and case responsibility.

Chief, North County Branch, 2008-2012

Served as first woman Chief of the largest branch office in the county, which is responsible for handling all misdemeanor and felony crimes for over one million of San Diego's three million residents, with over 100 employees and coordinating with three municipal Police Departments and six Sheriff Substations.

Chief, Sex Crimes, Stalking and Human Trafficking Division, 2005-2008

Envisioned, pioneered and led this Special Victims division, which is staffed with specially trained prosecutors, investigators and support staff who are responsible for prosecuting sex crimes, child molestation cases involving delayed reporting, sexually violent predators, sexual exploitation of minors, human trafficking, and stalking cases. Continued to manage this division as Chief Deputy District Attorney.

Assistant Chief, North County Branch, 2003-2005

APPOINTMENTS and LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

President-Elect, National District Attorneys Association, 2023 to present

Chair, Women Prosecutors Section- National District Attorneys Association, 2021 to present

Co-Chair, Substance Use and Overdose Prevention Taskforce, 2023

Co-Chair, Meth Strike Force, 2018

Co-Chair, California District Attorneys Association- Human Trafficking Committee, 2016 to present

Commissioner, San Diego Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention, July 2017 to present

Chair, San Diego County Human Trafficking and Commercial Child Exploitation Advisory Council, 2015 to 2017

Chair, Prosecution Subcommittee, San Diego County Human Trafficking and Commercial Child Exploitation Advisory Council, 2012 to 2014

Co-Chair, Legal and Community Education, Lawyers Club committee on Human Trafficking, 2014 to 2017

Coordinating Council, San Diego Human Trafficking Task Force, 2015 to present

This is a new model supported by the Police Chiefs and Sheriffs of a collaborative law enforcement victim centered task force to combat organized human trafficking. Fifteen local, state and federal agencies working under one roof opened in January 2015, with the DA's Office as a founding partner.

Member, California Governor's Task Force for High Risk Sex Offenders and Sexually Violent Predators, 2006-2007

Served as only one of two prosecutors on this task force which produced recommendations for public safety that were implemented statewide by executive order of the Governor.

Chair, P.R.I.C.E Coalition (Preventing Rape by Intoxication through Community Education), 2006-2008

As Chair, brought together all of San Diego's Colleges and Universities along with law enforcement, victims service providers, community partners, survivor voices, and military and health professionals to create a multi-media prevention, awareness and education campaign to address sexual assaults of college women. The campaign continues and may be accessed through www.KnowThePrice.org

Chair, Countywide Multi-Agency Task Force on Cyber Related Threats of Targeted Violence, 2014-2017 (Since 2017, I appointed a lead DDA to chair.)

Envisioned and pioneered an effort to create protocols to effectively deal with threats to schools and other venues to maximize the detection and interruption of threats before they materialize. Efforts continue to make this a national model.

Presenter-Participant, Success Inside and Out, a program by the National Association of Women Judges-Las Colinas Women's Detention Facility, 2016-2023

Featured speaker and panelist at this initiative of the National Women Judges Association, which mentors and educates women in detention who are nearing release to assist them with re-entry into society and succeed. Presentation: "How to stop destructive relationships of domestic violence and exploitation that trigger criminal and unhealthy lifestyles".

Mentor for Transitioning Veteran, North San Diego Business Chamber Initiative, 2016-2017

Member- Lawyers Club of San Diego, 2006-present

Helped lead several trainings on human trafficking for Lawyers Club along with panels on aspects of leadership.

AWARDS AND HONORS

- **Bernard E. Witkin Esq. Award for Excellence in the Practice of Law** by San Diego Law Library Foundation, 2022
- **Named The Five Best Prosecutors in America**, by Manhattan Institute, 2022
- **Women in Leadership Award** by Regional Chamber of Commerce, East County, 2021
- **Top Women in Law** by San Diego Business Journal, 2021
- **Humane Award** by Helen Woodward Humane Center, 2019
- **Pathbreaker Award** by Shared Hope International, 2018

- **Inspiring Dreams Award** by Kathy’s Legacy, 2018
- **Southern California District Attorney of the Year** by Crime Victims United, 2018
- **Community Impact Award** by North County Lifeline, 2017
- **Lifetime Legacy Award** by Connected Women of Influence, 2017
- **Voices for Justice Award** by Interfaith Center for Worker Justice, awarded for promoting justice for vulnerable workers and victims of exploitation, 2016
- **Public Safety Leadership Award** by San Diegans Against Crime, 2016
- **Spirit of the Community Award** by the Junior League of San Diego, for being a pioneer of service in the community, 2016
- **First Place Award for Human and Civil Rights Work by a Multi-Agency**, presented by the Association of International Police Chiefs for the role of the DA’s office in the Human Trafficking Task Force, 2016
- **Named “Modern Day Abolitionist”** by 3Strands Global, for combatting human trafficking, 2015
- **City of San Diego Human Relations Commission Partner Award and Special Commendation** for collaboration to promote positive change in the community, 2014
- **Named “Angel of Anti-Human Trafficking”** by Bilateral Safety Corridor Coalition, for 10 years of dedication to combatting human trafficking, 2014
- **Chuck Nickel Award** by Deputy District Attorneys Association for professional excellence and statewide impact on public safety related to the area of sex crimes, 2007
- **Commendation for Innovation in the Implementation of a GPS Pilot for High-Risk Sex Offenders** by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2006
- **FBI Commendation** for successful prosecution of cross-border organized auto theft ringleader, 2002
- **Response with a Heart** by the Sexual Assault Response Team for significant contribution to sexual assault crimes, 1998
- **Outstanding Achievement Award** by the Deputy District Attorneys Association for the successful prosecution of a special circumstance homicide involving the rape and murder of an 80-year-old woman in North Park, 1997
- **Prosecutor’s Award** by the San Diego Police Department Homicide Team, 1997

ACADEMIC DEGREES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology- University of California at Davis, 1983

Juris Doctor, University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, 1986 (Student Body President)

Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education Course: Driving Government Performance Certificate, 2015