

**Nomination of Kathleen Mayer for the  
Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence's  
Ocotillo Legislative Advocacy Award**

**1. Why is the nominee deserving of this award? Identify the accomplishments and activities that specifically relate to the award category.**

I am pleased to nominate Deputy County Attorney Kathleen ("Kathi") Mayer for the Ocotillo Legislative Advocacy Award. Kathleen Mayer has worked as a prosecutor for over 30 years. Kathleen is one of the most experienced and well-respected prosecutors not only in Pima County, but throughout Arizona. She has had a long and distinguished career and is well recognized and respected in her profession. After 30 years of service, Kathleen will be retiring this year; thus, this may be our last opportunity to publicly thank and recognize her for her outstanding service.

I am nominating Kathleen for the Ocotillo Award in recognition of the incredible work she has done over the past several years to create positive impact on victims of domestic violence. Pima County Attorney Barbara LaWall realized that, as Kathi neared retirement, her broad legal knowledge combined with her extensive trial experience

made her the ideal candidate to serve as the Pima County Attorney's Office Legislative Liaison, a position Kathi has held for the past several years. Kathi has done a phenomenal job representing not only the interests of the Pima County Attorney's Office, but more importantly the needs of crime victims across the state. She has been a tireless advocate for sensible and needed legislation to address a variety of issues of public safety, law enforcement and prosecution. She has been a tireless voice for the needs of crime victims, addressing a variety of shortcomings and gaps in current laws and statutes that deprive victims and survivors of needed legal rights and protections.

Over the past three years alone, Kathi worked closely with the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence (AzCADV) to ensure passage of the following bills by the Arizona legislature:

- SB1088 (2009 session) otherwise known as Katy's Law that expands the definition of domestic violence to including dating relationships.
- SB1086 (2010 session) that expanded domestic violence crimes to include strangulation.
- SB1085 (2010 session) that enables pets to be included in Orders of Protection.
- SB 1087 (2010 session) that included felony animal cruelty within the scope of domestic violence.
- SB1080 (2011 session) that fixed a loop-hole in custodial interference statutes that allowed perpetrators to avoid sanctions if the child was returned by a third-party (i.e., the perpetrator didn't actually voluntarily return the child).

Additionally, in conjunction with AzCADV, Kathi has advocated for other important measures that unfortunately have not yet been successful, such as SB1155 that was introduced this past session to expand the stalking statute to include the use of electronic and digital devices. But, as Kathi and the Coalition know only too well, perseverance is key in legislative advocacy. Many of the aforementioned bills that eventually became law, failed when they were first introduced. But Kathi is nothing if not tenacious. She told me not to worry about the failure of SB1155 – "we will be bringing it back this next session."

This positive, can-do attitude is what makes Kathi an ideal legislative liaison and advocate. She doesn't get discouraged and she never throws in the towel. Her deep knowledge of the law and its real-world application make her a formidable spokesperson and advocate for legislative changes to improve the criminal justice system.

Kathi has done an outstanding job building relationships and alliances that bridge normal political divisions. She understands the importance of finding allies and supporters across the political spectrum and is adept at communicating the values and merits of specific legislation in terms that are understood and recognized by legislators of different backgrounds and persuasions.

Kathi approaches her work with humility. While clearly invested in the outcomes, she recognizes that ultimately the fight is not about her nor is it hers alone. Kathi understands that the legislative fixes are ultimately about doing what is right for the community and for crime victims. She knows that the causes she fights for are just and that the outcomes have real consequences for people who have been wronged by others. In this sense, her advocacy has a wider purpose and calling.

But Kathi is also able to compromise and meet people half-way. She knows that the legislative process is ultimately about reaching agreements between competing interests and ideologies. Thus, without sacrificing her ideals or values, she reaches out to others to work collaboratively to forge agreements that are mutually beneficial and that advance the needs of victims.

**2. Please describe the nominee's background in the domestic violence movement in Arizona. Feel free to include information about the program for which or with which the nominee works.**

Over the course of her 30-year career as a prosecutor, Kathleen has demonstrated sustained service and exceptional advocacy on behalf of crime victims, and consistent dedication to the protection of public safety and the administration of justice in Pima County.

During her tenure, she has had the opportunity to work with countless domestic violence victims, helping them through the criminal justice system and supporting them throughout prosecution. In addition to being one of Arizona's most skilled and successful prosecutors, Kathleen supervised the Pima County Attorney's Special Victim's Unit from 1993 to 2004. Under her leadership this unit grew to include not only sex crimes but also domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and animal abuse cases.

Kathleen has tried more than 150 jury trials. These include: 23 Homicide charges and 76 Sex Offenses and Sexual Exploitation of Children charges. She has prosecuted and removed murderers, rapists, abusers, child abductors, and child molesters from our community, many of whom manipulated, deceived, and victimized those who loved and/or trusted them. Kathi's work focused particularly on child victims, most of whom were abused within the context of familial domestic violence situations. A few of the more notorious cases include:

- *Barry Lee Jones* – While on meth he spent the better part of a day driving his girlfriend's four-year old daughter around, alternately beating and violently raping her. She died an agonizing death from an untreated infection due to a torn stomach and intestines. He is on death row.

- Over a nine-month period, *Rodolfo Morales* stalked and enticed or forced five little girls into his car. He drove them to desert areas, threatened and raped each one, and then abandoned them. Using DNA, composite drawings, and in-court identifications, each child testified and the jury convicted him. He received 238 years.
- *Stanley Cummings* – Over a twenty-year period of time, this Sunday School teacher and nurse’s aide, befriended single mothers with young male children and became a father figure or big brother to them, often taking them camping, and to the zoo and amusement parks. He molested, sodomized, photographed, and tape-recorded beating his victims, some of whom he met through his church. He was indicted and found guilty on 62 counts, 61 of which were Sexual Exploitation of Minor charges. He was sentenced to 56 35-year sentences and three 35-year sentences to run consecutively.
- *John Sweet* beat *Donna Bennett*’s two-year old son into unconsciousness while she was at work. When she returned they conspired to deny him necessary medical treatment which could have saved his life. Instead they injected him with meth in an attempt to revive him. He died as a result of untreated head injuries. *Sweet* received 35 to life plus 20 and *Bennett* received 35 to life.
- *Billy Don Smith* – He beat to death the ten-month old daughter of his girlfriend because she was not learning to walk fast enough to satisfy him. He received 35 to life.
- *Betty Armstrong* engaged in a torture campaign against *Daryl Hendrix*’s three-year old son, which included breaking his arm, failing to get him medical attention, and leaving him out all night to sleep on the porch. He was five years old when, over a two-day period, she beat him to death. Because *Daryl Hendrix* did nothing to protect his son and fled the state with *Armstrong* in order to avoid authorities, *Hendrix* received 35 to life plus 26 years and *Armstrong* received natural life plus 75 years.
- *John Baker and Betty Miller* locked their two young grandchildren in a bare room of their trailer with little food and no exposure to the outside community for four years. Both grandchildren were severely malnourished and diagnosed with failure to thrive. Kathleen’s care and constant attention to the children not only helped them through a difficult trial, but also helped establish a normal life for them, and incarcerated the grandparents for decades. *Baker* and *Miller* each received 37 years.

### **3. How has the nominee made an impact in the community?**

Kathi’s impact on the community has been tremendous. First, as a 30-year prosecutor, she brought countless criminal defendants to justice and helped restore a small measure of peace to the victims’ lives. As a prosecutor, Kathi always put the needs of her victims front and center. While recognizing her role as prosecutor for the state, she also took seriously her commitment to making sure that the victim’s voices were heard throughout the process. She never lost sight that while all of society suffers the effect of

crime, the individual victims are the ones whose lives are forever changed and for whom justice is often needed for healing.

Additionally, the legislation that Kathi has helped successfully pass has made real changes in the lives of victims. Dating violence is now taken more serious and included as domestic violence. Victims of strangulation, one of the most common forms of domestic abuse, are now able to be classified correctly as domestic violence victims. The torturing of pets at the hands of their domestic violence abusers can now be included in domestic violence charges and victims can include their pets on Orders of Protection. These are changes that make a real difference in the lives of victims and survivors throughout our community.

#### **4. Is there anything unique about the nominee's work in the domestic violence movement in Arizona?**

There are few people who devote most of their time to legislative advocacy on behalf of improvements to the criminal justice system. Thus, she is already among a few unique individuals who are making a significant difference in the lives of crime victims. Additionally, Kathi's entire career has been dedicated to pursuing justice for women and children who have been abused and victimized by others, particularly the men in their lives in whom they trusted. She has been a fierce advocate for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. When she transitioned into the role of Legislative Liaison, she brought this passion and conviction with her and focused her efforts on legislation that would improve the lives of victims by holding offenders more accountable while making the criminal justice system more responsive to their needs. She has partnered closely with the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence and other victim service organizations, both governmental and nongovernmental, to be the most effective advocate possible for promoting positive legislative changes. For all these reasons, I think Kathi stands out uniquely in this field and should be recognized for her enormous contributions.

#### **5. Is there anything else you would like the selection committee to know about the nominee?**

I have had the pleasure of knowing Kathi Mayer personally and professionally for the past 10 years and have had the honor of working with her for the past four years. Kathi cares deeply about her work. Although she could have made a lot more money as an attorney in another area of law, Kathi committed her entire professional career to public service because she cares passionately about the victims and about making our community a safer place. It is this passion for positive societal change that motivated Kathi, at the end of her long and successful career as a prosecutor, to accept the challenge of serving as Legislative Liaison. To this new role, Kathi brought the same courage, conviction and drive to make a difference. She understands the real-world impact that big and small changes in the law can make for both victims and our communities. She has worked tirelessly to advance positive change. For that, I am

personally grateful. Thus, it is my true honor to be able to nominate her for this well-deserved award.