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Mothers Against Drunk Driving Honors City Attorneys

Matthew Starr wins Prosecutor of the Year; Karen Li receives volunteer award

Deputy City Attorney Matthew Starr and Chief Deputy City Attorney Karen Li were honored Wednesday by the local chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving for their work combating drunk and drugged driving in San Diego.

Starr won MADD's Outstanding Prosecutor of the Year award for 2021 and Li was presented with the chapter's first-ever award for Volunteer of the Year at the MADD San Diego Law Enforcement Recognition Awards ceremony.

"We are so proud to have both of these individuals and their great work honored by our local chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving," City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **"Karen has spent countless hours informing the public about the dangers of drunk driving. Matt's innovative work on prosecuting drug DUIs ensures that those people who refuse to obey the law are brought to justice."**

In his role as lead prosecutor on the specialized Drug DUI vertical prosecution team, Starr handles some of the most challenging DUI cases. As a result of his training, he understands how prescription and illegal drugs can interact with alcohol to reduce a driver's ability to operate a vehicle safely.

In *People v. Ryan Doll*, Starr convicted a driver who was under the influence of methamphetamine and Xanax that was found blocking the entrance to the San Diego Zoo's Safari Park. This was the defendant's second DUI conviction within 10 years and was sentenced to probation with 25 days custody in the San Diego County Jail.

In *People v. Andrew Bohannan*, Starr convicted a man who was involved in four separate collisions on La Jolla Shores Drive while under the influence of Fentanyl and marijuana. When paramedics arrived on scene, the defendant was unconscious in the driver's seat of his vehicle experiencing a Fentanyl overdose.

Starr's commitment does not end in the courtroom. He has participated in two ride-alongs with San Diego Police Department Drug Recognition Experts to further develop his skills as a prosecutor and get a first-hand look at what officers encounter on the road. He also attended Drug Recognition Expert School which is a two week-in-depth training on drugged driving and Southern California's Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor Traffic college, which focuses on DUI investigations and trial tactics.

Starr also played a significant role in securing re-authorization for the Office's Traffic Safety Grant that funds the vertical prosecution team.

MADD saluted Li for her work as a volunteer and advisory board member for more than 10 years.

Li began volunteering for MADD in 2010 after her fiancé, Deputy Sheriff Ken Collier, was killed pursuing a drunk driver going the wrong way on Highway 52.

Since then, her "Ken Collier's Crew & Public Safety Family" team has raised more than \$60,000 for MADD and is one of the largest teams at the annual Walk Like MADD team event.

Li has volunteered her time and her knowledge, answering countless calls for information about Walk Like MADD and has worked on MADD's Victim Impact

Panels, Law Enforcement Recognition Breakfasts/Luncheons, and Candlelight Vigils.

Li is the chief of the Neighborhood Services section of the City Attorney's Civil Advisory division.

The City Attorney's Office is committed to preventing impaired driving and reducing alcohol and drug-impaired traffic deaths and injuries.

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