

**DEPUTY JOE AVALOS  
DEPUTY TIM KELLER**

**MEDAL FOR LIFESAVING  
Saved the Life of a 17-year-old Student in Cardiac Arrest**

On Friday morning, April 23, 2010, Deputy Joe Avalos was working as a School Resource Officer in the city of Villa Park when he was dispatched to Villa Park High School regarding an unconscious student who had collapsed on the track. Deputy Tim Keller, who was working patrol in an adjacent area, also responded to the school.

Deputy Avalos arrived within two minutes and found the 17-year-old young student lying on the track surrounded by students and staff members. A health clerk was assessing the boy's condition and told Deputy Avalos the boy's pulse was very weak. Deputy Avalos quickly assessed the student's condition and determined he had no pulse and was unresponsive. He began chest compressions while the school's athletic trainer, Malia Reynolds, began rescue breathing. Deputy Tim Keller arrived shortly after CPR was started and took over for Ms. Reynolds. Deputies Avalos and Keller continued CPR for several minutes, trying desperately to save the teenager's life.

A few minutes later Orange County Fire Authority paramedics arrived and began advanced medical treatment. They were able to restart the victim's heart with a defibrillator before transporting him to the hospital for additional treatment. Hospital staff commended the actions of the Deputies. Early CPR is critical to saving lives and they said the first responders certainly saved the victim's life. The young man's parents later divulged they previously lost another child to a similar incident because of a hereditary medical condition.

Deputy Avalos and Deputy Keller provided immediate and effective CPR, remaining calm in a very tense and emotional situation. Their actions saved the young life of the student and prevented a tragedy.

**DEPUTY DOUG EARL  
DEPUTY SCOTT STEINLE**

**MEDAL FOR LIFESAVING  
Saved the Life of a 61-year-old Traffic Collision Victim**

On Sunday afternoon, June 6, 2010, North Patrol Deputies Doug Earl, Scott Steinle, and Ron Fugate were in Silverado Canyon after responding to an unfounded report call. While driving in the area east of the 241 toll road the deputies came upon a horrific crash scene involving a side-swipe collision between two motorcycles.

Deputy Fugate found the first victim lying face down in the roadway, suffering from non-life threatening injuries. The victim was moaning and uncooperative so Deputy Fugate patiently restrained the victim until paramedics arrived.

Deputy Steinle arrived at the location of the second victim and found a far worse situation. The second victim's left leg was nearly severed by the impact with the engine of the oncoming motorcycle and the man was bleeding profusely. His friend, Glenn Seymour, was valiantly attempting to apply direct pressure by squeezing the severed artery but was having little success stemming the flow of bleeding. Deputy Steinle quickly realized that the man was going to bleed to death in seconds unless more effective measures were taken.

Deputy Steinle commandeered a belt from a bystander and using all of his strength created a make-shift tourniquet above the life-threatening wound. Unfortunately, the belt's buckle was not strong enough and broke. Deputy Steinle retrieved a second belt and managed to keep it in place while Deputy Earl arrived. Deputy Earl applied a field dressing to the wound and applied direct pressure below the tourniquet to further slow the bleeding. Both Deputies continued first aid until Orange County Fire Authority personnel arrived. Paramedics provided advanced medical treatment and flew the victim via helicopter to the nearest trauma center.

Thanks to the tremendous efforts and quick thinking of Deputy Earl, Deputy Steinle, and Mr. Seymour the severely injured man survived his traumatic injuries.

## **SHERIFF'S SPECIAL OFFICER DARRIN MILLS**

### **MEDAL FOR LIFESAVING**

#### **Saved the Life of a three-year-old Choking Victim**

In the early evening of Tuesday, June 15, 2010, Sheriff's Special Officer Darrin Mills got off work from Police Services at John Wayne Airport and drove to Rush Park in Rossmoor for a Boy Scouts event. As he was walking into the event he unexpectedly found himself in an intense lifesaving situation involving a three-year-old choking victim.

Just after arriving at the park, SSO Mills heard a man yelling for help and saw the man knelling next to his little boy, frantically screaming for assistance. SSO Mills immediately ran over and assessed the situation. The man's son was standing with his eyes wide open but could not breathe. SSO Mills quickly scooped the boy in his arms and opened his mouth, looking for an obstruction. Not seeing anything, SSO Mills turned the boy over and administered back thrusts while instructing bystanders to call 911.

After giving a series of back thrusts, SSO Mills turned the boy over and did a quick reassessment. The boy's eyes were now closed and his face was turning blue. The father started to panic and tried to conduct a finger sweep of the boy's mouth. With the tension mounting and the real possibility of the boy dying, SSO Mills had to calm the man down and explain that attempting to dislodge an unseen object could push the object farther down the boy's throat. If this happened, the boy would almost certainly choke to death.

SSO Mills calmed the man down and resumed first-aid. Despite the highly-charged emotional distractions, SSO Mills displayed remarkable calm and incredible efficiency as he switched over to stomach thrusts in an attempt to dislodge the foreign substance. He saw a thick, paste-like fluid coming from the boy's mouth and reassessed the young victim. The boy had a pulse but was still not breathing. He decided to begin rescue breathing in an attempt to get oxygen into the little boy's lungs. Moments later, the boy began to take short, restricted breaths on his own.

Paramedics arrived and transported the boy to the hospital where he made a full recovery. Sheriff's Special Officer Mills' extraordinary actions conducting effective first-aid under extremely difficult circumstances saved the three-year-old boy's life.

**INVESTIGATOR DAVE PURSER  
DEPUTY DAVID LEE**

**MEDAL FOR LIFESAVING  
Saved the Life of a two-month-old baby in Cardiac Arrest**

On the evening of Tuesday, July 27, 2010, Deputy David Lee and Investigator (then Deputy) Dave Purser were working their assigned shifts in the city of Rancho Santa Margarita. Investigator Purser was dispatched to the kind of call that no one wants to get; a baby not breathing. Driving with his siren blaring and emergency lights flashing, Investigator Purser arrived within seconds, followed immediately by his area partner, Deputy Lee.

When the Deputies got to the apartment they found the lifeless baby on the living room floor surrounded by his hysterical family members. Investigator Purser quickly performed an assessment and discovered the infant had no pulse and was not breathing. He and Deputy Lee immediately began CPR. Both Deputies continued CPR until paramedics arrived and began advanced medical treatment. The baby was eventually transported to the hospital where he began breathing on his own and was admitted for further evaluation.

Investigator Purser and Deputy Lee performed exceptionally well in a very intense, chaotic environment and saved the life of the tiny two-month-old.

## **DEPUTY MIHAELA MIHAI**

### **MEDAL FOR LIFESAVING**

#### **Stopped a Suicidal Woman from Leaping to Her Death**

On Sunday afternoon, on August 22, 2010, Deputy Mihaela Mihai was working patrol in the city of Lake Forest when she was dispatched to assist Deputy Josh Dietrich on a 'Keep the Peace' call. This call involved a property pickup between an estranged married couple, the type of call that can quickly turn into a highly emotional and volatile encounter.

When they arrived at the apartment the wife was refusing to let the husband into the apartment. She was screaming profanities at the husband in front of the couple's three small children and was alternately crying and yelling. Deputy Mihai stood by with the woman while Deputy Dietrich stayed with the man as he collected his belongings. Eventually, the wife asked the husband to take the children with him because she did not have any means to take care of them. The man agreed and began taking the kids to the car.

Deputy Mihai was still in the apartment alone with the emotional and agitated woman when the woman suddenly kicked a table over and ran to the third story balcony. Screaming and crying, she jumped onto the railing and threw one of her legs over. Fearing the woman was going to jump, Deputy Mihai reacted quickly. She ran to the railing and grabbed the woman by the hair and shirt pulling her from the railing and onto the floor.

Deputy Mihai stayed alert and calm during a very emotional call. She used effective skill and quick reactions to stop the distraught woman from plunging 40 feet to her death.

## **DEPUTY ADAM SANDLER**

### **MEDAL OF MERIT**

#### **Created a Computer Software Program to Greatly Increase Efficiency**

Last year the CJ-1 Arraignment Court was created in an effort to streamline the court process, lower costs and increase productivity. The CJ-1 court has been so successful in those areas it created an enormous case load that was larger than anticipated. In early 2010, Deputy Adam Sandler was assigned to work in the CJ-1 courtroom and quickly determined the existing tracking method was unable to efficiently find and move the vast amount of CJ-1 inmates and update their cases. This was adding significant additional salary costs to the operational budget of CJ-1 due to increased staffing hours. He recognized the need to create a system that would allow the full cost-cutting potential of CJ-1 to be realized.

Deputy Sandler came to the Sheriff's Department with a background in computers and used those skills to create a hugely successful computer program named, "CJ-1 Tracker". He dedicated over 100 hours to building and implementing this program into the Sheriff's Department SDS database. The results were immediate.

On a normal court day there are approximately 25 employees from the Superior Court, District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Sheriff's Department and other government agencies on the payroll dedicated to the operation of CJ-1. Prior to implementation of 'CJ-1 Tracker' it commonly took until eight o'clock in the evening or later to complete paperwork and process the inmates. The computer program has reduced the amount of time spent on those tasks by one to one and a half hours per day, netting a 25 to 37 hour reduction in staff hours per day. The cost savings on salary alone are in the thousands of dollars per week.

Judges and attorneys alike have praised the new tracking system and requested it be installed in other Justice Center courthouses. One judge has suggested the program be implemented state-wide. The 'CJ-1 Tracker' program has greatly increased the efficiency of the CJ-1 courtroom, created huge cost savings, and drawn praise from several agencies. Deputy Sandler's efforts have brought significant positive recognition to the Sheriff's Department.

## **VIDEO PRODUCER MARC de JESUS**

### **MEDAL OF MERIT Created Award Winning Video**

Marc Jonathan Estaris de Jesus' official title is Audio/Visual Specialist, but his skills in all phases of film production are so varied and extensive that he is recognized as the Department's premier Video Producer. Marc has spent many years and much of his own time and money developing expertise in camera-work, direction and editing and has become an expert filmmaker.

Throughout his career Marc has produced exceptionally fine videos for fallen officers and memorial tributes for crime victims. He has produced superior quality training videos, public service announcements and short films of numerous departmental special events. As a member of the only video unit in county government, Marc has become a sought after resource for many agencies and has produced videos for OC Human Resources, the Board of Supervisors, OC Parks and the Social Services Agency.

Marc is currently the Department's Digital Media Consultant and over the past year has contributed his advice and skill to technical video projects from the Cal State Fullerton Police Department, the Sheriff's Advisory Council, the California Department of Transportation and the California Highway Patrol. In 2010, Marc completed the Department's High Definition Production Studio, allowing for state-of-the-art production quality. He has been instrumental in creating a superior and more positive public image for the Sheriff's Department through the filming of the Department's various programs. His video production of the 2010 Medal of Valor Presentation won a 'Telly' Award for creative style and special effects.

Through his creative genius and hard work Marc de Jesus has brought significant status and recognition to the Sheriff's Department from many diverse areas and has proven himself to be a valuable asset to the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

**DEPUTY GINO RODRIGUEZ**  
**RESERVE DEPUTY SCOTT KLAPPENBACK**

**MEDAL OF MERIT**  
**Highway Interdiction Team**

The Orange County Sheriff's Department established the Highway Interdiction Team (HIT) as part of the California Multi-Jurisdictional Methamphetamine Team (Cal-MMET) in an effort to halt the distribution of meth and other drugs through Orange County. HIT was originally staffed with two full-time Deputies, but funding decreases cut the program to one position so the Reserve Bureau was asked to fill the void. Reserve Deputy Sheriff Scott Klappenback joined original HIT member Deputy Gino Rodriguez in 2010 and they formed a team that produced phenomenal results. Last year HIT was responsible for seizing over 1.3 million dollars in drug money and confiscating 34 pounds of methamphetamine, 352 pounds of cocaine, and 256 pounds of marijuana.

HIT concentrates on targeting drug traffickers who go to extraordinary lengths to avoid detection, including the use of hidden compartments involving sophisticated electronics and vehicle alterations. These alterations go unnoticed by the average person and are undetected by most law enforcement officers. Federal agents typically use x-ray technology to locate these types of subtle modifications. HIT members rely on other methods. Deputy Rodriguez uses intuition, training, and incredible observation skills to detect the most minute details in order to establish probable cause and find highly disguised compartments. Reserve Deputy Klappenback and his K-9 partner Roan have been working as a team since 2003. He has combined extensive study in animal behavior with narcotics training to develop formidable skills in drug detection. His dedication and commitment are evidenced by the over 1800 hours he has donated this year.

Together Deputy Rodriguez and Reserve Deputy Klappenback form one of the most effective and successful units in Cal-MMET. They have been commended by the District Attorney's Office and the California Emergency Management Agency, as well as many others. When they participated in a Red Ribbon Week event in Northern California, the Drug Enforcement Administration management personnel involved with the event stated Gino, Scott, and Roan were the highlight of the day.

The extraordinary efforts of HIT members Deputy Gino Rodriguez and Reserve Deputy Scott Klappenback have brought distinction and positive recognition to the Orange County Sheriff's Department through their hard work, dedication to training, community activism, and professional image.



**SERGEANT ROGER GUEVARA  
INVESTIGATOR BILL BEEMAN  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEER III JER KAHALA  
ATF SPECIAL AGENT JIM SANDERS**

**MEDAL OF MERIT  
Operation Stormfront**

On December 16, 2010, members of a multi-agency task force named “Operation Stormfront” conducted the largest takedown of white supremacist gangs in Orange County history. Created in January of 2009, the task force was established to dismantle the criminal activities of the PENI, Aryan Brotherhood and various other white supremacist gangs and hate-groups operating in Orange County. Leading the investigative side of the operation were Sergeant (then Investigator) Roger Guevara, Investigator Bill Beeman, and Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) Special Agent Jim Sanders. Telecommunications Engineer III Jer Kahala engineered and implemented the technical support side of the operation.

The operational goals were to purchase firearms, narcotics and identity-theft profiles through various scenarios, including an undercover storefront where they conducted covert meetings with possible suspects. Sergeant Guevara, Investigator Beeman, and Special Agent Sanders spent countless hours establishing relationships between undercover agents, informants and the targeted criminal groups during which buys were set up or made. Jer Kahala worked tirelessly to set up the state-of-the-art surveillance equipment that was used to document these activities.

The scope of this operation was enormous. Sergeant Guevara and Agent Sanders spent hundreds of hours coordinating the massive resources required by each scenario within the operation, sometimes being called on their days off or in the middle of the night by informants advising them that suspects had guns or narcotics for sale “right now”. They planned and orchestrated each undercover buy and made sure security teams were set up for the safety of all undercover operations. Despite frequent logistical difficulties each operation was conducted in a smooth and safe manner, due to the operational expertise of Sergeant Guevara and Agent Sanders and the technical expertise of Jer Kahala.

Sergeant Guevara also provided exceptional leadership during the planning stages of the operation when he had to communicate with multiple units within multiple organizations, conduct planning meetings, staff briefings and command briefings. His work ethic and strong communication skills are recognized throughout the Southern California law enforcement community. Sergeant Guevara’s well established background and a prior working relationship with Agent Sanders helped OCSD and ATF personnel work in unison throughout the operation, helping to make ‘Operation Stormfront’ such a magnificent success.

All of the undercover operations were recorded and monitored live for the safety of the undercover agents working within the undercover storefront. This would not have been possible without Jer Kahala. He researched and brought in the surveillance equipment used in the store. He and Agent Sanders went above and beyond their normal duties to creatively and surreptitiously install the surveillance cameras in strategic positions to monitor all angles of the undercover operations. Jer Kahala burned the candle at both ends during the duration of the project, working this operation and his regular duties in the Communications Division. He was called upon day and night but was always ready to respond and assist with the operation. His expert knowledge of the covert equipment, coupled with his ability to troubleshoot problems on scene was a welcome and necessary addition to the task force.

Investigator Beeman took the lead in gathering intelligence, coordinating the information with multiple agencies and working with operation team members to keep the investigation moving forward. Throughout the operation, the task force gathered information by listening to over 1000 phone calls and 700 hours of recorded conversations. Investigator Beeman listened to all of these calls and was able to discern the codes and vocabulary used to pass on valuable information among the gang members. Calls to and from certain targeted phone numbers were forwarded directly to Investigator Beeman's phone. As a result, his phone rang at all hours of the day and he monitored each call to determine the investigative or tactical response needed. Through his efforts the task force was able to strategically remove high ranking, active players within these organizations.

Through the hard work and leadership of Sergeant Guevara, Investigator Beeman, Agent Sanders, and Jer Kahala this task force had unprecedented success in putting high ranking white supremacists gang members in jail. As a result of this operation, 54 individuals were arrested or indicted on federal and state charges. Praise was forthcoming from Senator Feinstein's office and the Anti-Defamation League. The skill and dedication of Sergeant Roger Guevara, Investigator Bill Beeman, ATF Special Agent Jim Sanders, and Telecommunications Engineer III Jer Kahala made 'Operation Stormfront' a huge success and serves as a shining example of the finest traditions of law enforcement.

## **SHERIFF'S SPECIAL OFFICER JOSE VILLALPANDO**

### **MEDAL OF COURAGE**

#### **Risked His Life in an Attempt to Save a Suicide Victim**

On the afternoon of Friday, March 12, 2010, an emergency exit door alarm sounded on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor of the Central Justice Center courthouse in Santa Ana indicating an unauthorized person had gained access to the balcony. In the past this has been an indication that someone is contemplating committing suicide by jumping off the balcony. Deputy Joe Croom was working on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor and responded to the alarm. He found a 48-year-old male subject on the balcony threatening to jump and transmitted the information over the radio. Sheriff's Special Officer Jose Villalpando and Deputy Phil Stoughton were among the first to arrive.

While Deputy Croom talked to the subject, SSO Villalpando and Deputy Stoughton moved onto the balcony. The man had climbed over the protective pipe railing near the balcony doorway and was standing near the edge of the balcony, which is surrounded by a short, four-foot wall. As the Deputies and Officer initiated a plan to take the subject into custody, the man climbed onto the wall and crawled over. Without regard for his own safety, SSO Villalpando quickly leapt over the pipe railing, leaned over the wall and grabbed onto the man's hands.

SSO Villalpando held onto the man with all his strength despite the possibility of being pulled over the wall, sustaining cuts and abrasions as he struggled to hold on. The man, however, was determined to take his own life and used his legs to push away from the wall. He broke free from SSO Villalpando's grip and fell to his death just as Deputy Stoughton reached the wall.

Sheriff's Special Officer Villalpando exhibited courage and extraordinary determination while risking his life in a valiant effort to save the suicidal subject.

# **INVESTIGATOR JEFF PUCKETT**

## **MEDAL OF COURAGE**

### **Risked His Safety to Disarm an Intoxicated Subject**

Stanton Investigator Jeff Puckett was working a special assignment on bike patrol at the Orange County Fairgrounds during the 2010 OC Fair. A few minutes after midnight, on Sunday, July 18, 2010, he was approached by a woman who shouted that several men were fighting nearby. Investigator Puckett hurried to the area and saw two men involved in a fight. One man was beating the other man who was lying on the ground face up.

Identifying himself as a Deputy Sheriff, Investigator Puckett quickly pushed the assailant away. At the same time, he noticed a gun in the prone man's waistband. Momentarily free from being attacked, the man on the ground started to draw the gun from his waistband holster, not realizing it was a Deputy who had stopped the beating. With only an instant to make a decision and concerned about possible harm coming to the dense crowd, Investigator Puckett decided to grab the subject's pistol instead of drawing his own weapon and risk an innocent person being shot.

Investigator Puckett dove on top of the man while simultaneously grabbing the gun with both hands, preventing it from being drawn. As both men continued to struggle for control of the weapon, Investigator Puckett repeatedly identified himself and told the man to let go of the gun. Eventually, several other Deputies arrived, deployed a taser, and helped disarm the drunk and confused man.

While putting himself in harm's way to disarm a potentially dangerous subject, Investigator Puckett showed tremendous courage and resolve, protecting the lives of those around him.

# **INVESTIGATOR STEVE SWIDERSKI**

## **DISTINGUISHED DEPUTY MEDAL Posthumously Awarded Outstanding Career Recognition**

Investigator Steve Swiderski began his career in law enforcement when he was still a teenager. He enlisted in the United States Air Force at age 18, became a member of the Military Police and developed a passion for training and tactics that would be one of the defining characteristics of his life.

Steve joined the Orange County Sheriff's Department in 1986 and was assigned to the Central Men's Jail for his first assignment. In November of 1987, he was selected to help open the Intake/Release Center, which began operation in January of 1988. He immediately developed a reputation as a dedicated professional, attending extra training classes and preparing himself to join the OCSD SWAT team. Steve transferred to South Operations in 1993 and was one of the first Deputies to transfer into the city of San Clemente after their police department was merged into the Sheriff's Department. Steve excelled in his job as a patrolman. He became a Field Training Officer (FTO) and was frequently called upon to serve as an acting-Sergeant. He was recognized by his San Clemente supervisors and peers for his judgment and officer safety.

In 1999, Steve was selected to become a Tactical Officer at the Sheriff's Basic Academy. He mastered the role and exemplified what it meant to be a training officer at one of the finest law enforcement academies in the country. Steve maintained exceptional physical fitness and a flawless professional image while serving as an example to both recruits and his fellow staff members. His excellent communication skills helped Steve develop a strong rapport with other police training divisions throughout the region, enhancing the reputation of the Academy and the Orange County Sheriff's Department as a whole.

Steve left the Academy in 2002, when he was selected to the Regional Narcotics Suppression Program (RNSP). Steve quickly familiarized himself with this unique assignment and became a valuable asset. Steve was such a productive and valued member, he remained with RNSP after his promotion to Investigator in 2004. Steve's ability to apply his tactical expertise during time-sensitive and dynamic operations was vital to the successful apprehension of high level narcotic traffickers as well as the seizure of large quantities of narcotics and drug currency. In fact, he was so proficient in all areas of these complex and dangerous investigations Steve was tasked with training an entire new surveillance team on techniques, protocols, tactics and practices. As a result of Steve's dedicated effort and sound investigative skills he was personally involved in the following seizures: 450 kilograms of Cocaine; 160 pounds of Methamphetamine; 3,183 pounds of Pseudoephedrine tablets; 15,163 pounds of Marijuana; 147,000 Ecstasy tablets; two pounds of Heroin; 86 arrests; 40 vehicles; 15 assorted handguns and rifles; and over fifteen million dollars in U.S. Currency.

Steve's strong communication skills were invaluable when interacting with officials from federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. His friendly demeanor and deep understanding of narcotics investigations inspired a spirit of cooperation among the various agencies and task forces in the state.

Steve received praise from local agencies throughout California and Arizona, as well as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). In 2008, the FBI was investigating a former FBI agent and an accomplice who were planning to travel to Orange County in order to commit a take-over robbery at a purported "stash house" in Fountain Valley. The FBI requested assistance from RNSP and Steve was the lead contact. Steve organized all surveillance and formed tactical teams and communication plans. The around-the-clock operation resulted in the arrest of the suspects, who were armed with assault rifles and tactical vests to carry out the crime. Steve received official recognition from the Los Angeles Office of the FBI for his leadership and personal contributions.

In 2009, Steve was transferred to the Homicide Detail where he joined a team of seasoned investigators. In Homicide the cases are sensitive, complex and often labor intensive. With Steve's experience and work ethic, he was the clear choice for this position. Steve's charisma, sense of humor and that ever-present tailored appearance added a much needed touch of lightheartedness in often stressful and tense situations. Steve's determination, his attention to detail and unwavering commitment proved to be key factors to his success in the Homicide Detail. A fine example of Steve's exemplary investigative skills involved a gang-related homicide in which Steve was the case agent. Despite few leads and minimal witness cooperation, Steve was successful in retracing the events leading up to and immediately following the homicide. He took extraordinary investigative steps including the use of a state wire-tap. As a result of Steve's extra efforts, four individuals were arrested in connection with the homicide.

In addition to his primary assignments, Steve held numerous ancillary positions and his impact in these roles was equally impressive. In 1994, Steve became a member of the SWAT team. Steve's strengths while serving on this team were his outstanding physical conditioning, expertise in tactics, and overall leadership. Steve became a Team Leader on this elite squad in 1998 and was responsible for providing instruction and advanced tactical training to twelve SWAT operators. His ability to instruct tactical operations was far reaching, touching both the new recruit and the seasoned veteran. For the past decade, Steve was a regular instructor at the Basic Academy and the Advanced Officers Training schools.

Over the years Steve received dozens of commendations and letters of appreciation for outstanding performance. He was a Gold Star Award recipient and received commendations from the FBI, Department of Justice, Department of the Treasury and several local police departments. Steve was praised for his work with the Explorers' Program as well as the Community Service Programs (CSP) for his volunteer work during a youth summer camp. In addition, Steve managed to find time to participate as part of the Lawmen Football team and the 'Baker to Vegas' relay team.

Throughout his career, Investigator Steve Swiderski distinguished himself as an outstanding member of the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the entire law enforcement community. His commitment to instruct his fellow officers in tactics, officer safety, investigations and SWAT operations was exceptionally commendable. In every position he held, Steve displayed loyalty, passion, professionalism, and leadership. Steve is recognized posthumously as a worthy recipient of this distinguished award.