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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **DA STEELE HONORS EIGHT CIVILIANS AND 29 LAW ENFORCEMENT MEMBERS WITH COMMENDATIONS**

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (May 12, 2021) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele honored eight civilians and 29 law enforcement members with commendations for their extraordinary efforts, exemplary work and heroism in protecting and serving the residents of Montgomery County. Awardees were honored at a ceremony today at the Montgomery County Fire Academy.

“Montgomery County is a wonderful place to live and work for many reasons including the fact that residents are willing to step up to help law enforcement do their job of keeping us all safe and making sure criminals are apprehended and prosecuted. We also have some of the finest law enforcement officers and officials who work every day at a high level of professionalism,” said DA Steele. “These honorees are among the best. I’m proud to honor each of these civilians and law enforcement members for their actions.”

Honorees and a brief description of their exceptional efforts are:

#### **CIVILIAN COMMENDATIONS:**

**Jennifer Schauble (Gulph Mills, Pa.)**

**Marie Pregler (Horsham, Pa.)**

**Paula Singer (Ardmore, Pa.)**

For their commitment to Montgomery County youths and exceptional service as a community member of the Youth Aid Panel Program.

**Carnell Kemp (Abington Township Refuse Department)**

**Michael Mayer (Abington Township Refuse Department)**

**Juan Vasquez (Trenton, N.J.)**

For their assistance with the apprehension of the defendant and providing crucial testimony in the successful prosecution of Gilbert Newton III for the First-Degree Murder of his former girlfriend.

#### **CIVILIAN AND LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMENDATIONS:**

**Paul Leonard, Retired Upper Dublin Township Manager**

**Chief Andy Rathfon, Fort Washington Fire Company**

**Deputy Chief Daniel Wade, Upper Dublin Township Police Department**  
**Lt. Darren S. Nyce, Upper Dublin Township Police Department**

For outstanding initial response, emergency management and ongoing recovery related to Hurricane Ida and a corresponding tornado that struck Upper Dublin Township.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMENDATIONS:**

**Det. Phillip Geliebter, Abington Township Police Department**

For an excellent investigation of a rape by a family member and the subsequent extradition of the defendant from Europe, who was then tried and found guilty.

**Sgt. Ryan Duntzee, Abington Township Police Department**

**Det. Holly Halota, Lower Moreland Township Police Department**

For leading the extensive investigation into a series of 10 church burglaries, a residential burglary and five stolen vehicles and the successful apprehension of the two defendants.

**Lt. Rebecca Mersky, Springfield Township Police Department**

**Sgt. Nelson Whitney III, Springfield Township Police Department**

**Ofc. Edward Gross, Springfield Township Police Department**

**Ofc. Ralph Burrows, Springfield Township Police Department**

**Ofc. Thomas Sweeney, Springfield Township Police Department**

**Det. Robert Baiada, Springfield Township Police Department**

**Det. Stephen Craig, Springfield Township Police Department**

For the excellent response to an armed robbery in progress, involving a stolen firearm, and the subsequent apprehension of the actors.

**Det. Joel Greco, Lansdale Borough Police Department**

For the outstanding investigation of an initial filming incident at a school that led to the discovery of thousands of images of child pornography as well as evidence of the defendant sexually assaulting a 6-year-old girl to produce his own child pornography.

**AUSA Christopher Parisi, U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania**

For the successful federal prosecution of significant drug trafficker David Cooper, which resulted in conviction and a sentence of 32 years in federal prison.

**Senior Supervisory Intelligence Analyst Steve Tori, Mid-Atlantic Great Lakes Organized Crime Law Enforcement Network (MAGLOCLLEN)**

For providing high-quality and detailed key exhibits for use in First-Degree Murder trials, especially during the crush of murder trials in 2021–2022.

**Cpl. Joseph Harmon, Pennsylvania State Police (Troop K, Skippack Barracks)**

**Tpr. Christopher J. Abbott, Pennsylvania State Police (Troop K, Skippack Barracks)**

**Tpr. Seth G. Betancourt, Pennsylvania State Police (Troop K, Skippack Barracks)**

**Tpr. Seth A. Heffner, Pennsylvania State Police (Troop K, Skippack Barracks)**

**Tpr. Jason K. Henley, Pennsylvania State Police (Troop K, Skippack Barracks)**

**Tpr. Jeffrey A. Simmons, Pennsylvania State Police (Troop K, Skippack Barracks)**

Troop K Midnight Squad performed exemplarily well during 2021, making numerous significant arrests including for DUIs, drug trafficking and wanted individuals, as well as seizing 29 illegal firearms and rescuing a young victim of human trafficking.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMENDATION FOR HEROISM**

**Sgt. Matthew L. Kuhnert, Lower Providence Township Police Department**

**Cpl. Robert Heim, Lower Providence Township Police Department**

**Ofc. Reginald Nealy, Lower Providence Township Police Department**

**Ofc. Matthew M. Barber, Lower Providence Township Police Department**

**Cpl. Brian D. Bishop, West Norriton Township Police Department**

**Ofc. John J. Barnshaw, Collegeville Borough Police Department**

**Ofc. William Murphy, Bridgeport Borough Police Department**

**Code Enforcement Officer Jordan McCourry, Lower Providence Township**

For exceptional bravery and performance during a standoff that began as a code enforcement incident with a hoarding resident but morphed into a standoff when the resident brandished a firearm, threatened police and ultimately detonated explosives, setting fire to his own and other's homes.

Approved for release:  
Kevin R. Steele