



# Sharen Wilson Criminal District Attorney



## For Immediate Release

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## Innovative TCCDA programs gain awards

(Fort Worth, TX) – Jamauri Robinson has a new goal in life – becoming a police officer.

That's because of a class called Prosecutors in High School that he took during his senior year at Eastern Hills High School that recently ended. The goal of the program, launched virtually in 2020 in the middle of the pandemic, is to build trust with students, teach about criminal justice and let students know about future job opportunities.

"The sessions taught me about my rights as a citizen, the role of the District Attorney's office and how they collect and present evidence during a trial. I also learned about the different careers I could pursue in law enforcement," he said. "As a result of attending the webinar series, I decided that I want to become a police officer and judge."

Robinson will attend Navarro Junior College this fall and work toward an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice. He plans to join the police academy and said he eventually wants to earn a law degree.

The program, part of the government class curriculum in the 2020-21, is a partnership between the Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney's Office and the Fort Worth Independent School District. Hundreds of students at Dunbar, Polytechnic, Diamond Hill-Jarvis, O.D. Wyatt, Eastern Hills and Western Hills high schools participated in the class.

Attorneys and staff taught about topics ranging from First Amendment Rights to Digital Forensics. The program will expand to other school districts in the 2021-22 school year.

This program not only changed the direction of Robinson's life. It also won a national award.

This program, and two others at the CDA's Office, received Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo). These awards recognize innovative county government programs. The awards are for:

- **Prosecutors in High School**, a virtual class that teaches students about the criminal justice system.
- **Prosecuting adult sexual assaults** by creating a better path to prosecution that begins with how police officers file cases and deal with victims. This approach included creating a specialized team of lawyers, investigators and staff to address and prosecute these cases.

A new approach, the vertical prosecution of sexual assaults, was adopted. Law enforcement officers were retrained in handling trauma cases and told to call our prosecutors any time. There has been a significant improvement in how cases are filed and how victims feel about the criminal justice process.

- **A new Intimate Partner Violence intake process** that streamlines the evaluation of misdemeanor domestic violence cases and improves the victim outreach process. The goal is to enhance the value of the cases as they are filed by focusing on evidence collection and witness and victim contact. It is key to have almost immediate contact with the complainant or victim in the case.

A CDA team evaluated more than 2,000 cases. About 18% of those cases were upgraded to felonies and enhanced or indicted. Of all the cases, about 75% of the victims were contacted in the first week of the case being filed. Several cases were returned for more investigation or rejected.

"I am very proud of the people in my office who created and brought to life these programs," CDA Sharen Wilson said. "These programs make a difference in our community."

The three awards, all in the category of Criminal Justice and Public Safety, were presented July 11 at a luncheon during NACo's Annual Conference and Exposition in Prince George's County, MD. Founded in 1935, NACo now represents nearly 40,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees.

"Over the past year, county officials and frontline employees have demonstrated bold, inspirational leadership," NACo President Gary Moore said. "This year's Achievement Award winning programs illustrate the innovative ways counties build healthy, safe and vibrant communities across America."

