



Commonwealth of Kentucky Personnel Cabinet

Matthew G. Bevin, Governor

Thomas B. Stephens, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jodi Whitaker

502-234-4805

Jodi.Whitaker@ky.gov

2018 Governor's Ambassador Awards presented

Public employees honored as part of Public Service Recognition Week

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 27, 2018) - Some of Kentucky's most worthy public employees were honored today with the presentation of the eighth Governor's Ambassador Awards.

Personnel Cabinet Secretary Thomas B. Stephens and Justice Cabinet Secretary John C. Tilley commemorated Public Service Recognition Week by recognizing the employees for exceptional service in the workplace and in their communities.

"Focused and effective government is essential to the success of our Commonwealth, and I applaud all of the award winners and nominees for their commitment to ensuring our public sector is the best it can be," said Secretary Tilley, who provided the keynote address. "Public service is a calling, and we are blessed to have so many who feel called to strive for a better Kentucky."

Created in 2008, the Governor's Ambassador Awards was established to highlight stories of employees who have made a positive impact on others. Nominations for the awards are accepted throughout the year in six categories: customer service, courage, leadership, professional achievement, teamwork, or community service and volunteerism. The 2018 awards generated nominations involving more than 140 employees.

"Among the more than 30,000 who work on state government's behalf, we have incredible, steadfast examples of commitment, compassion, service,

accountability, and diverse leadership," Secretary Stephens said. "This is an opportunity to showcase those examples, express our appreciation, and tell the truly amazing stories of Kentucky's ambassadors."

A selection committee reviews the submissions and three finalists are chosen in each category. Governor Bevin, who proclaimed April 23-27 Kentucky Public Service Recognition Week, selects the winners in each category. All names are removed from the submissions to ensure fairness and anonymity.

Award recipients are honored by having a personalized engraved brick placed along Ambassador Avenue outside the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History.

The 2018 award recipients include:

Community Service and Volunteerism

Derek Thomas, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

Derek Thomas' life has been dedicated to public service, and teaching others the importance of community service and volunteerism. He began public service as a Bosun's Mate on the USS Robert E Fulton and USS Sunbird. Returning home after eight years of service, he now works as a highway technician with the Transportation Cabinet, and he and his wife Cindy have raised an exceptional family of eight boys. The Thomas family holds the world record for the most Eagle Scouts in a single family (all eight boys). Eighteen other boys achieved Eagle Rank during Derek's 20 years as Assistant Scoutmaster and Eagle Coordinator of BSA Troop 219.

Derek served 4 years as a soccer coach, 6 years with Open Door Food Ministry, 8 years with Reaching Out for Kids, and 10 years with Master Provisions Clothing Ministry. Derek has taught each of the young men he mentored that service to others is what separates the men from the boys!

Last year, Derek and his highway crew helped a family of six from Canada who were involved in a crash on I-275. Derek and his wife opened up their home, gave the family a place to stay for several days while they sorted things out, offered home cooked meals, and even invited the family to stay at their home while they left for a previously planned vacation. Leah Alspach wrote, "What could have been such a negative experience for our family ended up being a huge blessing thanks

to the overwhelming kindness, care and leadership of Derek and his family and colleagues.”

Derek is an example of how, often unnoticed and despite life’s challenges, many public employees positively impact their communities well beyond their normal job duties.

Courage

Sandra Brock and Melissa Yeagle, Cabinet for Health & Family Services

On Monday morning, February 19, 2018, Sandra Brock and Melissa Yeagle performed CPR and other life-saving measures to save the life of a co-worker in the CHFS Ombudsman’s Office. Had they not jumped into action, the employee would not have made it. Sandra and Missy do a phenomenal job in their rolls at CHFS, but this act of heroism was above and beyond, proving what those of us who work with them already knew – Sandra and Missy genuinely care about those they assist through the ombudsman’s office, and their fellow co-workers.

Customer Service

Michael S. Pendley, Department of Juvenile Justice

Mike Pendley truly cares about the juveniles that come through the Butler County District Court, and becomes invested in their lives. He knows their parents, siblings, family history, medical history, and probably what they have for dinner! He uses tough love. He is empathetic with parents but at the same time, firm and professional in his resolve. His professional demeanor and sound judgment have earned the respect of all parties involved - the judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, parents and even the juveniles themselves. Many former juveniles who have come through the Butler County District Juvenile Court System, now adults, attribute their association with Mike Pendley as a life-saving experience. In short, Mike Pendley cares and makes a difference in the lives of the juveniles he works with every day.

Leadership

Shelley Perdue, Administrative Office of the Courts

Shelley Perdue began her career as a Court Designated Worker with the Administrative Office of the Courts in 1987, and has loyally served state government, working in juvenile justice matters on the local and statewide levels.

She was promoted to Field Supervisor in 2004, and named Statewide Operations Supervisor in 2013, where she serves on the management team.

She has been a mentor to her employees and co-workers and has helped mold the Court Designated Worker program during the past 30 years.

During recent juvenile justice reform efforts, Ms. Perdue was vital in the implementation, quality improvement and oversight of the changes to the pre-court process for youth.

Ms. Perdue continuously goes above and beyond what is required of her while maintaining a high level of professionalism. She has mastered the department's case management system and has continued to enhance that product with her expertise, simplifying the day-to-day operations for frontline staff. She has gained a reputation among her peers and fellow leaders as a dedicated, loyal, innovative professional. She provides superior leadership and a tireless work ethic to improve outcomes for youth across the Commonwealth.

Professional Achievement

James West, Cabinet for Health & Family Services

James West has worked in the Payables Accounting Branch at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services for 19 years. He constantly finds more effective and innovative ways to improve accounting operations. He has most likely saved the cabinet millions of dollars in his years of service, finding savings in phone, electric and water bills. He helped save \$75,000 alone just by adjusting payment methods to county attorneys. He talks to vendors and the Commonwealth Office of Technology and recommends efficiencies daily. His work ethic and integrity are exceptional. He cares about the cabinet, and makes everyone around him better. James is a true servant of the Commonwealth.

Teamwork

The Kentucky Division of Emergency Management (including Richard Bobo, Jerry Rains, and Gary Fancher)

This team's dedication to building a more resilient Commonwealth has resulted in establishing two Regional Planning Groups and a collaborative group of over 200 responders and multiple agencies across 24 counties, working together to achieve the goals of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery in every jurisdiction. They are continuing their pursuit of excellence by sharing their

successes with all counties and helping to establish these groups across the Commonwealth.

Through their leadership, these groups have identified their need for more precision in the local emergency operations plans, more application within local exercises, identifying the necessary and specific trainings for responders and facilities, and breaking boundaries between agencies to work together for the good of the citizens.

This group has been recognized by Louisiana State University's National Center for Biomedical Research and Training, and by the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service as being a national leader.

For additional information about the Governor's Ambassador Award Program, visit the Personnel Cabinet's website at personnel.ky.gov.

###