



NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Monroe B. Hudson, Jr.

Presented by Jason P. Miller, Chief of Communications and Community Relations

245 McKee Road | Dover, DE 19904 | Office: 302.857.5232 | jason.miller@delaware.gov

Department of Correction recognizes employees with annual awards for outstanding service

Dover, DE – During a ceremony this morning at the Department of Correction Administration Building DOC leadership presented nine officers and staff members with annual departmental awards for providing service above and beyond the call of duty during 2022. DOC annual recognition awards are traditionally presented during *National Correctional Officers and Employees Week*, which takes place this year from May 7 – 13. Watch the [recorded livestream of today's awards ceremony by clicking HERE](#).

“Every Day the men and women of the Delaware Department of Correction make a positive difference in the lives of others and today we have the honor and privilege to recognize exceptional individuals within our DOC family for their uncommon commitment to our very important mission of public safety and offender rehabilitation,” **said Commissioner Monroe B. Hudson Jr.** “Our annual employee award recipients demonstrate incredible acts of valor, bravery, heroism, acts of lifesaving, teamwork, professionalism, compassion, loyalty, and extreme acts of dedication to our DOC core values and to the communities we serve. Congratulations and job well done!”

The following officers and staff members have been recognized with Annual Departmental Awards for 2022:



Correctional Officer of the Year: Staff Sergeant Christa Russell, Community Corrections Treatment Center

Since the Community Corrections Treatment Center (CCTC) opened its doors in December, 2020 SSgt Russell has played an integral role in the daily operations of the facility, ensuring compliance with policies and procedures by staff and enforcing rules and regulations with offenders. She maintains an exceptional relationship with the Road2Recovery (R2R) Substance Abuse Treatment Program staff, sustaining a collaborative working relationship between security staff and treatment providers. SSgt Russell has embraced additional responsibilities, including Community Service Project Supervisor, overseeing four Officers who manage offenders on community work assignments. Through this role she has fostered positive relationships with community organizations and the public in New Castle and Kent Counties. In addition, SSgt Russell is working to establish a full-service recycling program at CCTC. SSgt Russell has been a member of Kent County Community Corrections for more than 20 years and time and time again has demonstrated her commitment to her fellow staff and the DOC mission of public safety and offender rehabilitation.



Probation Officer of the Year: Senior Probation Officer Dennis Desilet, Dover Probation and Parole District Office

Senior Probation Officer (SPO) Desilet exemplifies Probation and Parole's mission to protect the public while supporting probationers' reentry success. He demonstrates the keen ability to assist mental health probationers in navigating through crises. He constructively engages with military veterans on community supervision and further assists veterans on the Delaware Veteran's Response Team at community events and volunteers as a role player during Crisis Interventions Team and Veterans

Response Team trainings. Beyond his duties as a probation case manager, SPO Desilet supports the entire Probation and Parole team as a certified trainer for Officer Wellness and Resiliency. [He founded and coordinates Operation ZiPP Up, P&P's annual cold weather clothing drive that over 15 years has collected nearly 7,000 winter weather clothing items for distribution to Delawareans in need.](#) He is a member of the Delaware FOP Lodge 10 Incident Response and Wellness Committee. SPO Desilet has coordinated internship opportunities for students from the community who are enrolled in law enforcement programs and actively promotes positive connections between the Department of Correction and the community at National Night Out events, the Delaware State Fair, Crime Stoppers, Veteran's Administration, Town of Whitehall Vet Fest, Milford Halloween Parade, and more. He also serves in a leadership role on the Delaware Law Enforcement Memorial Committee. SPO Desilet exemplifies outstanding performance in serving the DOC, probationers, and the community through service above and beyond the call of duty.



Team of the Year: Sergeant Randy Twilley, Corporals Corey Keen and Frank Clendening, and former DOC Corporal Hunter Simpson (now serving as an Officer with the Milford Police Department), Sussex Correctional Institution

In March, 2022 while on duty at Sussex Correctional Institution these Officers responded to an emergency medical alert, finding an inmate unconscious and without a pulse. While awaiting the arrival of paramedics, these Officers assisted facility medical staff by taking over CPR chest compressions. Without hesitation the four Officers rotated through sets of CPR until Emergency Medical Services arrived on scene. Thanks to the quick and selfless actions of these Officers the inmate's life was saved that day.



Employee of the Year: DOC Controller Kimberly Cooper

In her position Kimberly is responsible for the Central Business Office which administers payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable, fleet management, and all DOC contracts. She is the focal point for preparing and managing DOC's \$376 million operating budget and has successfully steered the Department through the historic fiscal challenges of the COVID pandemic and unprecedented inflationary pressures while not only staying on budget but also saving funds to acquire needed goods and services not initially projected for. In addition to her significant ongoing responsibilities Kimberly also serves as the lead for several new initiatives, including the Cadet Lodging Program, DOC implementation of the State Banking Project, HB360 Gas Rebate Program, and DOC expenditures under the federal CARES Act and American Rescue Plan. Kimberly's knowledge, commitment and leadership have proven vital to the safety and security of our officers and staff and facility operations across Delaware's correctional system!



Commissioner's Award for Heroism: Sergeant Timothy McCrary and Correctional Officer Jeffery Hansen, James T. Vaughn Correctional Center

In August, 2022 Sgt. McCrary and Officer Hansen were assigned as partners in a maximum-security area of James T. Vaughn Correctional Center that houses our state's highest risk inmate population. While conducting a routine check of an inmate common area, an offender standing nearby suddenly turned toward Officer Hansen and launched an unprovoked attack utilizing a concealed improvised weapon. Officer Hansen was struck in the head more than a half dozen times. Sgt. McCrary immediately rushed to the aid of his injured partner, drawing the attacking inmate away. The inmate turned and struck out at Sgt. McCrary, hitting and punching him in the head and torso. Meanwhile, the injured Officer Hansen regained composure and came to the aid of Sgt. McCrary. Working together, Sgt. McCrary and Officer Hansen drew on their correctional training to secure the inmate even as he actively resisted. After

being relieved by other responding Officers, Sgt. McCrary and Officer Hansen were transported via ambulance to an area hospital where Officer Hansen required in-patient care. Sergeant McCrary and Officer Hansen worked effectively in the face of sudden, unprovoked, life-threatening violence to accomplish their public safety mission. Both Officers individually demonstrated heroic bravery, self-sacrifice and extraordinary presence of mind while enduring physical attack to come to the aid of his fellow Officer and end the threat without further escalation or injury. In a correctional environment that is built around predictability and routine their swiftness of actions speak not only to their character and commitment to DOC's core values but also illustrates their professionalism, skill, and ability to perform at the highest level.

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