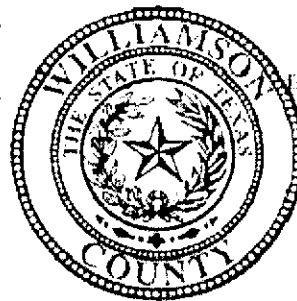


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December 1, 2014

It is my honor and privilege to nominate Chief Investigator Melissa Hightower for the distinguished Chuck Dennis Award. This nomination is not made with haste or on a whim. The Chuck Dennis Award is to recognize Investigators who exemplify commitment to the service of the law enforcement community, serving others, while serving their office and remaining active with TDCAA. These attributes are embodied within Melissa Hightower's actions and work ethic.

Melissa obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychobiology and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from Centre College of Kentucky. She has been a certified peace officer since 1995 serving two years with the Bexar County District Attorney's Office and sixteen years with the Williamson County Attorney's Office. I have personally witnessed her commitment to her profession and her loyalty to her office since 2001. Melissa never backs down from a challenge and is always prepared. She does not seek responsibility because it will bring her recognition. She accepts responsibility because there is a need that must be met.

Melissa trains for numerous policy academies (preparing our next generation of officers), for the twenty-eight reporting policy agencies within our county for Texas Justice Court Judges Association for Emergency Services, Texas Department of Transportation, TDCAA, NDAA, and for local community outreach programs. Melissa has contributed to both the 2003 and 2006 editions of the TDCAA Investigator Desk Reference Manual and previously served as Chairperson of the TDCAA Investigator Board of Directors in 2006 and 2012.

Melissa has been asked to train on topics such as digital evidence, DWI enforcement, report writing, sovereign citizen extremists, courtroom testimony, and domestic violence. These are just a few of the topics that she teaches to others in which I consider her to be an expert.

Melissa has been recognized within our county as an advocate for victims of crimes at our National Crime Victims' Rights Week ceremonies, and her name resides on the Victim Advocates Wall of Fame in our courthouse. Melissa also received the 2006 Oscar Sherrell Award for service to TDCAA.

Our office could not function without her. Melissa is the glue that holds our office together and that brings our law enforcement together. Melissa is in charge of our investigators and our evidence division. She stays informed on everything that is happening regarding law enforcement and has recently been able to strengthen our overall courthouse security by helping the county obtain grant

funding to bring our camera systems into the digital age. Melissa is the consummate "team" player and has a network of friends within her profession.


Melissa also serves on the Sovereign Citizen working group sponsored by the Joint Terrorism Task Force. She has never uttered the words "that is not my job" or "that is not my problem." If someone in our office or our law enforcement community has a problem and they reach out for help – then it becomes Melissa's problem to fix (and she usually does just that).

I cannot express to you the extreme admiration and respect that I have for my Chief Investigator. She works tirelessly to improve our world. Melissa arrives at work at least an hour early if not more and stays late every day. She always has "just one more thing" to accomplish before she can call it a day. I consider her a friend, an expert, a professional, a compassionate servant to our citizens and the quintessential "Investigator" that every office must have in order to be successful. I may not understand where she gets the energy to stay as active as she does on behalf of my office, our law enforcement community, the victims of crimes, and all those that reach out to her for help, but I have definitely witnessed how she uses that energy.

If you know Melissa Hightower, you will know that I speak the truth above. It is easy to overlook someone who excels; it is usually problems that stick in our memories and not the solutions. That is why I confidently nominate my friend and Chief Investigator, Melissa Hightower, for the Chuck Dennis Award.

Thank you for your time and consideration of someone I hold in the highest regards both personally and professionally.

Respectfully submitted.



Dee Hobbs
County Attorney
Williamson County, Texas