



OPOA ANNUAL AWARDS CRITERIA

The Oregon Peace Officers Association presents awards to law enforcement personnel who have performed exemplary deeds or services on behalf of their communities during the previous year. Anyone can nominate a potential recipient for an award in any of the listed categories. No one involved in an incident can nominate another officer or themselves for that incident. The nominations should come from an uninvolved criminal justice professional that has specific knowledge of the incident. Nominations will be reviewed by a committee made up of members of the Oregon Peace Officers Executive Board. Awards are presented to the recipients at the OPOA Annual Awards Banquet held each year in conjunction with the OPOA Annual Training Conference.

Awards may be presented in any of the categories listed below. The following criteria applies to all award categories:

Awards are open to any working police officer, telecommunicator, reserve, corrections officer or others employed by a law enforcement agency. The incident must have occurred in Oregon. The recipient need not be a member of OPOA. On-duty as well as off-duty incidents will be considered.

OPOA specifically solicits awards nominations from Chiefs, Sheriffs, or other agency department heads. Nominations that are opposed by the nominated officer's (or other intended recipient's) agency will not be considered. Specific actions of each nominee must be included in any nomination to be considered. Nominations must include the following minimum information:

1. The candidates name, rank, current assignment, and years of service in Oregon.
2. A description of the incident in which the applicant was involved or other justification indicating why the award should be given.
3. The nomination may recommend a specific award, but the Awards Committee reserves the right to select the most appropriate award or to decline the nomination if, in the committee's judgment, the criteria is not met.
4. Nominations must include supporting documentation such as police reports, audio or videotapes, internal memoranda, letters from outside sources or news accounts. All submissions become the property of OPOA.

Once the Awards Committee reviews the nominations, recommendations will be forwarded to the OPOA Executive Board who will give final approval to all awards.

The following specific criteria apply to each Award Category:

L. DALE MORRIS AWARD

This award was first awarded in 1981 and is given periodically to members of our profession who have made extraordinary contributions to law enforcement and the Oregon Peace Officers Association throughout their career. The person that is the recipient of this award should exemplify the character and dedication of L. Dale Morris. This is without a doubt the most prestigious award to be given to a law enforcement officer in Oregon.

Perhaps the best descriptions of Dale are found in the Summer 1980 issue of The Oregon Peace Officer. In that issue, Jerry Instenes made the following observations: "...Dale Morris worked harder than

seemed possible for any one man...For all who knew him, Dale left us with a better understanding of the words honesty, fairness, compassion, kindness, and love."

In that same issue, former Police Chief Zane Wilson also made some observations of Dale. Two that stand out were his loyalty and trust. Zane stated, "His was a loyalty that told you what he thought, told you when he disagreed. And he did what he said he would do. He produced results, never left you hanging."

In summary, the words used to describe Dale by his former Chief seem to be very appropriate. They are, "Most of us strive to make a small mark. We hope that someone in the future will note that we passed by. Dale Morris cut his mark statewide. In one-way or another, Dale affected the career of every officer in Oregon. He left his mark on training programs, on firearms procedures, in the professional organizations, and with the Board of Police Standards and Training. His mark can be defined in three words: DO IT RIGHT."

MEDAL OF HONOR

The Medal of Honor may be awarded to individuals who, while serving in an official capacity with their law enforcement agency, distinguish themselves conspicuously by the performance of a heroic act in excess of normal demands of police service, and where the person was fully aware of an imminent threat to his or her personal safety.

It is the committee's intent that very few of these awards should be given out, and then only for extremely hazardous situations that are truly noteworthy. These situations should relate to criminal law violations involving weapons, and lives saved. The recipient does not have to have been injured. The following specifics apply:

- A. The situation was extremely hazardous.
- B. A strong possibility existed at the time the person acted that he or she could have suffered serious injury or death.
- C. The act was not foolhardy.
- D. The person did not use poor judgment, thus creating the necessity for their act.

MEDAL OF VALOR

The Medal of Valor may be awarded to individuals who, while serving in an official capacity with their law enforcement agency, distinguish themselves by reacting to a situation in a positive and professional manner, and thereby reduce the risk of loss of life or injury to citizens.

The committee also did not intend for this award to be given out in great numbers. It should involve incidents of exceptional bravery, but falling below the requirements of the Medal of Honor. It may involve incidents where the officer just did the job that had to be done, but did it in an extremely professional manner. These situations should generally involve criminal law violations, and lives saved, but the recipient does not need to have been injured.

- A. The situation demanded immediate action.
- B. The possibility of injury or death to citizens was present.
- C. The act was not foolhardy.
- D. The person did not use poor judgment, thus creating the necessity for his or her acts.

PURPLE HEART AWARD

The Purple Heart may be awarded to an individual who is injured or killed while serving in an official capacity with their law enforcement agency. The injury sustained must have been as a result of a life-threatening situation or permanent injuries received as a result of the action, and not have been caused by carelessness on the part of the individual.

- A. The injury was sustained while serving in official capacity.
- B. The injury constituted serious physical injury as defined by statute.
- C. Injury was inflicted by means of dangerous or deadly weapon.
- D. The act was not foolhardy.
- E. The person did not use poor judgment, thus resulting in the injury.
- F. In the event of a line of duty death, the Purple Heart will be awarded Posthumously.

LIFE SAVING AWARD

The Lifesaving Award may be awarded to individuals who, while serving in an official capacity with their law enforcement agency, directly perform an active, distinct and successful lifesaving procedure saving the life of another human being in the midst of unusual actions above and beyond their normal job expectations, and:

- A. The recipient was aware of the seriousness of the situation.
- B. The act was purposefully done.
- C. Events leading to the act were not carelessly caused by the recipient, thereby necessitating the act.
- D. There must have been a strong possibility the person would have died if the action had not been taken.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The Distinguished Service Award is given to any Criminal Justice Employee for exceptional accomplishments. This individual has distinguished himself or herself while performing highly creditable or unusual actions. Factors for consideration for this award are:

- A. The recipient made a significant and major contribution to the development of programs, policies or procedures, which had a substantial and positive impact to their department, community, or profession.
- B. The recipient successfully conducted a long-term investigation or solved a neighborhood problem that had a tremendous impact on the community. (During the course of a long-term assignment their performance must be of an exceptional manner.)
- C. The recipient took an extraordinary action while assisting the community.

PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

The Public Service Award may be awarded to individuals who distinguish themselves and bring credit to the law enforcement profession by highly credible and unusual acts in the performance of police duties. Such acts shall significantly rise above the expected norms of police or community service.

This award could be given to someone killed in the line of duty who does not qualify for other OPOA awards. It could also be awarded to someone who put forth an innovative idea that significantly improved police practices and/or service to the public.

- A. The recipient used proper judgment and discretion and did not precipitate the necessity for the act.
- B. The act was not foolhardy.
- C. The recipient made a significant and lasting contribution to the law enforcement profession.

UNIT CITATION AWARD

The Unit Citation Award may be awarded to an established group that distinguishes themselves and brings credit to the law enforcement profession by highly credible and unusual acts in the performance of police duties. Such acts shall significantly rise above the expected norms of police or community service.

- A. The recipient used proper judgment and discretion and did not precipitate the necessity for the act
- B. The act was not foolhardy.
- C. The recipient made a significant and lasting contribution to the law enforcement profession.

DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Effective law enforcement can only be accomplished with the support and cooperation of citizens throughout the state. The OPOA seeks to further the acceptance of this shared responsibility through recognition of one citizen each year whose actions have made an exceptional contribution in one or more of the following areas: the apprehension of criminals, the prevention of crime, the safety of the public or improvement of the relationship between law enforcement and citizens.

The Distinguished Citizen of the Year Award may only be awarded to one individual each year and criminal justice/public safety personnel are excluded from consideration. The award may only be given to a citizen who has performed highly creditable or unusual actions; or who has made an exceptional and lasting contribution to support law enforcement.

CRITICAL INCIDENT AWARD

Public Safety personnel are sometimes required to respond to unforeseen catastrophes involving natural disasters, major accidents, homicidal violence and/or terrorism related events. Often times these events require multi agency and multi service responses. During such responses, it is not about who or what agency responds, but how the responding agencies seamlessly formed together to save lives and resolve these rare emergency situations. One example of when this award may be presented would include a multiagency response to a mass casualty event.

The Critical Incident Award will be presented to each agency that directly participated in bringing resolution to these rare events.