



Nicholas L. Chiarkas
State Public Defender

Virginia A. Pomeroy
Deputy State Public Defender

Deb Smith
Chief Legal Counsel

Arlene F. Banoul
Administrative Director

Marla J. Stephens
Appellate Director

Ellen K. Berz
Assigned Counsel Director

Jose Perez
Chief Information Officer

Michael Tobin
Trial Director

315 N. Henry St., 2nd Fl
Madison, WI 53703
Phone: 608-267-3587
Fax: 608-267-0584
Web: spd.state.wi.us

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CONTACT: Randy Kraft 608-267-3587

"Administrator of the Year" Awarded to State Public Defender Nicholas Chiarkas

(Madison) Nicholas Chiarkas, Wisconsin State Public Defender, was honored on May 5, 2000 as the American Society of Public Administration's (Wisconsin Chapter) Administrator of the Year. This annual award recognizes a head of a unit of government who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in achieving significant results.

Mr. Chiarkas' nomination noted "his inspirational leadership and success in establishing the Public Defender's Office as an international model for effective legal services." In the past two years, Mr. Chiarkas has traveled to both Israel and Japan at their invitation as both countries are interested in implementing Wisconsin's model of public defense.

Other successes highlighted in the nomination include Mr. Chiarkas' initiative to involve Wisconsin communities in discussions on local criminal justice issues through community forums held throughout Wisconsin. He has also developed many initiatives that focus on children because of Mr. Chiarkas' belief that working with children today will help to create a better world tomorrow.

Dan Berkos, Chairman of the State Public Defender Board, noted "It's easy to see why Nick received such an honor. Under Nick's leadership, the agency has been transformed into an international leader and as the standard of excellence for providing high quality representation."

In receiving the award, Nicholas Chiarkas thanked "Governor Thompson for his encouragement to think out of the box and take risks. In addition, I have to recognize my bright and energetic leadership team." Chiarkas also noted, "SPD is committed to ensuring that we provide ever enriching public value and that we perform with a heart and soul."

Nick Chiarkas has served as Wisconsin's State Public Defender since 1988. In 1996, Mr. Chiarkas became the nation's first public defender to receive the "Law Enforcement Commendation Medal" awarded by The Sons of the American Revolution. In 1999 and 2000, he was Governor Thompson's nominee for National Public Executive of the Year from the National Governor's Association.

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