



Nicholas L. Chiarkas
State Public Defender

MISSION

To enhance the quality of justice throughout Wisconsin by providing high quality, compassionate, and cost-effective legal representation; protecting the rights of the accused; and advocating as a criminal justice partner for effective defender services and a fair and rational criminal justice system.



315 N. Henry Street, 2nd Floor
P.O. Box 7923
Madison, WI 53707-7923
608.266.0087
Fax: 608.267.0584
www.wisspd.org

****PRESS RELEASE****

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
ISSUED: February 5, 2003
CONTACT: Randy Kraft (608) 267-3587

**State Public Defender's Office Honored with
Wisconsin Forward Mastery Award**

**Award Marks SPD's Third Consecutive Year of
Organizational Excellence Recognition**

(Madison, WI) For the third consecutive year, Nicholas Chiarkas has led the Wisconsin State Public Defender's Office (SPD) to a Wisconsin Forward Award for organizational excellence. And this year, the SPD will receive the prestigious Mastery Award. The ceremony will take place on February 6, 2003 at the Monona Terrace in Madison, Wisconsin.

The SPD emerged as a "Mastery" recipient through a rigorous three-level review process, becoming only the second state agency to ever achieve "Mastery". The award, based on the internationally known Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, recognizes organizations that are able to achieve and document excellence.

State Public Defender Nick Chiarkas stated, "This award marks a significant step in the SPD's commitment to excellence and cost effectiveness. Certainly, the feedback from Wisconsin Forward Award has been instrumental to the SPD and has helped to serve as a roadmap for our accomplishments."

When asked how his agency was able to achieve Mastery given the challenges it faced during the past year, Chiarkas said, "We paid very close attention to providing high-quality representation to our clients in the most cost-effective way. Plus, the Legislature has strongly supported our pursuit of operating a statewide indigent defense program at the minimum cost to taxpayers. And by doing so, we met the various challenges facing us -- ensuring liberty and justice for all citizens of Wisconsin."

Chiarkas, whose career spans from his start as a New York City Police Officer to his recent election to the Alumni Executive Committee of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, has led the agency since 1988. His leadership was credited in the accompanying report that cited "visionary leadership that focuses the organization—at all levels and in all entities—on mission and values."

Public Defender Board Chair Daniel Berkos noted, "It is a true honor to serve on this Board and to witness the achievements of Nick and his outstanding government agency." Berkos went on to say, "It's easy to see why this agency, standing for providing high quality services at the lowest cost to Wisconsin taxpayers, has become a world model."