



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

EMBARGOED UNTIL 2 P.M. ET
TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2015

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Justice Department Honors Two Brothers for Strengthening Arkansas Law against Certain Sex Crimes

WASHINGTON—The Department of Justice will recognize two brothers, Dr. Marcus Smith and attorney Matthew Smith with the Ronald Reagan Public Policy Award, for their role in extending the statute of limitations for certain sex crimes involving minors, during the National Crime Victims' Rights Service Awards ceremony Tuesday, April 21, in Washington, D.C.

The Smiths, just 18 months apart in age, grew up unaware the other had been sexually abused by the same perpetrator. In 2012, after returning to practice medicine in his hometown, Dr. Smith encountered his perpetrator coaching youth at a baseball field. Dr. Smith contacted local law enforcement and disclosed his childhood abuse, leading to an investigation in which more than 10 adult men were identified as victims of the coach.

Although the Arkansas statute of limitations precluded prosecution of the coach for crimes he committed in the 1980s and 1990s, the Smiths decided to help other victims. The brothers proposed legislation to amend the limitations period for certain sex crimes involving minors, which was sponsored by Arkansas State Senator Jimmy Hickey. The Smiths testified before the state legislature and the House Judiciary Committee in support of the bill, providing law enforcement and prosecutors with greater tools to hold sexual predators accountable, which Arkansas Gov. Mike Beebe signed into law February 21, 2013.

At the April 21 ceremony the Justice Department will also recognize 11 other individuals and programs for their outstanding efforts on behalf of crime victims. Descriptions of the honorees are available at the Office for Victims of Crime's Gallery: <https://ovcncvrw.ncjrs.gov/Awards/AwardGallery/gallerysearch.html>.

The Department's Office for Victims of Crime leads communities across the country in observing National Crime Victims' Rights Week and hosts an award ceremony each year. President Reagan proclaimed the first Victims' Rights Week in 1981, calling for greater sensitivity to the rights and needs of victims. This year's observance takes place April 19-25, with the theme *Engaging Communities. Empowering Victims*.

(MORE)

About the Office of Justice Programs (OJP)

OJP, headed by Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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