



Riverside County District Attorney
NEWS RELEASE

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**RIVERSIDE COUNTY PROSECUTOR TO BE RECOGNIZED
FOR MULTIPLE DEATH PENALTY CONVICTIONS IN 2009**

RIVERSIDE – Senior Deputy District Attorney John Aki will receive a prestigious national award in recognition for his work in securing death penalty convictions in two high-profile cases last year.

The Association of Government Attorneys in Capital Litigation has selected Aki to receive its Board of Directors' Trial Award for Outstanding Advocacy in Capital Cases 2009-2010. Aki is being recognized for his work in two death penalty trials – each with two juries -- which resulted in four murderers being sentenced to death.

In April 2009, Raul and Cathy Sarinana were convicted of torturing and murdering their 11-year-old nephew, Ricky, in their Corona home on Christmas Day 2005. Ricky's brother, Conrad, was also murdered in 2005 and his body was found encased in cement at the Sarinana home while police investigated Ricky's murder. Conrad was killed while the Sarinanas lived in the state of Washington.

Then, in December 2009, Jeffrey Jay Buettner and Glen Joseph Jones were convicted of murder for the brutal 2002 killing of 18-year-old Stephanie Ann Benton. She had been tortured and her body left in a 55-gallon drum north of Lake Elsinore. The case languished in the system for years until the victim's father, using his rights under Marsy's Law, made a plea to the judge in May 2009 to not allow any further continuances.

"This is a well-deserved recognition for a very talented prosecutor," Riverside County District Attorney Rod Pacheco said. "John's dedication and hard work in these -- the most crucial of cases -- brought justice for these young victims whose lives were taken far too soon."

Aki will receive the award on Aug. 31, 2010, during the "Making a Difference" presentation at the association's annual conference being held in San Diego.

"I feel humbled by this," Aki said. "One part of me feels a tremendous honor in being recognized nationally for the privilege of representing the victims' families and the hard-working men and women involved in these murder investigations. However, on the other hand, the award also reminds me of the devastation and irreplaceable loss of three children.

"I will solemnly accept this award on behalf of Ricky, Conrad, Stephanie and their families," Aki added.

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