



Everything Cleveland

THE PLAIN DEALER

Clevelanders honored for fugitive program

Wednesday, September 13, 2006

Jim Nichols
Plain Dealer Reporter

U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales honored 14 Cleveland-area government officials and volunteers Tuesday for pioneering a program to encourage wanted criminals to turn themselves in.

Gonzales bestowed the Attorney General's Award for Outstanding Contributions to Community Partnerships for Public Safety on the organizers of Fugitive Safe Surrender.

U.S. Marshal Peter J. Elliott of Ohio's Northern District, and the Rev. C. Jay Matthews of Mt. Sinai Baptist Church, launched the effort in 2005, based on a similar church-based pilot program in Cleveland Municipal Court.

Matthews offered his church, on Cleveland's East Side, as the safe-surrender harbor for four days.

The program overcame initial skepticism with success that surprised even its biggest backers: Almost 850 fugitives, including 324 felons, surrendered.

That success spawned copycat efforts in several other cities. Last spring, Cleveland Democratic Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones and Republican Sen. Mike DeWine led a successful drive to secure \$16 million in federal money to help set up similar programs in other cities.

Also honored were:

U.S. Attorney Gregory White; Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Bill Mason; county Public Defender Robert Tobik; Court Administrator Thomas Pokorny; Common Pleas Judge Richard McMonagle; Sheriff Gerald McFaul; Cleveland Police Chief Michael McGrath; Lutheran Ministries Community Re-Entry Director Charles R. See; WKYC Channel 3 Managing Editor Dick Russ; Assistant News Director Darren Toms of radio station WTAM AM/1100; Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation Director John E. Monce; and criminal justice consultant Douglas Weiner.

To reach this Plain Dealer reporter:

jnichols@plaind.com, 216-999-4111

© 2006 The Plain Dealer

© 2006 cleveland.com All Rights Reserved.