



Office of the Governor

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

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Governor applauds advisor, police officers for recognition

SANTA FE – Members of the New Mexico State Police and a senior advisor with the Office of the Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham were honored during the Excellence in Law Enforcement Awards hosted by the U.S. Attorney Office for the District of New Mexico on Friday.

“Proud to celebrate our outstanding state police, and my senior advisor, Ben Baker, for their exceptional dedication and service to our state,” said **Gov. Lujan Grisham**. “Honored by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of New Mexico for excellence in law enforcement, they exemplify professionalism and commitment every day. Thank you for your tireless efforts and unwavering bravery.”

The following were recognized at the Excellence in Law Enforcement Awards ceremony in Albuquerque on Friday:

- Senior Public Safety Advisor **Benjamin Baker** was recognized for his perseverance in pursuing a multi-million-dollar international fraud case, *U.S. v. Bruce Beckner, et al.*, for more than 10 years, long after he left his post as a case agent for the New Mexico Securities Division. The \$14 million-dollar fraud case came to an end when the defendant was extradited, tried, and convicted by a jury in 2022.
- New Mexico State Police Sgt. **Ruben Franco** was the first law enforcement officer to respond when Defendant Johnathon Bindues, a high school girls track and basketball coach at the time, was accused of engaging in sexual relationships with minor female students. Franco’s professional investigation gathered the critical evidence which ensured a solid prosecution by the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the defendant was sentenced to 23 years in prison.
- New Mexico State Police Sgt. **Sharron Duran** received the Valor Award for her work on the case, *U.S. v. Robert B. Nelson*, in which the driver of a

pickup truck opened fire at the officer at point-blank range during a routine traffic stop. Despite being shot and severely injured, Duran returned fire, and pursued the fleeing suspect ultimately stopping him and taking him into custody. Subsequently, Nelson was convicted and sentenced to 30 years in federal prison for attempting to murder Task Force Officer Duran.

- New Mexico State Police Officer **Jolean Jones** was honored for her life-saving efforts at Taos Feast Day 2023. Jones, along with other emergency personnel, acted quickly, working as a team to rescue a 67-year-old male who had collapsed and was unresponsive on the Pueblo.

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