



KEVIN S. BRACKETT
SOLICITOR

May 3, 2021

16th Circuit Solicitor Kevin Brackett is proud to announce that Senior Solicitor Matthew Shelton has been named the 2021 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor of the Year. He was selected from among candidates nominated by prosecutors across the country.

In his nomination letter Solicitor Brackett commented on the many contributions Mr. Shelton has made to the cause of traffic safety in York county. "From the establishment of the centralized DUI court, the reduction of the backlog of pending DUI cases in magistrates court, the establishment of the Traffic Education Program and the annual trainings that Mr. Shelton provides for local law-enforcement, Matthew has dramatically impacted the quality of traffic safety in our county," said Solicitor Brackett.

In his letter in support of the nomination Colonel C.N. Williamson, the Commander of the South Carolina Highway Patrol noted, "Mr. Shelton has created and fostered a beneficial working system for multiple law enforcement agencies. His contributions have been innumerable."

In concluding his nomination Solicitor Brackett stated that, even though he has made such an impact on traffic safety, the quality he most admires in Mr. Shelton is his positive attitude. "Through all the stress of our job he is one of the most upbeat and positive people I have ever known. He is relentlessly cheerful and always encouraging to his peers and those around him. He respects his co-workers and everyone he meets, and they always know it is genuine. He is available to help anyone at any time and works to build a sense of camaraderie and fellowship in the office," said Brackett.

Mr. Shelton will be presented the award at the National Association of Prosecution Coordinators annual summer conference in Norfolk, Virginia, which will be held July 11-14, 2021.



KEVIN S. BRACKETT
SOLICITOR

March 22, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to support the nomination of Senior Solicitor Matthew Shelton for the Barry Barnette DUI Prosecutor of the Year Award given annually by MADD. Matthew has been a member of my staff for close to 15 years with most of that time dedicated to improving the quality of traffic safety prosecution in York County and, as you will learn, has succeeded beyond any reasonable expectations in that task.

In 2007 I tasked Matt with assisting the Highway Patrol with the prosecution of DUI cases in the magistrate courts of York County. In South Carolina the 1st offense cases are prosecuted by the arresting officer. My office was not funded to assist with these cases until we received a grant through NHTSA to fund the position Matt assumed. Until Matt started helping, the officers usually had to contend with an attorney representing the defendant. To compound matters, magistrate judges are not required to be lawyers in South Carolina so in many cases, the only lawyer in the room was the defense attorney. Prosecutions usually did not end well.

Matt threw himself into the task with heart and soul and quickly became a hero to many in the Patrol for coming to their rescue. He would frequently try cases back to back with little time for preparation. To compound matters, the lack of any administrative oversight in the magistrate courts had resulted in the development of a backlog of over 1200 cases. Some of these were as old as seven years. The average was well over two.

About two years after Matt started prosecuting DUI cases for the Troopers the Chief Justice of the S.C. Supreme Court noticed the backlog of DUI cases that had developed in the magistrate courts across the state and issued an advisory memorandum directing that this be addressed by the courts.

Matt met with the magistrates and proposed an aggressive plan to eliminate the backlog of DUI's in York by implementing call-in's with multiple judges available for trial so encourage them to negotiate. More importantly, he recognized that the fundamental administrative weaknesses needed to be addressed or else we would simply have another backlog develop.

Matt proposed and assisted in the development of a centralized DUI court for all cases made in the county magistrate courts. Strict timetables would be imposed on each case requiring mandatory reports to a single magistrate for the processing of the case. Deadlines for discovery and plea offers were imposed and strictly followed. Cases that were marked for trial were organized for special trial terms that allowed for additional judges to be utilized so that multiple trials could occur at once. The S.C. Legislature enacted a special law allowing for a county-wide jury pool to be summoned for these trial weeks to eliminate any legal complaints that might arise from trying a case with a pool from a single magisterial township.

The results of this effort were astonishing. Within one year the backlog of 1200 cases was reduced well below half. The time to disposition on the new cases coming in went from an average of well over two years to less than six months. Today, even through the pandemic the court continues to keep its pending caseload at a number between one third and one half of the high of 1200 we once had. The conviction rate has improved so dramatically that one municipality agreed to contribute money to the funding of a prosecutor if we would assume the prosecution of their DUI cases. Two other municipalities are currently discussing doing the same. The unit now has three attorneys and is supervised by Matt.

In addition to this Matt regularly trains local law enforcement on the common legal pitfalls encountered in DUI cases. He developed an annual training program to teach law enforcement on developing and documenting cases that can stand up in court including mock court scenarios to learn how to handle yourself on cross examination. In this same program he teaches officers who still must prosecute their own cases how to prepare and present a case in court.

Matt is also responsible for the oversight of all felony DUI prosecutions as well as all motor vehicle reckless homicide cases. He is frequently called on to discuss cases shortly after they occur to assist the officers conducting the investigation. He provided advice on all manner of legal matters including the difficult issue presented by out of state blood draws that are necessitated by the fact that the regional level 4 trauma hospital is located just over the border in Charlotte, NC. Matt has worked to develop a protocol to ensure that the chain of custody in these blood draws will be admissible in South Carolina should the matter come to trial.

Lastly, eight years ago Matt helped implement the legislatively mandated Traffic Education Program that allows low level traffic offenders to avoid the consequences of a speeding ticket or other minor, non-DUI infractions. The program has an educational component, a fine, and a community service requirement. The York program is the most successful in the state and Matt personally reviews each application and approves or denies admittance to the program based on their driver history.

There are many other ways in which Matt has improved the quality of traffic enforcement in York county, but I hope, by now, you are getting the picture. Matt is a dedicated and hard-working prosecutor who genuinely cares about safety on our roads. He works tirelessly to improve the system as well as ensure justice is done in each of his cases.

As impressive as all the above is I would be remiss if I did not mention the quality I most admire in Matt though. Through all the stress of our job he is one of the most upbeat and positive people I have ever known. He is relentlessly cheerful and always encouraging to his peers and those around him. He respects his co-workers and everyone he meets, and they always know it is genuine. He is available to

help anyone at any time and works to build a sense of camaraderie and fellowship in the office. He is just a damn fine man and I could not expect or hope for anything more than he gives every day.

I hope that you will give him every consideration for this prestigious recognition and will happily answer any questions that may aid you in that deliberation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Brackett', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin S. Brackett

Solicitor, 16th Judicial Circuit



COURTESY – EFFICIENCY – SERVICE

**SC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
HIGHWAY PATROL**

Colonel Christopher N. Williamson, Commander

March 23, 2021

16th Circuit Solicitor's Office
Solicitor Kevin Brackett
1675 York Hwy # 1A
York, SC 29745

To Whom It May Concern,

Please consider my support for the nomination of 16th Circuit Senior Assistant Solicitor Matthew Shelton for the Prosecutor's Award. Mr. Shelton has been an invaluable support to the South Carolina Highway Patrol through his work with Traffic Safety Prosecution in York County.

Mr. Shelton has assisted the Highway Patrol with the prosecution of DUI cases in the magistrate courts of York County for over 15 years and has proven himself to be a knowledgeable and valuable resource for our agency. His work has aided the enforcement efforts of the South Carolina Highway Patrol, and has been integral to our mission to keep the roadways safe for our citizens.

Mr. Shelton has used his vast knowledge to develop training for local law enforcement agencies in York County on common issues encountered when prosecuting DUI cases. He created and hosts an annual training program which teaches law enforcement officers how to develop, document and prosecute cases. This training provides valuable information to officers and provides the platform to practice these skills, resulting in better efficiency and positive outcomes.

Mr. Shelton has also created and implemented strategic plans and practices which have significantly reduced the backlog of DUI cases. He developed a centralized DUI court which provided a quicker time to disposition regarding new cases. His processes have reduced time to disposition by more than half.

Mr. Shelton has created and fostered a beneficial working system for multiple law enforcement agencies. His contributions to Traffic Safety Prosecution have been innumerable. I hope that you will give him every consideration for this prestigious recognition and will happily answer any questions that may aid you in your decision.

Sincerely,

Colonel C.N. Williamson
Commander, South Carolina Highway Patrol





**Rock Hill
POLICE**

Rock Hill Police Department • South Carolina • www.rockhillpd.com



To: MADD DUI Prosecutor of the Year Nomination committee

From: Sergeant Christopher Rowe

Date: March 6, 2021

RE: Nomination of Solicitor Matthew Shelton for Barry Barnette DUI Prosecutor of the Year Award

On behalf of the Rock Hill Police Department Traffic Enforcement Unit and the 16th Circuit Law Enforcement Network I am writing to support Senior Solicitor Matthew Shelton's nomination for the NHTSA Prosecutor of the Year Award. Solicitor Shelton is the lead prosecutor for the 16th Circuit Solicitors Office DUI unit. In this role, Solicitor Shelton is often the lead prosecutor in Felony DUI cases, which result in death or great bodily injury, and vehicular homicide cases. As the committee is aware, these cases are often extremely complex and require tedious work which Solicitor Shelton completes with enthusiasm and without hesitation. Furthermore, Solicitor Shelton's wealth of knowledge of the nuances of the State's DUI laws makes him a tremendous asset to the 16th Circuit Solicitors Office DUI Unit and to surrounding law enforcement agencies. Solicitor Shelton is a role model and mentor for junior solicitors assigned to the DUI unit. Additionally, Solicitor Shelton is always available day or night. In fact, as recently as February 20, 2021, at approximately 8:30 p.m. Solicitor Shelton demonstrated this commitment. Despite being late on a Saturday evening Solicitor Shelton answered his phone in reference to Reckless Homicide case involving the death of Teresa and Donald Hewetson. Solicitor Shelton's guidance was instrumental in officers making a solid case so that the defendant could be held accountable for his actions. Although this case is not DUI related this is a prime example of Solicitor Shelton's dedication to prosecution of the State of South Carolina traffic laws. Despite the challenges faced by all during the COVID-19 pandemic Solicitor Shelton has continued his mentoring role. Solicitor Shelton eagerly and without pause agreed to meet with Solicitor Chisa Putnam, of the City of Rock Hill Solicitors Office, and I to discuss DUI related cases. Solicitor Shelton was able to provide valuable information related to out of state blood draws which are frequent in York County, South Carolina. Solicitor Shelton was also able to address small issues which would help officers make better cases, and even volunteered his time to teach a block of training to officers of the Rock Hill Police Department. Solicitor Shelton's unwavering commitment and knowledge in the area of DUI prosecution reflects greatly upon himself and the 16th Circuit Solicitors Office and he is an excellent candidate to be considered for this award.