



**Informational Release**  
***HPD Awarded Law Enforcement Crime Victim Service Award***  
**May 19, 2016**

On March 18, 2016, Washington County District Attorney Mark Bensen, Assistant District Attorney Sandra Giernoth, and Washington County Victim/Witness Coordinator Ali Krueger, nominated Chief David Groves, Detective Rich Thickens, and the Hartford Police Department for recognition from the Wisconsin Victim/Witness Professionals Association for their handling of the Jessie Blodgett homicide investigation in 2013.

In their nomination letter D.A. Bensen writes, ***“From the perspective of the District Attorney’s Office, the Hartford Police Department, and particularly Chief Groves and Detective Thickens, treated the Blodgett family with the utmost respect, dignity, courtesy, and care, throughout the course of the investigation and prosecution.”***

A second nomination letter written by Jessie's father, Dr. Buck Blodgett, said this about Chief Groves' role in the investigation, ***"Every day he promised that Joy and I would be the first to know anything new he learned that he could share. He kept that promise."*** Dr. Blodgett also commented on Detective Thickens role, ***"Throughout that process he was compassionate but direct, sensitive but professional, empathetic but honest...Never once did I feel disrespected, for me or for Jessie."*** He concluded his letter stating, ***"...I will always feel a bond and hold a place in my heart for these two men, and my family will be forever grateful to the whole Hartford P.D."***

In a separate letter submitted from Jessie's grandfather, E. Donald Blodgett, he noted the ***"special diligence, excellence and professionalism"*** of not only Detective Thickens and the staff of the Hartford Police Department, but also everyone who had a role in the investigation and prosecution of Jessie's case.

On May 19, 2016, Chief Groves, Lieutenant Scott MacFarlan, and Hartford Mayor Timothy Michalak attended an award ceremony at the Wisconsin Victim/Witness Professionals Association's annual conference at the Waters Hotel in Minocqua, and received the Law Enforcement Crime Victim Service Award.

Chief Groves said, ***"All of our staff strives to treat everyone they encounter with dignity, respect, and sensitivity. As members of the Hartford Community, HPD grieved with Buck and Joy and worked hard to ensure that there was justice for Jessie. As the Chief of the Hartford Police Department, I would like to say "thank you" for this recognition. I am very proud of my team and the work that they do every day."***

Mayor Michalak said, ***"It is fitting that this award is happening during National Police Week. Hartford is extremely proud of the leadership we have within the department. "***