



WES MOORE
GOVERNOR

ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND
MARYLAND STATE POLICE
1201 REISTERSTOWN ROAD
PIKESVILLE, MARYLAND 21208-3899
410-486-3101
TOLL FREE: 1-800-525-555
TDD: 410-486-0677



COLONEL
ROLAND L. BUTLER, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT

September 23, 2024

To whom it may concern,

Greetings, our names are Sgt. Taylor and Sgt. Martin of the Maryland State Police Homicide Unit. We have proudly served the state for over 20 years and have spent the last 12/13 years in the MSP Homicide Unit. As part of this unit, we are responsible for investigating homicides, suspicious deaths, infant deaths, and police involved shootings/in custody deaths across the state of Maryland. Countless hours are spent discussing charges, strategizing and going over every detail of the investigation, preparing for trial, communicating with the victims' families, and the execution of follow-up work. Over the last few years, we've had the distinct privilege of working with Professor Tiffany Edwards (Teaching Assistant Professor) at West Virginia University and we are more than happy to give her a glowing endorsement for this award for outstanding outreach of public service.

While working such cases in our careers, we've had the honor and privilege in working with Professor Tiffany Edwards. She has implemented a program at the university called "Unsolved Case Project". The students are hand-selected and go through a rigorous application process. This program was designed to assist law enforcement with several aspects of investigating cold case homicides. The program offers assistance to local and state agencies throughout the region. The effect a program like this has on the citizens that live in the areas where the crime occurred is limitless. Families of victims are provided the opportunities for closure and answers to questions that went unanswered for several years. The work of the club is a vital part of the mission of law enforcement, to protect and serve the citizens in their area. Edwards is a key component in this as she is the leader of this group and provides the guidance students need to be successful in the endeavors.

By design, this pioneer program lead by Edwards is instrumental in aiding homicide investigators with digitizing the case file, providing fresh eyes to the case from a younger perspective, and combining new technology/technics with an academic background that is guided by law enforcement experience. The program provides the investigating agency new avenues/theories to look into, witnesses to interview, newly formed potential suspects, and new technologies unknown to the current agency.

The digitizing of a case file can be daunting and an expensive task. But it is a necessary one. One of the most important task in any investigation is to maintain organization. No one knows this more than Professor Edwards. More often than not, case files are handwritten or printed/typed out with little to no

organization when it is stuffed into a folder. In older cases, interviews, pictures, surveillance video, and other recordings utilized outdated or obsolete equipment. Agencies no longer have access to VCR's, tape players, cd players, etc. Professor Edward's program fixes all of these issues by digitizing all recorded evidence and reports. They organize it to a much easier format that can be searched and navigated easily. Saving costs and doing more with less seems to be a current theme with law enforcement. This service typically costs thousands of dollars to complete and is done free of cost to the agency.

Providing fresh eyes to a case gives that investigation a new beginning and a renewed spirit. It creates a new purpose. The students (guided) by Professor Edwards represent the younger generation that think and react to life differently than their older counterparts. By default she is teaching young minds interested in the field, thus molding the future of law enforcement. They look at things differently and aren't influenced by the "old school" way of doing things. They also have the uncanny ability to use social media to locate witnesses/suspects/persons of interest as well as potential evidence. Due to their separation from the case (time/distance/general knowledge) they look at the case with unbiased eyes and aren't predisposed to the beliefs of previous investigators that may worked on the case.

Technology is constantly changing and improving. The students learn from Edwards about newer laboratory capabilities and fully versed on the abilities of law enforcement to use scientific techniques to investigate and solve crimes. Professor Edwards teaches students about methods but does so with the unique experience of having a law enforcement background. Professor Edwards is a former sworn law enforcement agent with the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division. She was also a certified Medicolegal Death Investigator in Memphis. Not only are her students guided by the academic world, they are also influenced from a law enforcement perspective. I think this unique combination of disciplines makes the program successful in the investigation of cases.

With regards to Professor Edwards, she is the leader of the "Unsolved Case Project" which provides outstanding service to law enforcement and the neighborhoods they protect. Her passion for domestic violence, gang affiliation/criminal activity, and homicide cases is clearly evident. Her desire to provide the victim's families with some type of closure is unmatched. Her professionalism with regards to her craft is unparalleled. She is committed, often makes herself available to answer questions or discuss the case even while on vacation or spending time with family. She always makes the time to provide guidance and support law enforcement and her students when necessary. She is willing to fight for aspects of the case that might fall in the gray area of the law. She was willing to try and make new case law and fight for justice. She was unafraid to try new things and was always open to new ideas and strategies in investigating cases.

As a professor, her character, integrity, and dedication to her craft is undeniable and incomparable. All of this is done with the benefit of the community in mind. Not only is the intent to provide closure to the victim's families but it helps to solidify public safety by getting the most heinous of criminals off of the street. Her work serves her community and provides a positive impact on the residents of the jurisdictions she and her program supports. Her program has the unique ability to make a substantial

push for solving crimes and keeping neighborhoods safe. In short, it was an honor working with Professor Edwards all of those years and we humbly give our full endorsement for this award.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Christopher Taylor, including the number #4937.

Sgt. Christopher Taylor #4937

Handwritten signature of Jonathan Martin, including the number #4841.

Sgt. Jonathan Martin #4841

Homicide Unit
Maryland State Police
1201 Reisterstown Road
Pikesville, Maryland 21208
410-486-3101
christopher.taylor@maryland.gov
jonathan.martin@maryland.gov