

# Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

## Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: May 28, 2008

### SHERIFF'S DETENTION OFFICER VINDICATED IN EXCESSIVE FORCE CASE

### WIN MARKS 7<sup>TH</sup> STRAIGHT JURY VERDICT IN FAVOR OF SHERIFF'S OFFICE

(Phoenix, AZ) The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and Sheriff Joe Arpaio won another jury case yesterday, making this the 7<sup>th</sup> straight jury verdict which found in favor of the Sheriff's Office in recent months.

Yesterday's case centered on a \$6 million claim by a former inmate, Thomas Stewart, who accused detention officers of using excessive force against him causing permanent injuries. The Sheriff's Office was defended by the civil division of County Attorney Andrew Thomas's Office.

The federal court jury deliberated for only one hour before coming back with a unanimous verdict denying any payment to the plaintiff.

The previous six victorious jury cases involved allegations of inmate injuries, one inmate wrongful death suit, civil rights violations and a very contentious and public libel suit brought against the county and the Sheriff by Dan Saban.

Arpaio says that when any law enforcement agency is sued, it should take the case to trial, rather than settling the case.

"County risk managers and insurance carriers who settle claims because they are afraid to fight to the bitter end is a real disservice to taxpayers," Arpaio says.

"Juries understand what we are up against," says Deputy Chief Jack MacIntyre. "They know that people sue government agencies hoping for big settlements. They

News Release

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also know there are attorneys out there who specialize in suing law enforcement agencies believing they can get rich off taxpayers money.”

On that point, Arpaio points to local attorney Michael Manning.

Manning has sued the Sheriff’s Office numerous times and recently lost a \$16 million lawsuit against the Sheriff. He is now suing the Phoenix Police Department for \$8 million in the case of Carol Gotbaum, the New York woman who died while in police custody at Sky Harbor Airport last September.

“My advice to Phoenix Police in the Gotbaum case is to go all the way to trial rather than cave in to Manning. What he really wants is a quick and easy no risk payday without facing a jury of his peers,” Arpaio says.

Manning has been very vocal in his criticism of Sheriff Arpaio and the jails saying Arpaio has created a “culture of cruelty” there.

Arpaio says Manning is wrong and points to a recently published report by the U.S. Department of Justice which ranks Maricopa County jails as having one of the lowest number of inmate deaths among the 10 largest American jail systems. Since Sheriff Arpaio was elected in 1993, an average of \$2 million dollars a year has been paid out in civil lawsuits against Maricopa County, a very low figure when compared to other jail systems of a similar size.

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