

VOCAL votes Adams prosecutor of the year

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OZARK — Dale County District Attorney Kirke Adams is no stranger to receiving local and state awards.

The youngest elected D.A. in the state, he has been recognized by local civic organizations as Man of the Year and by state organizations as a top prosecutor.

But Adams' most recent award as the 2010 Victims of Crime and Leniency Alabama Prosecutor of the Year is one recognition Adams said is a testament to his entire office staff's commitment to justice and victims' rights.

"I am honored, but I could not be in this position without the outstanding group of people I work with every day," Adams said in his office on Friday.

"They've devoted countless hours to getting the job done, and getting it done right. They are honest and full of integrity. I can't say that every district attorney's office in the state is as straightforward and honest with victims — no matter the crime — as we have been."

Adams has served as D.A. for Dale and Geneva counties since 2005.

He estimates his office sees at least 5,000 cases a year, from traffic and burglary cases to homicides and other felonies.

He has been most passionate about prosecuting child abuse and child sex abuse cases, and has sought life sentences for convicted abusers.

Challenges he has had while in office include the time it has taken to get some of the cases to trial, he said.

"As committed as I am, I would like to see cases prosecuted right away, but my office is careful in assuring that when we go for a conviction that the case is done right and that the right offenders go to prison. That takes time, sometimes more than we want," Adams said.

Adams worked in a law practice with his father, Joe Adams, for several years before the younger Adams was elected district attorney.

With no opposition, he intends to continue to serve and protect the residents in the counties he works for over the next six years of the new term.

And, between work, he intends to

continue to volunteer as a soccer coach at Carroll High School and a youth sports coach in the community. "My family is the most important thing in the world to me and my outlet away from the stress this job can bring sometimes," he said.

"But I couldn't see myself doing anything different than I'm doing now."

Adams was nominated for the VOCAL award by Dale/Geneva County Assistant District Attorney Cathey Berardi.

Last year, he was runner-up for the award.

Amarylis Benefield, Adams' victim service officer for Dale and Geneva counties, was honored last year by VOCAL as the top person in her field.

Dale County District Attorney Kirke Adams poses for a photo inside a courtroom at the Dale County Courthouse on Thursday afternoon. Adams was voted as the state prosecutor of the year by the group VOCAL.



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