

# **Governor Doyle Announces Gena L. Jarr Receives 2006 Virginia Hart Award**

Governor Jim Doyle today announced that Gena L. Jarr is the recipient of the annual Virginia Hart Award in recognition of her public service at the Wisconsin Department of Corrections. The Virginia Hart Award is given annually to a woman in state government in honor of exemplary performance in public service that improves the quality of life for Wisconsin citizens. Ms. Jarr was honored at a ceremony in the Senate Parlor at the State Capitol this afternoon, and Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton presented her with the award.

"Through her work at the Department of Corrections, Ms. Jarr has gone beyond the call of duty to protect the safety of her community and its citizens, and to ensure that offenders who have paid the penalty for their crimes are successfully reintegrated into the community," Governor Doyle said. "Her leadership abilities, strong partnerships with law enforcement and other community stakeholders, work ethic, and long-term commitment to the field of community corrections have made her truly deserving of this award. She has earned the respect and admiration of her colleagues and is to be commended for her dedicated and committed public service to the citizens of the State of Wisconsin."

Ms. Jarr was recognized for her work as a corrections field supervisor with the Division of Community Corrections in Eau Claire. She developed the first Community Advisory Board in Eau Claire, and as a result of her work with the Board, the Eau Claire Restorative Justice Program and the Eau Claire Drug Court Program were implemented. She also produced a desk-top reference manual for probation and parole agents in the Region 5 Sex Offender Specialized Supervision Program, which is utilized state-wide. In addition, for the past two years, Ms. Jarr has served as the program coordinator for the Wisconsin Correctional Association. Ms. Jarr has also coordinated a partnership for several years with local law enforcement for holding high-risk offenders accountable.

"Gena Jarr's achievements demonstrate the tremendous value that women contribute to our communities, our state government, and to all employers throughout our state," Lt. Governor Lawton said. "She serves as a wonderful role model for young people who are considering a career in public service."

Also receiving honorable mentions at today's event were Jill Hjelsand and Patricia McCallum, both employees of the Department of Transportation; Cindy O'Donnell and Susan WhiteHorse, employees of the Department of Justice; Rhonda O'Leary, employee of the Department of Natural Resources; and Ann Smith, employee of the Department of Workforce Development. All six were recognized for their outstanding contributions to state government and the citizens of Wisconsin.

Christine Lidbury, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Women's Council, also presented remarks at the ceremony on the accomplishments and value of women in state government.

The awards were given in honor of Virginia Hart, Wisconsin's first woman cabinet member. Virginia Hart served as Secretary of the Department of Regulation and Licensing, chairperson of the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations, and as chairperson of the Labor and Industry Review Commission. Upon Virginia Hart's retirement from state service in 1983, friends and colleagues established a fund so that each year a woman in Wisconsin state service could be recognized for exemplary performance and contribution to the citizens of the state. The recognition award is administered by the Office of State Employment Relations.