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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **KELLIE JOHNSON APPOINTED CHIEF CRIMINAL DEPUTY**

(Tucson, AZ) – Barbara LaWall, Pima County Attorney, is pleased to announce the appointment of Kellie Johnson as *Chief Criminal Deputy* of the Pima County Attorney's Office.

Ms. Johnson joined the Pima County Attorney's Office in 1995 as a law clerk. She became a prosecutor in 1997. She quickly rose through the ranks and established herself as one of the finest prosecutors in the Office; she has performed exceptionally well in the courtroom with an 86.2% conviction rate. Most recently she was Chief Trial Counsel and supervisor of the *Homicide Unit* and the *Violent Offenses and Gang Unit*.

In August 2011, the Arizona Prosecuting Attorneys' Advisory Council (APAAC) honored Ms. Johnson by naming her *Felony Prosecutor of the Year*. For her commitment to justice and her perseverance in seeking the death penalty for deserving defendants, in July 2011, Ms. Johnson received the *2010/2011 Outstanding Advocacy in Capital Cases Award* from the Association of Government Attorneys in Capital Litigation.

Ms. Johnson's work is well-documented. She has tried more than 145 felony jury trials and been involved in some of the highest profile cases in the Office. Most recently, Ms. Johnson was lead prosecutor in the *State v. Shawna Forde* case, a savage home invasion that resulted in the brutal murder of a nine-year old girl and her father in May 2009. Ms. Johnson's efforts resulted in justice for the victim as three defendants in three separate trials were each convicted of first degree murder, with the jury returning death sentences in the first two convictions.

LaWall said: "I have total confidence in Kellie Johnson's abilities to carry out the mission of the County Attorney's Office, which is to protect the public safety of the citizens of this community by vigorously and professionally prosecuting those who violate the law and threaten and endanger the safety of others."

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