

Utah County Employee of the Month, July 2014

Chris Yannelli - Supervising Attorney

Utah County Attorney's Office

Chris Yannelli is a great asset to Utah County. He is a prosecutor in the Utah County Attorney's Office. As such, every day he must deal with the delicate balance of satisfying the police, victims, and the need to protect the rights of accused people who may actually be innocent. It is hard to walk into that minefield without fireworks commencing, especially when so many cases involve sensitive matters like sex offenses. Yet Chris is able to accomplish this because he has a number of strengths that make him a particularly effective prosecutor. He is good with people, and uses his wide range of experience and his communications skills to listen and also to explain, so that the parties involved in any given case can find some common ground from which to proceed. Even if a particular party does not get their way, they at least know they have been treated respectfully, and they understand why the County Attorney's Office has done what it has done. Chris works hard to open better paths for defendants as part of holding them accountable. He makes sure victims know how to be restored to the extent possible. He takes care to treat defendants ethically, and he is scrupulous about that. He does all of this from the foundation of a solid grounding in the law, and through use of a sharp and flexible mind that is well suited to the complexities of legal practice. There are a lot of lawyers who come and go, but Chris has served Utah County exceptionally well for many years. This includes work in the office's civil division, where he ably provided counsel to various Utah County departments.

When the Utah County Attorney's Office was restructured some years ago, Chris took on the responsibility of supervising all of the juvenile court prosecutors and all of the justice court prosecutors. This is a particularly important responsibility because new prosecutors in the office start in juvenile or justice court. Some of the older prosecutors do not require much supervision, due to their existing expertise. However, the entire future of the office depends on new hires being trained correctly at the beginning of their careers. These attorneys will hold the lives and liberties of county residents in their hands, and it is vital they be trained and supervised correctly. When it came time to pick someone to supervise those attorneys, Chris was the obvious choice, and he continues to do that well. He has also represented the office effectively in a variety of other ways, serving on many task forces and projects to improve justice for our residents.

Utah County government would do well to recognize Chris Yannelli as employee of the month.

Paul Wake

Deputy Utah County Attorney