

## ALVAREZ CITED AS "STAR"

ALVAREZ CITED AS "STAR" OF COOK COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

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Office's "stars" driven by desire to help victims get justice

Esposito, Stefano

They don't have the name recognition of O.J. Simpson prosecutor Marcia Clarke. Or Gloria Allred, the celebrity attorney who loudly and publicly demanded that authorities seize Michael Jackson's kids following his recent arrest.

But Anita Alvarez, Adrienne Mebane and Shauna Boliker are all stars within the Cook County state's attorney's office.

Alvarez is chief deputy, Mebane chief of staff, and Boliker heads up the sex crimes division.

They've each had opportunities to take private practice jobs paying much more money, but all three say they stay put — and often work insanely long hours — because nothing quite beats the feeling of helping victims get justice.

Admiring colleagues say all three women know how to get jurors' attention in the courtroom, but never in a showy or self-promoting way.

"I love working with victims and working with families, and being in court — that's what really gets my blood boiling," said Alvarez. "It's not about money."

Alvarez, 43, is perhaps best-known as one of the attorneys who prosecuted Patrick Sykes, convicted in the 1997 rape and poisoning of Girl X, who was left unable to speak or use her hands and is nearly blind.

Boliker, 40, is one of two attorneys prosecuting R&B superstar R. Kelly's child pornography case. She also coordinated training for the state's attorney's new Sexual Assault Response Team, which, among other things, seeks to fine-tune communication and information among police, prosecutors, victims' advocates and nurses in sexual assault cases.

As a mother of two small children, Boliker says she's careful not to cart too much baggage from the courtroom into her home.

The children "understand to a certain extent," Boliker said. "They are proud of what I do, but I don't come home and talk about the gory side of the world."

Mebane, 44, may be best-known for her work in the early stages of the case of Lenard Clark, a black teenager who was savagely beaten by a group of white youths in 1997.

Mebane says she still gets nervous before she appears in front of a jury.

"Am I going to remember all the facts?" she said. "Will I be able to convince a jury that what I'm saying is right? You stand up, and if you are doing opening statements, you get the first few lines out, and then you settle in and you do your job."

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