



A publication of the Southern States PBA

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE PBA, ISSUE 14

**THERAPY DOG, DEPUTY HONORED
AS TOP VOLUNTEERS**

**AMERICA STILL RELIES ON LAW
ENFORCEMENT**

**DEDICATED PBA LEADER NAMED
ASST. CHIEF OF POLICE IN
COLUMBUS, GA**



A SHOOTING OR AN ACCIDENT...
NO ONE LIKES TO THINK ABOUT IT!

CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS

IF IT HAPPENS TO YOU:

- **Don't** panic! Calm down and compose yourself.
- **Don't** rush into making a statement.
- **Call** the PBA Hotline: 1-800-233-3506.
- **The PBA** will provide you with an attorney prior to making a statement - either on the scene or wherever needed.
- **Wait** until you talk to a PBA attorney before making any statements, oral or written, unless you have been given a direct order to do so.

As a PBA member, you're not alone.
The PBA is there to protect your rights.



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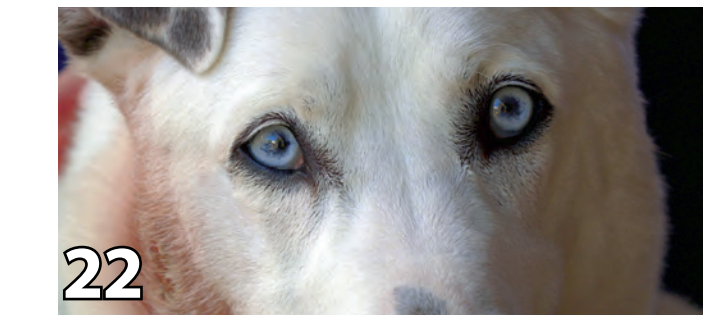
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RENEE DIXON, SSPBA CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER:

Renee handles the day-to-day operations of the SSPBA under the authority of CEO Jack Roberts, and has been with the SSPBA for 34 years.

"I strive to make sure that every member's needs are handled with professionalism and care. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (800) 233-3506."

EDITOR: Katharine Jefcoats,
Communications Staff Writer
kjefcoats@sspba.org



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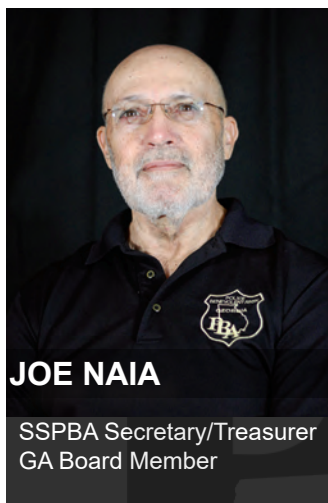
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AMERICA STILL RELIES ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

By Sean McGowan
VAPBA Executive Director

As I sat in a meeting several years ago in the office of the Virginia Attorney General, I had the opportunity to talk about the SSPBA with a new member of their legal staff.

I explained unique aspects of the SSPBA such as our unmatched legal defense plan, our extremely committed and dedicated staff and board of directors, and our assistance provided for families of our fallen members through our death benefit and Police Benevolent Foundation work.

As we talked, I mentioned that, unlike a police union, the SSPBA reserves the right to deny coverage on incidents if a member has intentionally violated department policy or intentionally violated the law.

The attorney looked at me and replied, "So the SSPBA are purists."

I took no offense to the comment and agreed with the categorization. Absolute adherence to traditional rules or structures is exactly what the SSPBA does, and we can be proud of our high road stance, quietly and reliably taking the right course according to our organization's values.

This legal coverage policy is in direct contrast to most union norms which supply some level of legal assistance no matter what the member has done.

Legal defense by unions for officers who intentionally violate policy or law has contributed to the current animosity toward law enforcement and caused some in the public to view law enforcement in a negative light.

For this reason, defending a union is a difficult task. As most of the country seeks to limit police representation through membership in a union or



Sean McGowan

~~~~~  
**This law went into effect  
in May 2021. Collective  
bargaining is no longer  
illegal in Virginia, and  
this pro-worker progress  
gives me hope.**  
~~~~~

association, the City of Alexandria and other Northern Virginia jurisdictions are embracing a new Virginia law that allows localities to engage in collective bargaining with public sector workers, including teachers and police.

This law went into effect in May 2021. Collective bargaining is no longer illegal in Virginia, and this pro-worker progress gives me hope.

It is ironic that Democratic leadership in these Northern Virginia jurisdictions have embraced a pro-police idea in contrast to other liberal localities across the nation with leaders screaming to defund police

and jeopardizing the safety of officers holding the thin line between order and chaos.

What do these Virginia leaders know that eludes the leaders of other liberal cities who stoke the flames of police hatred, where crime has risen dramatically since their political leaders turned activists instead of public servants?

How can the truth be so obvious to law enforcement officers and also be completely ignored by agenda-driven politics?

All is not lost. I am certain that, in time, the pendulum will swing back and some level of correction will take place. The activists' screams for blue blood will subside, and people will once again respect you and your profession.

The less reported positive interactions with law enforcement will slowly be heard by more and more people, gradually changing public perceptions.

Always remember you are in a noble profession that you did not choose, you have been called; you are the sheep dogs.

It is up to you to honor that calling by faithfully enforcing the law and protecting those sheep who cannot protect themselves.

You may not feel the support from the public right now, but be assured, the SSPBA has your back.

Remember that, although there are those who hate you with every fiber of their being based on the badge you carry, when their lives are upended by violence or crime, they still dial 911 and rely on you to do what they cannot do.

Without you, America does not exist.

A BLUE NIGHTMARE IN COLUMBUS, MISS.

By Jeff Reynolds
Jackson, Miss., attorney

Introduction

Late on the night of Oct. 16, 2015, a drug dealer who had drawn his gun at a police officer was in return fired upon. He passed away that night. Incredibly, the officer was later indicted.

The evidence, the testimony and the science of this case all proved that Officer Canyon Boykin, my client, was falsely accused of a crime he did not commit – manslaughter.

A drug dealer, who is armed with a pistol, slows down while running and then turns back to his right, with a pistol in his right hand, to point a gun at Boykin as the armed suspect is running through a field at night. What begins as a traffic stop quickly escalates as the suspect jumps from the still moving car and takes off on foot.

Boykin Tases the suspect, and he falls to the ground. He then gets up and takes off again. Only this time he doesn't just run. He turns back around and raises his right hand at Boykin, pointing a gun at him.

Only when Boykin has a pistol pointed at him is he forced to shoot in self-defense.

How did this indictment come about?

The armed suspect, Ricky Ball, was African American, while Boykin is white. This shooting occurred shortly after the Ferguson, Mo., police shooting. Racial tensions were high across the country, and an overzealous prosecutor went before a Grand Jury in Lowndes County, Miss., and secured a meritless indictment that disregarded the facts.

Boykin shot an armed suspect in self-defense after the suspect pointed a loaded pistol at him. This shooting

in self-defense had nothing to do with race. In fact, Boykin's two partners that night were Officer Max Branch and Officer Yolanda Young. Branch is white; Young is African American.

Furthermore, as discussed below, the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation agent who reported this case to the commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, Albert Santa Cruz, was Capt. LeCarus Oliver, who is African American.

Oliver, along with all of the other MBI agents who investigated the shooting on behalf of the State, determined that Boykin justifiably shot the suspect in self-defense after the suspect pointed his pistol at Boykin.

The chase narrative

Let's go back to Oct. 16, 2015. It is late at night. Boykin is with a Special Operations Group – called the SOG team. Canyon is doing what he's always wanted to do since he was a little boy, be a police officer and help people, making his community safer.

The three-member team of Boykin, Branch and Young are tasked with a mission by the City of Columbus: to patrol high crime areas of Columbus and arrest the drug dealers and other criminals there.

Late that night, the team members are sitting in their unmarked police car on a street in a high crime area.

At about 10:05 p.m., they notice that a passing car's tag light appears to be out and see that a white female is driving the tan Mercury Marquis. The driver pulls her hat down as she passes the police officers, as if to avoid identification.

The officers then start after the Marquis in their unmarked police car. Boykin does not see any other occupants of the car at this time.

You might be asking, "Why would a Special Operations Group be pulling over a car with a tag light that's out?" Because that was their assignment -- their assignment from the City -- to make traffic stops for any violations, no matter how minor, in the crime-infested areas of Columbus.

They were in the Central Beat, the most crime-infested beat in Columbus. They constantly went to calls involving shots fired, drugs and fights. The fact that the driver pulled her hat down over her eyes is suspicious enough to catch the attention of the officers.

Branch is driving. Boykin is in the front passenger seat beside Branch. Young is in the back seat, driver's side.

When Branch approaches the red light, he turns his headlights off to double check to make sure the tag is in fact out. It is.

When the Mercury Marquis begins to turn right onto 14th Avenue heading east bound, Branch turns on his blue lights, and the car slows as if the driver is looking for a place to stop.

When the blue lights come on and the Mercury Marquis initially slows down but does not immediately stop, Boykin notices for the first time that there is another individual in the vehicle, an African-American male.

The passenger starts opening the passenger side door. The officers are experienced with suspects running from them, so Boykin opens his passenger door in preparation of a potential foot chase. His right hand is on the car door, and he holds the radio in his left hand.

The Mercury Marquis turns onto 21st Street and gets on the left-hand side of the road, at oncoming traffic, instead of being properly on the right side of the road.

Boykin throws the radio to Branch. Branch radios, "I've got one failing to stop." The passenger jumps from the car and Boykin simultaneously jumps and gives chase.

Boykin has his Taser in his right hand and his flashlight in his left hand as he starts this brief foot chase. Boykin yells, "Stop, stop," but the suspect keeps running.

The suspect runs in front of the Mercury Marquis and Boykin catches up to him and Tases him in front of the vehicle. The suspect goes down and winds up on his back.

When the suspect hits the ground and gets on his back, Boykin can see for the first time that the suspect has a pistol in his right hand. Boykin yells while stuttering, "Gun, gun!!" Young hears this.

Per police protocol, Boykin creates distance between himself and the danger, so he begins moving in a semi-circle away from the suspect. At the same time, he drops his Taser and draws his own weapon to defend himself. Still, he does not shoot.

A Taser immobilizes a suspect for up to 5 seconds. On this night, the Taser wears off, the suspect gets up, holds onto his gun and resumes running across a field. He runs about 20 yards, slows down and then he turns back toward Boykin and raises his right arm to point his gun at Boykin.

Young sees the suspect turn back towards Boykin, and at that point, she testified that she is afraid she will be shot by the suspect.

Boykin sees the gun pointed at him, and believing he's about to be shot, fires nine times at the suspect. He stops firing when he sees the suspect turn back around and resume running away from him.

It is later discovered that two of the bullets struck the suspect.

Boykin and Branch give chase to this still armed, still running suspect, but they lose sight of him. Other police officers converge on the scene to search for this armed suspect. They ultimately find the suspect hiding by a house, with the pistol and a big bag of marijuana in arm's reach, and with the suspect's blood on both the pistol and the drugs.

The police immediately call the paramedics to help the suspect, Ball, who is alive at this point.

Exculpatory facts that negate Boykin's purported guilt

The State's own investigators conclude shooting justified.

The wall of exculpatory evidence begins with the fact that all four MBI agents charged with investigating this shooting, as experts for the State and on behalf of the State, to determine whether or not the shooting was justified, testified to their conclusion that Boykin justifiably shot Ball in self-defense.

Thankfully, the suspect's family filed a civil wrongful death case against Boykin and the City of Columbus, so I was able to depose these MBI agents:

Capt. Kenneth Bailey:

Q. Okay. All right. This will be 28A. (Exhibit 28A marked for identification.)

Q. (By Mr. Reynolds) Dr. Funte testified in paragraph three, "As noted in my autopsy report, Mr. Ball had two gunshot wounds. One to the posterior aspect of the right arm and one to his right hip. These two gunshot wounds are consistent with the narrative that Mr. Ball, when he was shot, was turning his body around to the right with a pistol in his right hand to face the shooter." Did I read that correctly?

MR. CLARKE: Object to the form.

THE WITNESS: Yes.

Q. (By Mr. Reynolds) And so what you

testified a while ago and her testimony are consistent, correct?

A. Correct.

Q. Okay. Now, you would agree with me, wouldn't you, Captain, that Officer Boykin had to shoot the suspect in self-defense when the suspect turned and pointed a pistol at him?

MR. CLARKE: Object to the form.

THE WITNESS: If I were in Officer Boykin's shoes, somebody pointed a gun at me, I would feel a threat and I would hope that I could react to that threat appropriately.

Q. (By Mr. Reynolds) Would you have done the same thing he did?

MR. CLARKE: Object to the form.

THE WITNESS: I wasn't there, but I would hope that I would have.

(Ex. 2: Bailey Depo., p. 52, l. 17 thru p. 53, l. 23)

Master Sgt. Cory Burrow:

Q. Okay. All right. Tell me what your understanding is of what happened, then, after he tased him, if you have an understanding?

A. Mr. Ball took off running. An officer pursued Mr. Ball through the park, field. Sometime during this run -- again, I -- this is what my understanding is -- that Mr. Ball displayed a handgun and pointed it at the officer.

Q. And then officer Boykin shot --

A. Yes.

Q. -- in -- in self-defense?

A. Yes.

(Ex. 3: Burrow Depo., p. 33, l. 20 thru p. 34, l. 6)

Capt. LeCarus Oliver:

"Once Ball ran from the Grand Marquis, Officer Boykin jumped from

the Law Enforcement vehicle and chased Ball. Boykin got close enough to Ball that he could deploy his Taser. The Taser Prongs inserted into Ball and he fell to the ground. At that time, Officer Boykin noticed a handgun inside Ball's right hand and the bag of marijuana inside Ball's left hand.

After the burst of the Taser, Ball was able to continue running. At some point Ball stopped and turned, right hand leading towards Officer Boykin and Boykin was able to fire multiple shots at Ball with his Glock .40 caliber service weapon.

After the shots were fired Ball started running again. Officer Boykin advised he continued to chase Ball but at some point he lost sight of him."

"The Autopsy showed Ball was struck twice and both projectiles were recovered; however, the projectiles could not be positively matched to Officer Boykins' (sic) weapon because of the similarities of projectiles produced by Glock weapons. The wound tracks relayed by the Pathologist were consistent with the Statement provided by Officer Boykin."

(Ex. 4: Oliver Depo., p. 20, ls. 5-24 & Ex. 1 to Depo., Memo p. 2, emphasis added)

Capt. Oliver's Memo was prepared at the direction of his superior, Albert Santa Cruz, commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, some weeks after the shooting occurred, "as a true and accurate account of what the MBI's investigation had shown."

(Ex. 4: Oliver Depo., p. 78, ls. 14-25 & p. 90, l. 19 thru p. 91, l. 20)

Master Sgt. Hathcock:

Q. All right. Let's go back. Let's get that A out again, Exhibit A, second page, first full paragraph. This will be the

fifth sentence.

A. Yes.

Q. It says, 'At some point, Ball stopped and turned, right hand leading towards Officer Boykin, and Boykin was able to fire multiple shots at Ball with his Glock .40 caliber service weapon.' Do you recall me reading you that and you saying that was accurate?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. All right. So you would agree with me that when Officer Boykin shot Mr. Ball, he was in compliance with the Columbus Police Department's use of deadly force policy?

MR. CLARKE: Object to the form.

THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

(Ex. 1: Hathcock Depo. p. 64, ls. 3-20)

Q. Do you remember Mr. Ball bailed from the vehicle?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Okay. And you agree with me, Officer Boykin didn't shoot him, right?

MR. CLARKE: Object to the form.

Q. (By Mr. Reynolds) When he bailed from the vehicle?

A. Correct.

Q. He tased him --

A. Yes, sir.

Q. -- right? And Mr. Ball went down?

MR. CLARKE: Object to the form.

THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

Q. (By Mr. Reynolds) Right? And Officer Boykin saw the pistol in his hand?

MR. CLARKE: Object to the form.

Q. (By Mr. Reynolds) Right?

A. That's what he has stated, yes, sir.

Q. And Officer Boykin didn't shoot him

then or did he?

MR. CLARKE: Object to the form.

THE WITNESS: No, sir.

Q. (By Mr. Reynolds) And Mr. Ball got up and resumed running, right?

A. Yes, sir.

MR. CLARKE: Object to the form.

Q. (By Mr. Reynolds) Mr. -- and Officer Boykin didn't shoot him then, did he?

MR. CLARKE: Object to the form.

THE WITNESS: Correct.

Q. (By Mr. Reynolds) He only shot him when he turned back towards him with his pistol --

MR. CLARKE: Object to the form.

Q. (By Mr. Reynolds) -- right?

A. Yes, sir.

(Ex. 1: Hathcock Depo., p. 85, l. 3 thru p. 86 l. 15)

The State Medical Examiner, Dr. Lisa Funte, who performed the autopsy on Mr. Ball, concluded:

As noted in my autopsy report, Mr. Ball had two gunshot wounds, one to the posterior aspect of the right arm and one to his right hip.

These two gunshot wounds are consistent with the fact that Mr. Ball, when he was shot, was turning his body around to his right, with a pistol in his right hand, to face the shooter.

Why Mr. Ball was going to shoot Officer Boykin

Why did Ball jump from the car and run and carry with him a loaded pistol? The following were discovered either still on Ball, or he threw them as he ran: 5+ grams of cocaine, 93 hydrocodone narcotic pain pills, 80 Xanax pills, a bag of marijuana and a scale.

Ball was already out on bond for selling



Photo submitted by Jeff Reynolds

Outside the courtroom, Reynolds (r) enjoys dove hunting with Canyon Boykin and several 'good boys.'

cocaine and marijuana. He knew that his bond would be revoked if he was captured and that he likely would spend decades in prison when convicted of the multiple drug trafficking charges he would be facing.

Justice prevails

Irrespective of the undisputed evidence that Boykin shot Ball in self-defense after Ball pointed a pistol at Boykin, the former attorney general would not dismiss the bogus indictment against Boykin.

Then, in January 2020, a very fortunate event occurred for Officer Boykin: A new attorney general, Lynn Fitch, was elected to office. I met with the attorney general and her prosecutors and

showed her the evidence of Boykin's innocence.

Nevertheless, Fitch instructed her prosecutors to conduct their own, independent investigation of the case.

Her chief prosecutor also requested that Boykin sit for a polygraph examination given by a polygrapher of his choosing. We immediately agreed to this. Boykin was ecstatic that somebody finally asked him to submit to a polygraph examination.

There had been a pervasive disinformation campaign waged against Boykin, falsely alleging that he had a vendetta against Ball (Boykin did not even know Ball), the Columbus Police planted the pistol that was found

by Ball with Ball's blood on it, and other such false information.

Boykin passed the polygraph examination with flying colors. Shortly thereafter, Fitch did the courageous and right thing, regardless of the flak she would receive: she agreed to a dismissal of the indictment against Boykin with prejudice.

But for the fact that the Police Benevolent Association has been there for Boykin from shortly after the shooting until now, this case may have had a very different ending for him.

I can't say enough about the attorneys at PBA who steadfastly stand behind officers like Boykin in their times of need.

DURHAM OFFICER RAMPS UP FOR STRICKEN SECURITY GUARD

By Katharine Jefcoats
kjefcoats@sspba.org

When Durham, N.C., private security guard Jay Burroughs found himself paralyzed in a 2017 work-related shooting, help came to him from an unexpected source.

Burroughs was well-acquainted with Durham police Officer Roger B. Humphrey because they protected the same people. Burroughs provided private security services to several apartment complexes and businesses in the neighborhood Humphrey frequently patrolled.

“We knew each other for a long time,” Burroughs said. “We were both chasing bad guys and we developed a great relationship.”

Humphrey said he was impressed by Burroughs’ work ethic and willingness to get involved.

“(Jay) stood out because he was dressed in tactical gear, had a great work ethic and tried to make our job as police easier,” he said. “He identified folks, trespassed problem people and reported needed evictions to problem apartments. This was more than the average security officer would do on any given day.”

It was natural, then, that Humphrey became concerned when he didn’t see Burroughs for a period of time in the summer of 2017. He soon learned Burroughs had been shot in the back when he tried to break up a fight at a nightclub.

The shot hit Burroughs in the spine, paralyzing him immediately. As if that was not traumatic enough, Burroughs was not allowed to leave the hospital until his home was equipped with a ramp.

Humphrey called Burroughs after



Durham police Officer Humphrey



Jay Burroughs

learning he had been ready to go home for a couple of months.

After talking with Burroughs, Humphrey realized he felt a camaraderie that moved him to offer to build the ramp he so needed to reunite with his family at home.

“(Jay) Burroughs was a benefit to the community working security,” said Humphrey. “He took the same risks as police and his situation could have been mine. I felt compelled to help him after hearing and talking with him.”



Humphrey built a second ramp so Burroughs could access his garage.

Burroughs said he never expected the great contribution Humphrey would make in his recovery.

“When he called to ask if I needed anything, I first told him I’d be fine,” he said. “But I finally gave in and accepted his offer to build a ramp.”

Humphrey told Burroughs he’d pay to install the ramp if Burroughs could round up some friends to build it. When plans for help fell through, Humphrey built the ramp himself. It

took more than 12 hours.

“The entire time I worked, (Jay) made sure I had water and kept me company while I worked on his new ramp,” said Humphrey. “I dug holes, placed poles with concrete and built the ramp. Twelve-plus hours later, the ramp was complete, including a safety rail to guide himself down. He was so grateful and told me that he could never thank me enough.”

Humphrey even returned to build a second ramp so Burroughs could access his garage, where he has a gym, and his mailbox.

“Such a simple thing that most people take for granted,” said Humphrey.

Burroughs said he was stunned beyond belief.

“I was ecstatic,” he said. “I didn’t know what to expect but that ramp made me the happiest I’d ever been besides my kids being born. It’s really awesome and more than I could have hoped for.”

With the shooting almost four years behind him, Burroughs said he is “rolling with the punches” and remains grateful for his ramps.

“The ramps made everything possible,” he said. “It was a game-changer, a life-changer. Nothing else has helped me as much as those ramps.”

“Officer Humphrey is a great guy,” continued Burroughs. “His heart is out there for anybody. When we see each other, it’s never, ‘Hey, buddy,’ it’s always, ‘Hey, brother.’ He and I both understand helping people who need it.”

Burroughs is not letting his wheelchair keep him from enjoying life, which includes two daughters, age 14 and 8.

“I do a little hunting here and there, when I can with the chair,” he said. “We keep a hobby farm with ducks and chickens, which my 14-year-old loves. She wants to be a veterinarian.”

Humphrey’s “simple thing” helped a

positive person in the community, he said.

“(Jay) made a difference in our community and I noticed that he was not out there,” said Humphrey. “He was part of the solution and not part of the problem in our community. Today, there are so many people that sit by and ignore everything. They don’t want to

get involved, or when they do, they are part of the problem.

“(Jay) not being out there is a loss for the community,” he continued. “It was my honor to help a friend get home.”

(Officer Humphrey is a member of Triangle Chapter of the North Carolina Police Benevolent Association.)



Photos submitted by Roger Humphrey

Private security guard Jay Burroughs enjoys the ramp Officer Roger Humphrey built for him after Burroughs was paralyzed in a work-related shooting.

CHAPTER PRESIDENT APPOINTED TO GEORGIA DPS BOARD

By Katharine Jefcoats
kjefcoats@sspb.org

During a meeting in 2020, the Georgia Board of Public Safety confirmed Gov. Kemp's nomination of Jesup police Lt. Nick Ellis to a three-year term seat.

Ellis said the appointment is a dream come true.

"When I was at the academy in Forsyth, I'd wonder what the Georgia Board of Public Safety was and what it does," he said. "I wondered if I would ever have the opportunity to oversee law enforcement organizations, establish and approve rules and general policies for peace officers. It was one of my dreams."

OCGA 35-2-1 describes the Georgia Board of Public Safety. The board is comprised of 16 members and the governor is chairman. The vice-chairman presides over each meeting.

The BPS oversees the Georgia Bureau of Investigations, the Department of Public Safety (umbrella over Georgia State Patrol, Capitol Police and Motor Carrier Compliance) and Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth.

Ellis, 32, is a lifelong resident of Wayne County. He is married to Krystal, a loan manager, and the two have three children, sons, Amarion, 15, and Dominique, 14; and daughter, Kadence, 6.

He is president of the Police Benevolent Association of Georgia's Atlantic Chapter.

Ellis said he is eager to get started on this new venture.

"I'm really looking forward to meeting with state executive officers and get into how law enforcement will look in the future. We need to have conversations



Jesup police Lt. Nick Ellis

about the times we're dealing with."

One might say Ellis was born into law enforcement. His mother, Donna Nuriddin, is a sergeant at the Wayne County Jail.

"My mom influenced me," said Ellis. "She's really excited about this appointment."

Ellis has devoted his life to helping youth, fostering his career in law enforcement and creating strong family bonds, thereby developing a solid foundation in his community.

In addition to his profession, Ellis gives of his time at New Creation Ministries, graduated Leadership Wayne and is chairman of the Boys and Girls Club board.

For more than 10 years, Ellis has spent two to three days a week as a School Resource Officer and provides a presence at school functions.

"I wanted to be a part of the change I wanted to see," he said. "Law enforcement and youth have been my focus."

PBA of Georgia Executive Director Joe Stiles said being nominated to the board is prestigious for any law enforcement officer but is especially so for Ellis given his position as a police lieutenant.

"It's very unusual for someone who isn't a chief or sheriff or someone higher up the food chain to be appointed to this board," he said. "It's a good board and a great honor for Nick."

Stiles said the appointment also gives PBA an enhanced visibility in the state.

"It's a great opportunity the governor has given us," said Stiles. "We have other members on other boards but this is the most prestigious."

Stiles said he is familiar with Ellis's reputation in Wayne County.

"He is a good family man," he said. "He has a strong presence in the community and church. He's well-respected."

Joe Naia worked with Ellis in the Wayne County Sheriff's Office. He watched him grow up and work up the ranks to lieutenant.

Naia echoed Stiles's glowing words about Ellis.

"He's a great family man, leads a youth group and he is a great leader," Naia said. "I'm very proud of him. He walks the walk and talks the talk. I envy his commitment to his community, family and county."

Naia is also the PBA of Georgia president and is secretary/treasurer of Southern States PBA.

"He's a good officer, efficient," said Naia. "I'm extremely happy. This is monumental for PBA to have one of our members on that board. It's awesome that Gov. Kemp thought that much of Nick and the PBA. It gives us a better voice and is a blessing to PBA."

ALA. MEMBER HONORED FOR SAVING LIVES FROM MARINA FIRE

Scottsboro, Ala., police Sgt. Brian Eakin was among three first responders honored in 2020 for bravery in saving seven lives from the County Park Marina fire that killed eight others.

Eakin, Lt. Landon Baker of the Scottsboro Fire Department and Robert Shook of the Jackson County Rescue Squad received Life Saving Awards for their efforts.

The awards were handed out during the annual Alabama Association of Rescue Squads conference.

Eakin said he is thankful to be recognized.

“As a police officer, we are not respected so to be nominated for Citizen of the Year for getting out and saving those seven was very satisfying and I am very thankful,” he said.

Eakin said he was already on a burglary call at Shook’s pawn shop Jan. 27, 2020, when both men heard about the fire.

“Robert Shook, the owner of Scottsboro Gun and Pawn, and I were at his place of business on a burglary alarm,” he said. “The call of the boat fire came over the radio. I sent my other guys to the location.”

‘People were in the water’

“Once (officers) got there, they started saying the whole dock was on fire and people were in the water,” said Eakin. “Robert and I looked at each other and decided we need to go get a boat.”

Eakin and Shook immediately went to the Rescue Squad headquarters and loaded one of the rescue boats. They drove to Jackson County Park and put the boat in the water and began rescue operations.

The three men were hailed as heroes by the Scottsboro City Council, police Chief Ralph Dawe, and fire Chief Gene Necklaus, for their actions above and



Sgt. Eakin (fourth from the right) on the night he was given the Life Saving Award

beyond the call of duty.

Eakin said he and Shook were in the water nine minutes after hearing the fire call.

Eakin is an 18-year veteran of the Scottsboro Police Department. He started working for the Hollywood Police Department, and joined the Scottsboro Police Department in 2002. He was promoted to sergeant in the patrol division in 2014.

Eakin, Shook saved seven

“We went around the dock and rescued four people on the first pass and took them in,” said Eakin. “We went back out and got three more people and then took them in.”

At the time, they were in and around the engulfed marina and other boats on fire floating in the water.

A little-known fact about that night is that when the rescue boat they were using was returned to bay, the Rescue Squad captain found that the seats were partially melted from the intense heat that Shook and Eakin were so close to.

The actions of Eakin and Shook, as well as that of Baker, who braved the frigid



Sgt. Eakin with his wife, Tara

waters to save lives as well, exemplify everything that is good about public service.

(Staff writer Katharine Jefcoats contributed to this report from Scottsboro Police Department. Eakin is a member of the Southern States Police Benevolent Association’s Northeast Alabama Chapter.)

DIXON KEEPS BUSY ON THE STREETS OF MADISON, ALA.

In addition to the officers working patrol shifts, Officer Michael Dixon is assigned to the Madison Police Department Traffic Safety Unit, a division of the Special Operations Division.

As the sole member, Dixon's responsibilities are many, and encompass enforcement of traffic laws, working accidents, speed enforcement and event planning that impacts traffic flow within the city and keeping drivers safe on the roadway.

One might find him in the rain placing digital signs to warn drivers of roadway construction or hazards or directing traffic during school hours or at special events such as parades and ballgames. He is most famous for adding creative reminders on the digital signs such as "That seat belt makes you look skinny" and "You look great, the selfie can wait."

Dixon came to the Traffic Unit from patrol and immediately completed a Traffic Homicide Investigations course. He is the only THI-certified officer, in addition to three other accident-reconstruction certified officers assigned throughout the department. With the number of motor vehicle crashes increasing with the rising population, Dixon stays busy every shift he works.

Dixon said that an effective Traffic Unit officer must have good decision-making skills, be able to multi-task and respond to different situations at a moment's notice.

Young, inexperienced drivers require his patience and understanding as he tries to teach them valuable, life-saving driving skills.

He related his theory on tickets vs. warnings and it makes a lot of sense.

"Tickets are used to correct dangerous



Photos submitted by Michael Dixon

Officer Michael Dixon is assigned to the Madison Police Department Traffic Safety Unit, a division of Special Operations. He is a member of the Madison County Chapter of the Alabama PBA.

or habitual driving behaviors," Dixon said.

With the capability of viewing a driver's history while conducting a traffic stop, Dixon is aided in deciding whether or not the driver was merely distracted

or if they are exhibiting chronic poor decision making on the roadways.

Those who are repeat offenders will almost always receive a citation. Those who have clean records and may not understand that they are breaking the



Officer Michael Dixon at home with his daughters.

laws are the drivers with whom he takes the time to explain the rules of the road and how safe driving habits will keep the roadways clear of accidents.

The most time-consuming part of his job is crash investigation. Rarely is it just a single car accident. Many times, Dixon will be dispatched to the scene of a crash and find that he is dealing with not only the carnage of the crash, but also an impaired driver requiring search warrants be obtained, blood to be drawn, witness and victim interviews be completed, transport of the offender to jail and later a court appearance.

He may have to return to the scene of an injury crash multiple times to conduct exact measurements and diagrams in order to determine the

cause of a crash.

During a recent ride along, Dixon intercepted vehicles parked adjacent to the school zone blocking emergency access and causing dangerous congestion where children were walking and riding bicycles.

He conducted several traffic stops, always taking the time to explain what law was broken and the importance of speed limits and signals. Dixon's encounter with a young driver on her way to work began with trembling hands and tears, and ended with a smile and a driver with a digital copy of her insurance card.

Dixon says that some of his more memorable traffic stops involved drivers who thought "showing some skin" or "cranking up the tears" would influence the outcome of a traffic stop.

These are the drivers who make him thankful for body-worn cameras protecting officers from those who might try to coerce or influence him regarding citations or warnings. Dixon said if you try to put him in a position where his ethics are challenged, a citation will usually be issued.

This ensures that no one will be able to say "I got out of a ticket by flashing/crying/acting out!" If a driver gets a ticket, it is probably deserved. If the driver disagrees, court is the place to have the judge hear the driver's side of the story. Dixon knows he cannot stop every violator for every infraction. He works tirelessly to correct the most egregious issues that affect the most drivers. Treating everyone with respect and understanding goes a long way, and he says it is not uncommon for a driver to thank him for his advice even when they get a citation or warning. Most drivers know the rules of the road are in place for their safety and Dixon is there to help them remember to slow down, buckle up, stop, look and get home safely.



Officer Dixon and wife Amanda

ARKANSAS ALDERMAN VOLUNTEERS AS UNPAID POLICE OFFICER

By Katharine Jefcoats
kjefcoats@sspba.org

Beebe, Ark., residents can be excused if it seems as though they see Derrek Goff a lot within the city limits.

In addition to serving the town of 5,400 as one of six city aldermen, Goff teaches 10th grade civics and economics at Cabot High School, just south of Beebe on U.S. 167. He works at his family's realty business too.

Oh, yeah, and he's a police officer – a part-time auxiliary officer but still wearing a uniform and badge, and driving a patrol car.

"When I'm on patrol, people do recognize me as an alderman," he said. "They ask me 'How many jobs do you have?' I just tell them that I get bored."

Goff, 31, got married in December. He was raised in Beebe by a single mom and was heavily influenced to succeed by his grandfather. Goff has been working since he was 8, picking up construction debris from work sites. He bought his first car at 14.

"My grandfather started Goff Realty in 1969," he said. "He built his company from dirt to 500 rentals. I ran for office to be the change I wanted to see and to preserve what my grandfather created. I always took the initiative and got things done."

Goff has just been elected, without opposition, for his third term. He approached Beebe police Chief Wayne Ballew in February 2020 to ask about joining the department as an auxiliary officer.



Derrek Goff

"As an auxiliary police officer, a person receives no compensation for their services, but they are still required to complete the same course of training as any other part-time law enforcement officer," Ballew stated in a Facebook announcement about Goff joining the department.

That's right, Goff dons the uniform for free.

At that time, the whole world was on the verge of a quarantine because of COVID-19.

"I was home because we were out of school," said Goff. "I'd done ride-alongs with the cops and helped out in the animal shelter. They work for the city and so do I."

As an alderman, he participates in the hiring and firing of police officers. He said he couldn't see carrying out those duties without knowing exactly what

the men and women in blue endure on a daily basis.

"I'm not above anybody," Goff said. "I can't ask folks to do something I wouldn't do. I think there needs to be more people doing that."

To prepare for his new venture, Goff enrolled in the same law enforcement training the officers in Beebe attended. He completed the training in July 2020, and Ballew took him on.

"Since then, Officer Goff has volunteered countless hours to the department," Ballew stated in the announcement. "Recently, Officer Goff worked the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays to allow our full-time officers to spend some much-needed time with their family."

What Goff saw on the job changed his perception of law enforcement.

"I did not understand the number of calls and the different ways to deal with them," Goff said. "Most people think the police show up and arrest people."

There was the time an officer paid for a motel room for a mentally-ill woman who was stranded in Beebe. Another time, an officer bought an air conditioner for a woman trying to survive an Arkansas summer without one.

"They're changing tires, buying food," said Goff. "We see things the public generally doesn't. Being a police officer really opened my eyes to this stuff. The main goal is to help people."

But Goff sees more than sweetness and

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Photos submitted by Derrek Goff

Derrek Goff likes to relax by duck hunting with Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge at a Beebe hunt club.

light while on duty.

“We do see a lot of bad in people, too,” he said “We try to be as respectful as possible. Some people have issues that other people have no idea, like mental health issues. You can solve a lot more problems by having a good relationship with the community.”

Ballew said in his Facebook announcement he is “humbled” by Goff’s interest in learning law enforcement firsthand.

“As the chief of police, I am humbled by Officer Goff’s service to the city and

I greatly appreciate his willingness to see, without compensation, what our men and women go through on a daily basis,” he said.

As a city alderman, Goff does not vote on the state statutes that the officers enforce. The council addresses city ordinances that regulate municipal code violations such as a resident having high grass that needs mowing or a dog off its leash.

“I don’t enforce those ordinances,” he said, “so I’m not out writing tickets and making money for the city.”

The self-described conservative said he joined the Southern States Police Benevolent Association as soon as he completed his training, primarily because of the support services afforded by the association. He is a member of the Arkansas PBA’s North Central Arkansas Chapter.

Tommy Simpson, director of organizational services for the west region of Southern States PBA, said Goff can possibly serve as an example for others.

“Maybe (he) will inspire some others to do the same,” said Simpson.

TENN. SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT PLANS FUTURE AS GEOLOGIST

By Katharine Jefcoats
kjefcoats@sspba.org

When Sierra Grace Alexander graduates from Tennessee Technological University, she will do so debt-free, thanks in part to a Police Benevolent Foundation scholarship.

The scholarships are awarded to children or stepchildren of law enforcement officers who are members of Southern States Police Benevolent Association. Alexander's father is patrol Lt. Jason Alexander with Dyersburg (Tenn.) Police Department.

"This scholarship has assisted me in decreasing the financial stress that is placed upon college students every day," she said. "With 70 percent of college students graduating with debt today, I am very thankful to have the support from PBF. I am on track to graduate from college debt-free thanks to PBF and other organizations that support the education of young people."

Sierra is majoring in geosciences with a concentration in Geographical Information Systems with a minor in military science. She is also an ROTC cadet in the Golden Eagle Battalion. Her post-graduation plan is to join the Army as a commissioned 2nd lieutenant and serve as a geologist.

She is passionate about her respect and support of her father and law enforcement, not an easy position to take in a social media-centered society whose backing of the blue ebbs and flows.

"As the daughter of Lt. Alexander, I have always been so proud of my father and the work he has done for our community," she said. "When I was younger, I told everyone about my dad's line of work. However, as I grew up and the media became a bigger part of our society, I did struggle with criticism and backlash from my peers. My beliefs were tested and ridiculed



Sierra Alexander

because I 'backed the blue.'"

Lt. Alexander has been in his chosen field for 27 years, so the "thin blue line" life is the only one Sierra knows. He taught her and her brother to stand up for themselves and their beliefs, despite that backlash. Sierra's brother received a PBF scholarship a few years ago.

"One value that my father instilled in me and my brother was to always stand up for what you believe in," she said. "I have never been one to let others affect my decisions, so I stood strong. Yes, I lost friends, made some enemies and felt isolated for a long time, but I was never hushed by the voices and opinions around me."

One of Sierra's lingering childhood memories involves witnessing firsthand her father's place in the community.

"One memory sticks out very vividly in my mind," she said. "Every year, our church hosts a Trunk or Treat for our community on Halloween. So, every year, my father would bring the patrol

car with police caution tape, lights, sirens, a fake chalk outline of person, who might have been me, and of course, candy. We always had the best 'trunk' because we got to do it together, and we were building trust with the community in a positive way."

Serving his community is the driving force in Lt. Alexander's life and career. He first served his country in the Army as a paratrooper. He rubbed elbows with the military police, which sparked his desire to continue service after his discharge as a police officer. He said he enjoys impacting lives in a positive manner.

"The most memorable event was being a school resource officer for seven years at Dyersburg High School," he said. "During my tenure there, I was able to establish friendships with students, parents and faculty members that have lasted for over 20 years. These friendships have allowed me to impact people's lives in way that I could have never imagined."



Sierra and Lt. Jason Alexander

Lt. Alexander said he could not be prouder of his daughter.

"I cannot express how proud I am of my daughter, Sierra Alexander," he said. "She has a drive for success that I only wish I had. She excelled in FFA in high school. She was awarded a National ROTC Scholarship and is continuing the family tradition of service in the

U.S. Army as a fifth-generation service member.”

Sierra said she has often heard law enforcement officers compared to lions, the kings of the jungle, because of the lions’ dogged determination to protect their habitats and their prides.

“Motivational speaker and former Ohio state Rep. Les Brown said, ‘Lions don’t have to roar. There is power in silence, confidence and persistence,’” she said. “I have often heard law enforcement officers compared to lions, and I can see the comparison quite clearly. My father, and every law enforcement officer in the nation, puts his life on the line every day to protect his community.”

No matter where her life takes her, Sierra said she will always be proud of being the daughter of a police officer and dedicated to the support of the thin blue line. She said she also appreciates that PBA exists to offer aid and benefits to its law enforcement members.

“I appreciate the fact that there is an organization that supports our local law enforcement officers and their families,” said Sierra. “I am very proud and grateful to be a part of this big family. I will always be a firm supporter of the thin blue line.”



Lt. Jason Alexander and his daughter, Sierra Alexander



PBA of GA COBA Chapter President Jeff Burchell joined Gov. Kemp for the signing of Senate Bill 60, which expands the Georgia State Indemnification Fund to cover heart attacks, strokes and vascular ruptures for public safety officers. Many thanks to our legislators and Gov. Kemp who made this possible. (Photo provided by State of Ga.)

FALLEN OFFICER LAUDED AS A SELFLESS AND LOVING FAMILY MAN

By Zilla Willoughby
Contributor to The Blue Review

Deputy Sheriff Jared Michael Allison of the Nash County (N.C.) Sheriff's Office was born July 22, 1994, and died in the line of duty Dec. 1, 2020, at the age of 26, after a traffic accident that occurred Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 26. He was a two-and-a-half-year veteran.

Deputy Allison had just completed a traffic stop and was trying to catch a motorcycle when another car attempted a left turn in front of him at an intersection. He was pursuing a motorcyclist who was reportedly operating the bike in a "careless and reckless manner." Deputy Allison's patrol SUV struck the vehicle and it overturned. According to Sheriff Keith Stone, Deputy Allison was ejected from the vehicle through the passenger side door, sustaining critical injuries. He was then transported to Vidant Medical Center. He fought for five days with his family by his side before his organs shut down and he succumbed to his injuries Dec. 1.

Deputy Allison was returned home Dec. 2, 2020, with a procession from Greenville to Nash County. The Nash County Sheriff's Office, the North Carolina State Highway Patrol and other local law enforcement agencies escorted his body home to Wheeler-Woodlief Funeral Home in Rocky Mount.

Many first responders from other agencies were there and several fire trucks and emergency vehicles were parked along bridges in support. People were encouraged to line the roads in a show of respect.

Deputy Allison was laid to rest Dec. 4, 2020. Law enforcement officers from all over the state came to pay their respects to the fallen deputy.

Emotions poured out as Deputy Allison's casket was carried past



Mourners tied blue ribbons along the funeral procession route.

his family and taken inside Baptist Englewood Church for his funeral services.

"No parent ever wants to have to go through this," said his father, Scott Allison. "He cared. He had compassion. He was concerned about others over himself and unfortunately, his sacrifice showed that."

Allison's grandfather doted on his ability to be a tough Nash County

deputy while also an animal lover with a "tender heart." "That's a fine young man and that was my grandson," he said.

A final procession was held from the church back to Wheeler-Woodlief Funeral Home. Community members placed blue ribbons along the route.

Deputy Allison is survived by his wife, Brenae Allison; his son, Colt Allison; his father, Scott Allison; his mother,



The late Jared Allison and his wife, Brenae, son Colt, and their fur babies.



Fallen Deputy Jared Allison's flag-covered casket is pulled by a caisson, as is traditional for an officer's funeral.

Angela Radford McClellan and step-father, Robert McClellan; his sister, Deanna Beal; his grandparents, Rick and Barbara Murray, Michael and Christy Allison, and Ray and Kathryn White; his father and mother-in-law, Brian and Beth Janes; his nieces and nephew, Raine, Tristan, Esme, Kennedy and Verity; and his most loyal fur babies, Shep, Nugget, Nash, Harlough and Mr. Ginger.

Deputy Allison will best be remembered for making a difference in the lives of all those surrounding him. Like branches from an oak, he entered into this world touching the lives of many and in his passing and hereafter, will continue to make a difference for those of us left behind. Growing up, Allison's devotion to helping others and making a difference led him to enlist in the U.S. Army as an 11B infantryman and later, the sheriff's office. It was, in fact, his life's calling, as well as the standard by which he lived his life. Allison had many joys in life, from his 4x4 Ford Broncos to spending time with his friends.

Yet nothing could ever compare to the joy he shared with his wife, son, family members and his inherited law enforcement family and friends. He fulfilled his duties both in life and in service to all, and the legacy he leaves

behind will forever live on.

Quotes in memory of Deputy Jared Allison

Sheriff Stone called Deputy Allison a "phenomenal officer."

"We ask everyone to keep Jared's family, as well as our deputies, in your prayers as we all grieve the loss of a hero who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving the citizens of Nash County," he said.

"It is with great sadness that I've learned of Deputy Allison's passing. He was serving our community to the end

as he watched over our safety while we celebrated Thanksgiving. Now we must look out for his wife and son as they begin to learn to navigate the coming days without him. My heart goes out to them. Please join me in supporting, comforting, and holding them in our thoughts and prayers," said Rocky Mount Mayor Sandy Roberson.

Maj. Allen Wilson with the NCSO said "He was respectful, humble and always wanted to do what was right. Jared stood out like a bright star. From the first time I met him, he had his big smile. It was always, 'Yes sir,' 'No sir.'"



Officers line up to enter the church for Allison's funeral service.



A riderless horse is part of a traditional funeral service for a fallen officer.



The late Deputy Jared Allison

Deputy Allison's wife, Brenae, said "Jared was not only a good human and a good deputy, but a good family man and husband. He enjoyed spending time with family, eating lots of good foods and sharing many memories and laughs. He was always the friend that was there for his friends, no matter what time of the day or night. He was always looking out for everyone, in every situation.

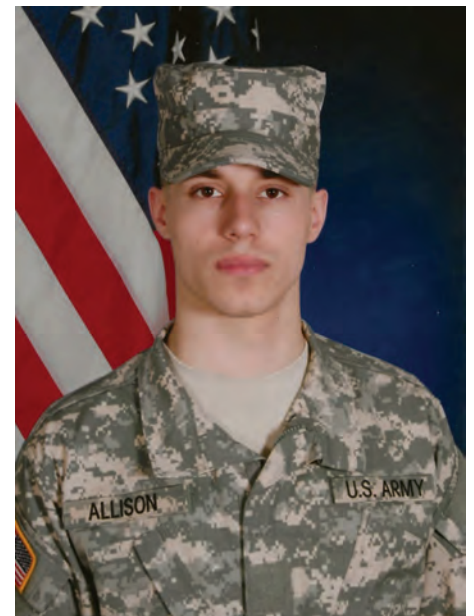
"He loved animals and was even on

an episode of 'Saved by the Barn' on Animal Planet, where he was involved in an animal rescue that he was called to while on duty. He spent many hours off-duty coordinating rescues for all the animals that were found on the property.

"He loved Outback, The Cheesecake Factory, Gushers and Fruit-by-the-foot. He could go from a serious officer to the funny family guy so seamlessly. Jared treated every single person with respect. There were many people that

Jared had arrested that later told Jared how much they liked him, and how much he made them feel like a person, not just a suspect. Jared was a by-the-book, rule-following man, and liked making people feel safe. The world has a giant hole in it without Jared Allison."

Deputy Allison was a valued member of the North Carolina Police Benevolent Association. In addition to providing line-of-duty death benefits, the North Carolina PBA and the Police Benevolent Foundation were able to raise additional funds to help Brenae.



Allison served in the Army



Fire officials hoist an American flag to honor fallen Deputy Jared Allison

GEORGIA PREVENTS LOCALITIES FROM DEFUNDING POLICE



PBA of GA North Central GA Chapter President Tim Hines and staff representative Patrick Cullinan joined Gov. Brian Kemp and other law enforcement officers in Barrow County for the signing of House Bill 286. This bill, championed by Rep. Houston Gaines, prohibits local governments from defunding the police. Many thanks to all of our legislators and Gov. Kemp who made this possible. (Photos provided by the Governor's Office)





Photos by Mike Haskey of Columbus Ledger-Enquirer

Beethoven watches as Lt. Cynthia "Shanon" Zeisloft makes instructional hand gestures to the deaf therapy dog.

MUSCOGEE CO., GA DEPUTY, THERAPY DOG TOP VOLUNTEERS

By Mark Rice
mrice@ledger-enquirer

A teenage boy with Huntington's disease could move only a finger, but his eyes lit up as he held the therapy dog's leash a month before he died in hospice care.

An elderly woman couldn't have any visitors in her room due to the coronavirus, but her spirit soared on Easter Sunday when she saw that same dog — dressed in bunny ears — through her window. Twin girls at a camp for grieving children were reluctant to share their feelings about the murder of their father, but they opened up while petting this canine named Beethoven.

He's a 7-year-old, 100-pound, marvelous mix of American bulldog, Shar-Pei, Alaskan malamute, bullmastiff and terrier. And he's deaf.

But thanks to his handler, Muscogee County Sheriff's Deputy Cynthia "Shanon" Zeisloft — better known as Lt. Z or simply Z — this dynamic Columbus duo has turned that disability into a beneficial ability.

Out of more than 260 nominations in the United States, the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization selected Z and Beethoven as the winners of the 2020 Volunteers are the Foundation of Hospice Award in the category of Specialized Volunteer for Pet Therapy Services and Pet Peace of Mind.

Z is a member of the Southern States Police Benevolent Association's West Georgia Chapter.

Katie Greene, volunteer coordinator for Columbus Hospice of Georgia & Alabama, explained why she nominated Z and Beethoven.

"No matter what I ask, she's willing to help out," Greene said. "Whether it's to come do therapy with Beethoven for staff and volunteers and patients, or help out with transporting pets to and from vet appointments when their owners can't, Z is a helper."

Z didn't know about the nomination, so winning the award was an even bigger surprise.

"I was very honored by that," she said.

From jaded to empathetic

Beethoven, adopted from Paws Humane, is a therapy dog owned by the sheriff's office. He was certified five years ago after six months of training through Pet Partners, based in Washington state.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March, Z and Beethoven

made 15-20 visits a month to the jail, hospices, hospitals, nursing homes, schools and libraries.

Since then, they've been to St. Francis Hospital twice just to visit staff, three or four times to Spring Harbor so residents could see Beethoven through their windows, and a few visits to the jail.

"Now, he's not doing anything," Z said, "and he doesn't understand why I'm leaving him at home."

But she took advantage of the downtime to get crisis-team certified with Beethoven.

These visits with Beethoven have made Z more empathetic, she said.

"Being in law enforcement, I get jaded," she said. "Well, having Beethoven has changed that perspective for me. ... It's changed my perspective on being nicer to people."

Donna Morgan, CEO of Columbus Hospice, called the visits from Z and Beethoven "life-changing" for the

staff as well. The hospice house has 25 rooms, 158 employees and 123 volunteers, who serve more than 1,200 new patients per year in the hospice house, personal residences, assisted living centers and nursing homes.

"Animals are very calming, very soothing," she said. "Unconditional love is an understatement. ... They accept us. They don't care if we're having a bad day. They make it better, and they don't know what we're normally like. They still love us despite being ourselves. It's just very soothing."

Z cherishes the memories of patients gushing with joy when Beethoven enters their room or they glimpse him walking down the hall.

She keeps a journal of the especially touching moments among the thousands of visits they have made during the past five years.

"It's really cool to know that that's probably the last time they're going to see a dog," she said, "and I feel privileged to be a part of that."

Z calls Beethoven "a rock star" in popularity and "chill" in temperament.

"I'm very fortunate to witness and be a part of him making an impact to the people that are here," she said. "It's a blessing to see."

Training

Dane Collins, the jail's former commander, asked Z in 2015 whether she would be interested in implementing a therapy dog program.

The timing was right. Her father and her dog had died that year, so this was a constructive way for Z to channel her grief.

"The next thing I know," she said, "(Beethoven) and I are out in the hot August sun training and learning hand signals and doing all this stuff."

Paws Humane named Beethoven after the famous classical music composer, who gradually lost his hearing. Beethoven was born deaf, but Z considers his disability an advantage for a therapy dog, especially in the jail.





Lt. Cynthia “Shanon” Zeisloft and Beethoven, a deaf therapy dog

“He’s not susceptible to the banging, the loud noises, the screaming,” she said.

Z uses hand signals to give Beethoven commands, such as sit, stay, fist bump and even talk — or bark.

She tells children who like to read to speak with Beethoven so he can feel the vibrations of their voices.

“It’s the coolest thing,” she said. “Some of them are really, really shy. But when you bring the dog into the classroom, they really open up.”

The only time she recalled Beethoven acting out of control is when a child approached him while holding an ice cream cone. It was level with Beethoven’s mouth, so he naturally ate it.

Z also laughed as she recalled when the inappropriate eating went the other way. A patient with dementia blissfully

ate the dog treats she was given to feed Beethoven.

Impact

Z took photos of Beethoven’s visit with that teenager battling Huntington’s disease. When she gave them to his grateful father, “He lost it,” she said.

The boy didn’t recognize Z and Beethoven during their next visit a few weeks later. The father requested them to return that night, and the boy remembered them.

“I really felt like they had a good connection,” she said.

Several more weeks later, when the father told her that his son had died, Z recalled, “The father was so thankful for Beethoven.”

No wonder Beethoven is featured among 38 therapy and service dogs in the 2017 book “Loyal” by National Geographic.

“We deal with some very heavy things here at hospice sometimes,” Greene said. “We get to help people and families that have some of the hardest times in their lives, and (Z and Beethoven) bring a lightness to the situation, something that can take their minds off some of the hardships that they’re going through and some of the difficult decisions.”

Beethoven and Z show how human beings can comfort folks in distress — even when they don’t have a pet to lead the way.

“Being your genuine self,” Greene said, “being present with them, even if you’re not saying anything, just being a presence for people, a genuine presence, where they know that you really want to be there and help them, means so much.”

(This article is re-printed with permission from the Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, where it was published Oct. 28, 2020.)

CONCORD POLICE OFFICER BECOMES 15,000th MEMBER OF NCPBA



Concord police Officer Fred Riddick

Officer Fred Riddick recently became the 15,000th member of the North Carolina Police Benevolent Association.

Riddick was born and raised in Portsmouth, Va., and moved to North Carolina in 2007. He has four sisters, a brother, and lots of nieces and nephews. Riddick graduated from Churchland High School in Portsmouth where he was the company commander for the JROTC. He was part of the JROTC Rifle Team, and played volleyball.

After high school, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps, where he served honorably from 2005 to 2013. He completed two tours: one in Africa in 2007 and one in Iraq in 2009.

In between deployments, he graduated from Johnson & Wales University in Charlotte, which is where he met his wife, Jessica. After the military and working in various restaurants, he decided to go back to school at CPCC to earn a degree in criminal justice, which he completed in 2016. He then went on to Liberty University to complete his bachelor's degree in 2019.

"I got into law enforcement because I've always wanted to be one of those people that takes care of other people," said Riddick. "The military helped shape my desire for service."

Riddick attended BLET at Rowan Cabarrus Community College after being hired by the Concord Police Department.

"So far, my experience as a police officer has been great, primarily

because of my current assignment as an SRO," Riddick said. "I work at an elementary school and it is amazing. It's so fulfilling to be that role model and pillar for those kids. It brings me joy to see their faces every day and the hugs and high fives are the icing on the cake.

"My goal as an SRO is to just be there for those kids," he continued. "If I can reach just one child and help them shape their lives for the better, I've done my job.

Riddick recently made the Concord PD SWAT team and attended Basic SWAT school.

"So far, that experience has been great as well," he said. "It's truly an eye opener to see the various things operators are expected to do and all the training involved."

Riddick recently graduated from the Drug Abuse Resistance Education instructor school. He spent two weeks in intensive classes where he learned

how to instruct on various topics from the DARE curriculum. This program is a police officer-led series of classes that teaches children from kindergarten through 12th grade how to resist peer pressure and live productive drug-free and violence-free lives.

When he is not in uniform, Riddick spends time at home or camping with his family, which includes his wife and two children, Fred and Kyla. He enjoys working in his garden and making YouTube videos with his children. Making sure his family is taken care of was the primary reason Riddick joined PBA.

"I joined the PBA because I want to make sure that in the event something happens to me, that my family is taken care of," he said. "Also, if I am involved in something, I will have someone on my side. It's always nice to have more friends."

(Riddick is a member of the Southern States Police Benevolent Association's Southern Piedmont Chapter.)



Fred with his wife, Jessica, and their kids, Kyla and Fred

(Family photo)

DEFUNDING COPS SHORTCHANGES CITIZENS

By Brandon McGaha
NC Staff Representative

Asheville, N.C., is known for its beautiful mountains, breweries, restaurants and people. Recently, Asheville has also become known for crime. In June 2020, in the wake of the George Floyd incident, Asheville became the center for the defunding movement in the western mountains of North Carolina. The history of the city officials in Asheville openly opposing law enforcement is well-documented. The relationship among cops, council and citizens has been contentious at best.

A 2014 Asheville Citizen-Times article by Jon Ostendorff addresses the 44 officers who signed a petition of “no confidence” in police Chief William Anderson. They accused Anderson of improperly intervening in an investigation his agency held into a car crash involving Anderson’s son. Anderson publicly cleared his son of wrongdoing when that was not the case. Anderson then was accused of retaliating against officers involved in reporting his actions.

Whistleblowers also brought forward massive issues with the evidence room, which prompted a large-scale investigation by district attorney Ron Moore and outside sources. Ultimately, the petition and interactions between the chief and his officers led to Anderson’s resignation in December 2014. Anderson’s troubles should have come as no surprise to anyone. A simple Google check revealed a checkered history of problematic leadership from Anderson virtually everywhere he has served. City officials chose Anderson anyway, ignoring other well-qualified candidates without the baggage that Anderson brought with him.

City council members showed their lack of support once again in 2017 following a police encounter with a combative suspect. During this incident, the officer and his trainee attempted to write a

citation to a person jay-walking after repeated attempts to warn the suspect failed. The suspect refused to comply with officers and attempted to flee, forcing officers to try to restrain him. During the struggle, the man broke free and ran a short distance before one of the officers caught him. A fight ensued whereby the man attempted to grab the officer’s taser. The summarized incident led to widespread negative criticism from city council members, with one member publicly saying that the Asheville Police Department was “structurally racist.” PBA members once again took action and, after several meetings with council members and Mayor Manheimer, the mayor issued a public apology for the statement.

In 2018, Buncombe County District Attorney Todd Williams demonstrated his total lack of support for the law enforcement community when he allowed a career criminal to walk on a plea deal on attempted murder of a law enforcement officer. Ronald Patton, a multiple violent offender, walked out of the courtroom with time served and a reduced misdemeanor plea to resisting arrest. Patton was initially arrested for an outstanding warrant and subsequently charged with assault with a deadly



Asheville Mayor
Esther Manheimer



District Attorney
Todd Williams

weapon while inflicting serious bodily injury and with the intent to kill when he took Officer Matt Metcalf’s taser from him during a fight. Patton then pressed the taser against Metcalf’s head and activated the taser multiple times before another officer could intervene. Not only did the district attorney’s office not consult with Metcalf before the so-called plea negotiation, but they also went on to state to the local media that “officers were okay with the plea arrangement.” This statement was false. When PBA members, including Metcalf, met with the district attorney regarding the matter, their concerns were ignored.

In 2019, the NCPBA Mountain Chapter objected to efforts by the City of Asheville and the Southern Coalition for Social Justice to restrict officers’ ability to conduct consent searches. The SCSJ misrepresented traffic stop information by race and consent searches, to make it appear police officers were improperly targeting minority communities. Chapter President Rick Tullis and NCPBA staff addressed the council on the real reasons for traffic stops and consent searches in these communities. Crime data clearly showed that the calls for service and citizen complaints were directly correlated and proportional to actual encounters of violent crime and drug-related incidents. Eventually, a compromise was reached between the council and the PBA. Then-interim Asheville police Chief R. White included language in a new written consent search policy that allowed officers the opportunity to defer from the policy when officers had reasonable grounds for conducting such searches pursuant to existing constitutional and decisional law. While PBA believes such a policy remained unnecessary and counterproductive both to the officers and defendants, the fact that PBA representatives were able to reach a compromise with executive staff and the city council at that time was a positive step forward.

On June 29, 2020, Williams once again demonstrated his disdain for law enforcement when he improperly brought a criminal charge against Senior Officer Anthony Sorangelo. In February 2020, Sorangelo was trying to arrest an impaired assaultive suspect. As officers were trying to place the handcuffed suspect in the back of a cruiser, the suspect got onto his back and began kicking Sorangelo in the groin. Sorangelo delivered one effective strike to the suspect, gaining compliance. PBA staff and legal counsel advised the department and Williams it was not a criminal matter. The force used was within departmental standards, policy, procedure and law, and in keeping with the officer's training.

Nevertheless, PBA's concerns were once again ignored, and Sorangelo was charged with misdemeanor assault. Following the unlawful assault charge, Williams made the unprecedented decision to Giglio the officer. Using a decades-old U.S. Supreme Court case, *Giglio v. United States* (1972), concerning failure to disclose police officer untruthfulness, Williams misapplied the Giglio Doctrine to the case of a criminal assault. Following what appears to be an intentional misapplication law on top of a fraudulent criminal charge, Sorangelo was fired by the Asheville Police Department. On Feb. 12, 2021, more than a year after the officer was charged, Chief District Court Judge Calvin Hill dismissed the case against Sorangelo at the end of the state's evidence. Hill said the officer should never have been charged. The verdict was announced without the defense even having to be heard as prosecution witnesses admitted under cross-examination that they saw no assault in the actions taken by Sorangelo. As PBA now prepares to assist Sorangelo in getting his job back, PBA is exploring options in addressing the actions of the district attorney's office, the City of Asheville and others who appear to have played a role in this travesty of justice.

Since the George Floyd incident,

Asheville has been dealing with severe riots and actions by anti-law enforcement groups calling for the police's defunding. This call has been compounded by the total lack of police support by Asheville City Council. As recently reported by local media, Asheville has been given a new recognition as named in a 2021 report by the online media publication of the Wall Street Journal.

According to the report, Asheville has been named in the top 10 percent of America's most dangerous cities. That fact should come as no surprise given the history of lack of support from city leadership. Becoming the center for the Western North Carolina defunding movement has weakened officers' ability and desire to perform their duties. It has resulted in an unprecedented exodus of officers leaving the department.

"We're up," Asheville police Deputy Chief Mike Yelton was quoted as saying about the city's violent crime rate. "Crime is up nationwide, but particularly in the city of Asheville. For a city our size, we're not within the scale we should be."

Kimberly King with WLOS News reported, "The violent crime rate continued to climb in 2020, when 10 people were killed, four more than in 2019. Of those 10, eight were African-American -- seven men and one juvenile."

In 2020, APD reported 45 people were shot, 57 were stabbed and 652 people made emergency calls for shootings. Of the 45 people shot, 39 were men, and 37 of those were African American men. Of those shot, 46 percent was between the ages of 16 and 25. One factor for the increase in crime is police officers are leaving the Asheville Police Department at alarming rates. Television station WLOS reported, as of November 2020, 53 police officers left the department, and 49 of them left since June 1, 2020. As of January 2021, that number has risen to over 70 officers, with several more officers actively searching for other jobs. The mass withdrawal of officers

began after the city was hit hard by people calling for defunding the police department.

These protests included painting a "Defund the Police" mural on the street at the police department and leaving a coffin in the lobby. There were reports directly to the NCPBA that officers were ordered to stand down and allow the protestors to paint the street illegally. Officials have allowed the mural to remain in place as officers have to cross it daily as they go to work. These reports were the latest in an ongoing trend of city leaders not supporting the police.

Former Asheville police Sgt. Ethan French told WLOS one of the reasons he turned in his badge was, "Various members of the governing body would come over and tell us (APD officers) that they appreciated us and then the next day would make public statements that were totally opposite from the things that they told us. So, I don't know anyone in the private sector who would put up with that for very long. There were a series of situations that occurred during the protests that caused a lot of people to just throw their hands up and say, 'I'm done.' I think I did the same thing," French said.

In response to this cry for defunding, the City of Asheville re-allocated \$770,000 from the police department budget. The police budget decrease happened after the extraordinary refusal of council members to vote on the budget in July 2020. It became apparent the then-Asheville City Council was going to hold the budget hostage until drastic cuts took place.

Asheville's first Black city manager, Debra Campbell, cautioned the council that structures were not in place for large budget cuts. It appears clear that Campbell is being pressured to work with police leaders to comply with the council's instructions. To her credit, she has been somewhat hesitant thus far to make widespread cuts.

State officials have now stepped in to address this issue and the targeting of

the police. Republican state Sen. Chuck Edwards introduced Senate Bill 100 that would withhold state funds from municipalities advocating for their police departments' defunding.

"The brave men and women who serve in law enforcement simply must have the adequate financial backing to ensure they have the personnel, equipment and resources they need to do their job and protect their lives," Edwards said. "We are already seeing crime rates skyrocket in areas where radical threats and efforts are being made to defund police. I intend to stop those defunding efforts in their tracks."

Democratic state Rep. Brian Turner said "Everyone is attaching their meaning to the phrase 'Defund the Police.' Without a common understanding of what it means, it's become difficult to have an objective discussion around what changes are needed in public safety. While I know we need to look at new ways to address our community's challenges, recent calls for a 50 percent reduction in the budget fail to think through how that would present itself in everyday life and safety across our city. I think we all know firsthand how well-trained, quick-thinking officers put public safety first and earn the community's trust. As a member of the North Carolina General Assembly, I have a responsibility to work with local governments to help enact policies



Sen. Chuck Edwards



Rep. Brian Turner

needed at the state level to make sure law enforcement has the tools they need to do their jobs and to keep everyone safe."

While in Asheville, state legislators have a more measured conversation, some of our state's executive leaders have gone to the extreme. This conversation has become more challenging as we find how North Carolina leadership feels about officers.

In a report produced by Democratic co-chairs North Carolina Associate Supreme Court Justice Anita Earls and Attorney General Josh Stein, the North Carolina Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice refer to a problem with law enforcement committing "extrajudicial killings." The PBA was previously refused "a seat at the table" on this commission. For some background, Earls is a founding member of the anti-law enforcement group, Southern Coalition for Social Justice. So, while disappointing, it is not surprising that the task force would conclude similar anti-law enforcement animus.

An extrajudicial killing is "... the killing of a person by governmental authorities without the sanction of any judicial proceeding or legal process. Extrajudicial punishments are by their nature unlawful, since they bypass the due process of the legal jurisdiction in which they occur. Extrajudicial killings often target leading political, trade union, dissident, religious, and social figures and may be carried out by the state government or other state authorities like the armed forces and police. Extrajudicial killings and death squads are common in the Middle East, Central America, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, several nations or regions in Africa, Jamaica,



NC Associate Supreme Court Justice Anita Earls (Photo Provided by News & Observer)

Kosovo, parts of South America, allegedly Russia, Uzbekistan, parts of Thailand and in the Philippines."

Some of our highest-elected officials' default to feeling the use of deadly force by law enforcement officers is unlawful. Von Kliem, J.D., LL.M, of the Force Science Institute finds, "As it sits now, there is a constant tension between traditional law and order interests (e.g., crime reduction, public safety, law enforcement) and the government's broader efforts to achieve 'social justice' (the reduction of unearned disadvantages and systemic inequality). The result is that officers are no longer judged solely on the lawfulness of their conduct, but instead on whether their actions support the larger social justice efforts, including renewed efforts to dismantle systemic racism."

Asheville may have started as the epicenter for this movement in North Carolina. However, this attempt to subvert law and order and handcuff the very officers called upon to protect our great state is spreading throughout North Carolina. NCPBA is fighting across the state and in the General Assembly to maintain our members' ability to perform their job in the safest way possible. It remains to be seen what will eventually happen in Asheville. As more officers continue to leave the agency, the question becomes, "How does Asheville protect its citizens?" The department has already had to take unprecedented measures to maintain the minimum manning levels to allow officers to perform their jobs safely. The agency has cut out or reduced significantly many of the services it used to provide the citizens. The investigations unit is now being tasked with a rotating schedule of detectives working patrol shifts to maintain the most basic services.

Time will tell whether the newly-elected council members will tone down some of the rhetoric and work with the police on actual solutions. At least two outspoken opponents of law enforcement are no longer on the council, and the first all-

female council in the city's history was elected this past November.

One thing is certain. Suppose these elected officials within our state continue to call for defunding police departments and demonstrate their lack of support for law enforcement in general? In that case, officers will continue to abandon the profession, and crime rates will continue to rise. Citizens will continue to be increasingly tormented by the criminal. There will be a tipping point, of course, but after, how much cost? How long will it take to regain the confidence of the people in its government? How long to regain the officers' confidence to do their jobs as they have been trained? A government's first obligation is to attend to the safety and well-being of its citizenry. This obligation is the one area the government cannot continue to shortchange the citizens.

It is not just our duty; it is our most fundamental and constitutional requirement as a nation.

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MIRACLE AND FAITH GIVE MEMBER ANOTHER CHANCE

By Zilla Willoughby
Contributor to The Blue Review

Over the past several months, the North Carolina Division of the Southern States PBA and the Police Benevolent Foundation have raised funds to help Rick Tullis with medical expenses.

Rick is a sergeant with the Asheville Police Department. He also serves as the Mountain Chapter president of the NCPBA.

Rick has served in law enforcement since 1991 when he became a deputy sheriff with the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office. He worked his way up, becoming an FTO and SRT commander during his time there. Rick then worked for the Lake Lure Police Department as a sergeant and training coordinator for that agency.

In 2003, Rick joined the N.C. Justice Academy as a training coordinator for the Tactical Training Center. As part of his job, Rick had the opportunity to travel across the state and the country, delivering training on various use of force topics, firearms, officer safety, and responding to terrorist incidents. Rick was offered the opportunity to serve as the chief of police for the Biltmore County Police Department. It was here Rick honed his skills and training on leadership. Rick earned a Bachelor of Arts in criminal justice and a Master of Science in management and leadership along the way. Rick continues to serve as an adjunct instructor, focusing on leadership in law enforcement.

In addition, Rick holds specialized instructor certifications from the N.C. Department of Justice to include subject control, firearms, rapid deployment, and instructor certifications related to these topics. Rick has trained law enforcement and detention officers in specialized topic areas since 1996. Rick published several articles, and



Sgt. Rick Tullis and his wife, Lt. Angie Tullis

has presented training to public safety personnel at the local, state, national and international levels. He is a lifetime member and past board member of the International Association Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors.

His wife, Angie, is also in law enforcement and serves as a lieutenant in CID with the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office. Rick met his wife during a six-month leadership academy in 2011. He was teaching Emotional Intelligence and she thought he was the most motivational instructor that she had encountered. His passion, knowledge and dedication were unforgettable.

Rick was born with a rare heart condition called tetralogy of Fallot. TOF consists of four separate heart defects. He had open-heart surgery

when he was 3, and had no further issues until 2018 when he went into atrial fibrillation. This caused a blood clot that led to a stroke. He was walking the next day, and was back at work two months later.

Rick continued to do well until Oct. 24, 2020. While he and Angie were doing what they loved doing, traveling, Rick looked pale and thought it was just something he had eaten. Over the next few days, Rick got worse and that's when Angie persuaded him to seek medical attention.

On Oct. 27, Rick was admitted to ICU for pneumonia. Further diagnosis found that Rick had a staph infection related to a heart valve replacement he had the year before.

During his hospitalization, he was

placed on a ventilator and dialysis, and was in the fight for his life, as one doctor described. After a month in the hospital, Rick was released to an acute rehabilitation facility to help in his continued recovery. Although he lost 40 pounds during his hospital stay, doctors considered his recovery “a miracle.”

On Dec. 22, Rick finally got to go home after showing improvement. His tests showed that his levels were all good, including his white blood count. His CT scan showed improvement with his lungs.

Since his release, Rick has continued to work with his physical therapist to improve his health and overall strength and conditioning so that he is able to return to the job he loves. He has made significant strides, progressing at a rate ahead of schedule.

Angie Tullis has been overwhelmed by the support she and her husband have received. “I want to thank everyone with the PBF and SSPBA for your love, support, financial donations and prayers,” she said. “You have made an exceedingly difficult time in our lives much easier to manage.”

Rick Tullis shares his story

By Rick Tullis

This is my story -- at least the most important part of it and what led me to where I am today. Normally, it is not in my nature to talk about myself. But it is important here as it provides context to the message I want to convey. So please bear with me as you read my story.

I cannot be defeated, for my strength comes from the Lord. Although one day my physical body will be laid to rest, my spirit will rejoice eternally in the company of God. That is God’s promise to us. Although I have considered myself a Christian believer since I was young, I do not believe I fully embraced the meaning of truly having faith until what I call my “awakening.” This was my choice at the time.

When I say young, I was about 11 when I accepted Jesus as my savior and was baptized in a small Baptist church in the countryside in Western North Carolina. About a year later, I received confirmation into the Episcopal Church and served as an acolyte for the church. As what happens to many of us, I fell away from attending church regularly as I grew, although I remained a believer in Christ. Again, this was a choice.

However, it was not until my most recent battle, a battle for my life, that I came to realize that believing was not enough. I was not practicing faith as God instructs us to do, it is not enough to believe. Belief is based on a tangible and intellectual premise that someone or something exists. And like with Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny, that belief can be changed in light of other facts. Having faith, on the other hand, is actionable, it is a deeper commitment and it is belief in the absence of evidence or with little evidence. This is a choice that we must make. This is my story of my transformation from belief to having faith.

At the time of this writing, I serve as the training coordinator for a medium-sized police department in North Carolina. I have spent my entire adult life committing myself to the service to my community. Growing up in Florida, I knew since fourth grade that I wanted to become a law enforcement officer. That year, many mornings, as I waited at my bus stop, a deputy would be sitting there in his patrol car. He patiently entertained my questions and curiosity as a young boy looking for excitement. He had an instant impact on my life.

I was what you might call somewhat a rambunctious kid growing up in Florida, and later in North Carolina. I can certainly say that I tested my parents with my various antics. But I always knew I wanted to serve.

My story actually starts before that, when I was just 3. It was then that a

heart condition known as tetralogy of Fallot began to cause problems for me. I began having fainting spells. My condition got to the point that I had to have open heart surgery. In 1971 to 1972, there were only two hospitals in the country considered the places for pediatric cardiology. One was in Houston, Texas, and the other was Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. What a blessing for my parents that we lived a short five to six hours away from the top hospital in the country. The doctors did what they could for me with the technology and resources they had at the time. Luckily, it was enough. Until most recently, I have lived a completely healthy and active life with no issues.

I tell that part of my story, because I believe it has direct relevance to my service. I have always considered my profession a calling, but I know now that God had a plan for me. He blessed me with the best doctors in the country, that they may make my heart whole and provide me with the ability to accomplish all of the things I wished. Despite my original condition, my heart, according to my cardiologist, was healthier than 95 percent of the population.

In September 1990, at the age of 20, I enrolled in Basic Law Enforcement Training and completed my training in December 1990. I turned 21 in November so I was sworn in as a deputy sheriff for the local sheriff’s department in February 1991. I had done it. I had fulfilled my lifelong ambition. As I grew into the job, my desire to do my best and be better each day became a hallmark of my attitude and actions.

My desire to attend training became insatiable. I attended as much training as my lieutenant allowed and then I attended more training on my days off.

My focus became officer safety and mindset. I became convinced that proper mindset and attitude could overcome any obstacle. I attended training such as the Caliber Press

seminars on multiple occasions.

I have met presenters such as Lt. Clebe McClary, author of the book "Living Proof," and Trooper Bobby Smith, a Louisiana State Trooper who was blinded by a shotgun blast to his face. I have met Lt. Col. Dave Grossman on multiple occasions.

My training included an education in mindset and attitude through books by these men and Lt. Col. Jeff Cooper, Malcolm Gladwell, Gavin de Becker, Daniel Goleman, John Maxwell and Stephen Covey, to name a few. Throughout the course of my career, I developed into a voracious reader, wanting to consume every bit of knowledge about mindset and attitude and how they translate to officer safety and leadership.

I first realized my greater contribution to my fellow officers when I became a field training officer in 1994. It was then that I realized that I wanted to do more. My calling to be a law enforcement officer was not enough anymore. I want to train law enforcement officers. I enjoyed the opportunity to share my experience and training with others. Training other officers became my new passion, my additional calling. I doubled down on my own growth and training to better equip myself to become a better instructor. Throughout my early years as an instructor, my areas of expertise involved officer safety-related issues, firearms and use of force applications. In the last several years, I shifted somewhat to leadership and emotional intelligence. I thoroughly enjoy sharing those experiences with others in the training environment. Little did I know then that God was preparing me for my greatest challenge.

As of February 2021, I have dedicated 30 years to this profession. I can honestly say that I still have a passion to serve and have not experienced the burnout that so many others have who reach their retirement age. I believe much of that is attributed to the type



Sgt. Rick Tullis on vacation

of training that I research and deliver. Proper mindset and attitude are core principles in much of what I teach and I sincerely believe that has helped me find strength of conviction in my own career.

All of that changed for me Oct. 26, 2020. Two days prior, my wife, Angie, and I spent the day at Dollywood. It is one of our favorite daytime or weekend getaways. I had eaten some brisket at the park and, as the day progressed, I became ill. I was so ill that by the time we drove the two hours home, I was visibly shaking and had vomited all of my lunch.

Angie took my temperature and it registered 102.4 F. I attributed it to food poisoning and resisted her pleas to go to the doctor. All that Sunday was much of the same for me -- fever, shaking and nausea. Angie took me to the emergency room the next day, Monday, Oct. 26. The last thing I remember was sitting in a wheelchair getting ready to be wheeled back to a room in the ER. Angie will tell you that I continued to talk with medical staff as they explained to me that I had a kidney stone.

While I vaguely recall bits of that conversation, I cannot remember the context of that conversation in its entirety, and moreover, I do not remember Angie being in the room. In my mind she had gone to move her car to a parking space and had not yet returned as they were taking me to the back from the admissions waiting area.

What happens next has had a profound impact on how I now choose to live my life. I was septic and my body completely shut down due to a staph infection that developed from a kidney infection. I was intubated for several days. At one point, doctors were only giving me a four-hour window whereby it was more likely that I was not going to survive.

My wife said while she was praying over my body, she and the doctor went out of the room and he told her she needed to prepare herself, because this was not going to end how she hoped. My experience during this time was surreal. Like many of you, I have heard or read stories about near-death experiences. What I can vividly recall is that I was watching myself from a third person perspective. I was lying on a bed or

gurney of some sort and my upper body was in a plain white room. There were no doors or windows, nor were there any pictures or other decorative materials on the walls -- plain white walls, that was it. The only difference was where my lower body was supposed to be. My body appeared to be divided by a wall of glass that was opaque. I was not cut in half, my body was still whole and intact, but this wall of glass that I could not see through, passed through my body. I could make out shadows on the other side and I could tell there was something important happening as there was a lot of chatter and rushing about going on. I could not make out the conversation. I could hear the many voices but it was all unintelligible to me. I was afraid.

Something urgent was happening and it appeared to be happening to me although I could not be sure. I had a sense that I was being taken somewhere but I knew I did not want to go. My reason was very simple. I was afraid, because as I said earlier, I did not recall Angie returning from parking her car. I was afraid because I did not want to go anywhere unless someone could assure me that she knew where I was and where I was going. I could see myself yelling and arguing with the people on the other side of that glass. I was becoming increasingly frustrated because nobody was hearing me or paying attention to me. That is when I quit being afraid and just became angry and determined that somebody was going to give me the satisfaction and answer that I was seeking. I would not go anywhere without my wife knowing exactly where I was.

From my standpoint, this was a cycle that repeated itself multiple times. I was in a battle for someone to pay attention to me. Little did I know at the time, I was literally in a battle for my life. All of my training and experience, all of the countless hours of research and instruction were put into action. Through God's will, I validated everything I had been teaching. That



Rick and Angie Tullis

was the choice I had made at the time.

When I was finally brought back to consciousness, my wife shared with me what was actually happening during that time. I had been under for five days and she had been praying over my body endlessly. I spent a total of just over four weeks in the hospital and almost four more weeks in a rehab center. During my time in the hospital I could not eat anything so I had a feeding tube for much of my time there. I lost 40 pounds and was on dialysis for my kidneys. I was finally able to come home three days before Christmas and, I will tell you, the importance of the significance was not lost on me. As of this writing, I am home recovering well and making progress. I am off of dialysis and my kidneys have seemed to have recovered. I still have work to do regaining my strength. But my plan is to return to duty this spring. That is my choice.

The doctors and nurses, I am told, relate my recovery as nothing short of a pure miracle. As I met various doctors and nurses who saw me and the condition I was in those first days, they related to me their astonishment at my recovery. I know it was God's work and his plan for me to remain. He gave me a choice back in that room. I could choose to go with God or I could choose to stay a little longer. I now have come to understand that my demands that my wife know where I was, was in

fact me making the choice to remain a little longer.

I am eternally grateful to God for allowing me that privilege. I know He has a plan for me and this is a part of that plan. I told you earlier that I have always believed in God and Jesus Christ as my Savior. The difference now is that my belief has been reinforced by conviction and faith in knowing that death will come one day for all of us and I do not fear it. My lack of fear is not based on some courageous macho way, but in a secure and peace of mind way of knowing that God has a plan for us all.

It is my hope that my story touches someone in an impactful way. That is my purpose, that is God's will. If you have doubts, if your faith has been shaken, please take comfort from my story that God is watching, He has a plan for us all. He will care for you and comfort you as He has done for my wife and me. You do have a choice.

I know more now than ever before that I cannot be defeated, for my strength comes from the Lord. Although one day my physical body will be laid to rest, my spirit will rejoice eternally in the company of God. That is His promise to us.

Finally, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to all of the police officers, sheriff deputies, troopers, and corrections and probation officers for their support and contributions during this challenging time. I was touched on an extremely emotional level to receive all the prayers from all of the members from across the state. I would also like to thank all of the folks who were responsible for setting up the PBF account for me and my family. The Police Benevolent Foundation does such great work. I have had the opportunity to work with them on several occasions and they are truly top-notch folks. To be on the receiving end was truly meaningful to my family and me. Thank you all so much for your donations, prayers and support.

ATTORNEY SPOTLIGHT: DUBOS, WOLLESON PROVIDE EXPERTISE

By Joni Fletcher Cawthon
SSPBA director of legal services

Attorneys Michael L. “Mickey” DuBos and P. Scott Wolleson have represented PBA members in north Louisiana for 15 years.

Mickey and Scott, partners in the firm Breithaupt, DuBos and Wolleson, are quick to respond when PBA contacts them to seek assistance for members.

In fact, it is not unusual for DuBos and Wolleson to initiate contact with PBA when they know of a PBA member needing representation.

Mickey DuBos is an Air Force veteran and a graduate of the Loyola University School of Law.

Scott Wolleson received his J.D. from the Louisiana State University School of Law.

Both have been practicing law for over 25 years. Both are experienced civil and criminal litigators and practice routinely in state and federal court.

DuBos and Wolleson have garnered a reputation as fierce advocates for law enforcement officers, particularly those in north Louisiana.

They routinely handle disciplinary matters for PBA members, often with those members seeing their discipline reduced or removed completely during their appeal process.

DuBos and Wolleson have represented PBA members through all phases of the internal affairs investigative process and, at times, have been able to head off discipline before it was ever imposed on the officers.



Michael L. ‘Mickey’ DuBos and P. Scott Wolleson

“When we have members needing assistance in the northern Louisiana area, I’m always confident that Mickey and Scott are willing to help,” said Dale Preiser, SSPBA staff attorney.

“It’s pretty typical that our members are familiar with the reputations of these attorneys for getting good results for police officers,” Preiser continued.

But it’s not just in disciplinary matters that DuBos and Wolleson excel on behalf of PBA members. During their tenures as PBA panel attorneys, DuBos and Wolleson have repeatedly dropped everything to come to the aid of an officer who has been involved in a shooting incident, regardless of the hour.

On numerous occasions, they have responded to the scene of a critical incident or have arrived at the police department to meet with officers before any statements are given to

investigating agencies.

And when the unthinkable happened and PBA member Jody Ledoux was indicted for negligent homicide in 2015, DuBos and Wolleson represented the member through PBA from the night of the incident all the way through his trial, obtaining a not guilty verdict for him.

In handling more than 100 PBA cases, Mickey DuBos and Scott Wolleson have proven to be valuable and effective parts of the PBA legal team.

Once a PBA member’s case is sent to them, they are committed to working toward a positive resolution for the member, all the while being mindful of PBA resources and of communicating effectively with PBA legal staff.

Louisiana PBA members who have DuBos or Wolleson representing them are certainly in good hands.

DNR POLICE OFFICERS THRIVING IN FIRST PBA CHAPTER IN WV

By Steve Haines
West Virginia Natural Resources
Chapter president

Five years ago, West Virginia's Natural Resources Chapter police officers benefited greatly after the creation their newly-formed PBA chapter, which was the first in West Virginia's history.

The chapter members and the political action committee quickly went to work lobbying, with assistance of PBA Executive Director Sean McGowan, and managed to defy all odds to bring a critically-needed pay raise to West Virginia's officers.

The agency's director, Stephen McDaniel, and Col. Jerry Jenkins agreed that the officers needed a pay raise as the agency suffered from a loss of well-qualified officers seeking better wages, and recruitment of replacement officers was difficult to say the least.

Although the Division of Natural Resources generated some of its own funding, the difficulty was to convince legislators to agree to a pay raise at the same time the state was enduring financial issues. The PBA kept the lobbying officers organized, shared experience and knowledge, and provided support.

Many considered the pay raise endeavor an impossible task. However, the legislators overwhelmingly agreed with a vote of 132 to 2 to provide the West Virginia Natural Resources Chapter with the ability to get the increase in compensation.

As a result, PBA membership increased as the officers gained respect for the SSPBA and its abilities. With a supportive agency director and colonel, chapter members decided it was time to set another goal. This goal, however, would be more significant. The officers set their sights on their own retirement system. The retirement plan would not

only let them retire with appropriate compensation but, more importantly, would protect them and their survivors against financial devastation in the unfortunate event of an officer's death or injury.

Prior to the attempt, West Virginia Natural Resources police officers were vulnerable as they were placed by default within the Public Employees Retirement System, which in no way addressed the increased risks inherited and endured by first responders.

The state managed several retirement plans for other groups that cut away from PERS. Those groups included state troopers, city police officers, sheriffs' deputies, municipal firefighters and EMTs. Even the teachers and judges got a retirement system to fit needs not addressed by the default PERS system.

However, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources law enforcement officers were not included in the other state-managed plans as they were employer-specific. West Virginia Natural Resources police officers modeled a retirement plan after the Deputy Sheriffs Retirement System. That system was created in 1998 after several deputies were injured and left to financial despair as members of PERS.

PERS total disability benefits were only 50 percent of the officer's wage if the officer was injured in the line of duty. Depending on the length of service in the tenure status of the officer, a death benefit to a surviving spouse may be a one-time lump sum of the officer's wage in the amount of 4 percent that the officer contributed to his own retirement.

Every other first responder plan offered a 90 percent total disability benefit to a critically-injured officer, or a 90 percent compensation of the officer's annual pay rate per year to a surviving spouse for life.

Several PBA chapter members committed an exorbitant amount of time to the effort of obtaining a new retirement system to protect all DNR police officers. Although PBA lobbying members came up short on three different legislative sessions and felt the weighty concern of knowing their fellow law enforcement officers were left in continued jeopardy, the PBA chapter members never lost sight of their mission. They kept their goal in mind throughout the year, continuing to strive for support.

During the legislative session they were the constant, and sometimes hourly, driving force of the progression of the West Virginia Natural Resources Police Officers Retirement System.

Finally, during the 2020 legislative session, the West Virginia Natural Resources police officers took a place next to their fellow law enforcement officers with their own West Virginia Natural Resources Police Officers Retirement System, as the legislators voted 132-0 in favor.

As an added bonus, the West Virginia officers found out that they no longer needed to pay state income tax on their retirement pensions, which was a benefit for all other retired officers under their own plans. The PBA and its members had attempted to rectify that situation in prior legislative sessions.

Since then, membership recruitment has increased to a level not seen in years. Many chapter members credit a supportive DNR Director Stephen McDaniel, Col. Jerry Jenkins and the dedication of several fully-committed PBA chapter members to make this retirement system a reality. The system will not only change the lives of every West Virginia Natural Resources police officer across the state, but it will forever change the lives of natural resources police officers for generations to come.

TENN. EMPLOYERS CONTINUE TO LEAVE OFFICERS UNPROTECTED

By Joni Fletcher Cawthon
Director of Legal Services

“This letter is to inform you that after careful consideration and review of our records, [employing agency] will not be representing you in your individual capacity in the above referenced lawsuit. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this matter.”

With those two sentences, a Tennessee PBA member was recently advised that he was on his own when it came to defending himself in a lawsuit that arose from his on-the-job actions as a school resource officer. Fortunately for that member, PBA was there to pick up his full defense.

This is certainly not the first time that PBA has had to step in to directly defend a Tennessee member named in a lawsuit. Over the years, there have been multiple instances where the Tennessee Municipal League as well as employing agencies such as Chattanooga and Hamilton County have not provided direct defense to SSPBA members named in civil lawsuits for matters arising out of the performance of their law enforcement duties.

In such instances, SSPBA has had to step in and retain counsel to file an answer for the members in their individual capacities and to directly defend the member for the duration of the case.

PBA's legal defense benefit provides members with attorney representation for matters arising out of and in the scope of employment and their duties as law enforcement officers.

To be eligible under the benefit, a member must have been a PBA member in good standing prior to the incident and maintain membership in good standing status from the time of the incident and throughout the resolution of the case.

(See the Legal Defense Benefit, Policy No. 00-16 posted on the Legal section of the website at www.sspba.org.)

While the benefit does not cover judgments and settlements, it pays attorney fees and associated costs in defending the member.

In most civil matters, the member's employer provides primary representation with the PBA assigning an attorney to monitor the case to ensure that the member's interests are protected.

When the employer declines to cover the member, however, PBA handles the direct defense.

Throughout the states covered by PBA, it is far more likely that a Tennessee member will be excluded from defense coverage by his employer than in any other state, and this has been the case for many years.

PBA legal expenditures for civil matters in Tennessee consistently run significantly higher than in other PBA divisions. Whereas it is typical in other states for insurers to cover members in their individual capacities through a reservation of rights and assignment of conflict counsel, it is not unusual at all in Tennessee for the employer to deny coverage completely.

Without SSPBA's involvement, these officers would be wiped out

financially as they would be forced to hire legal representation on their own.

Currently, PBA is providing direct representation for a Hamilton County deputy who had an altercation with a non-compliant suspect in 2018. That altercation was videoed and spread on social media, and investigations by TBI and the FBI ensued.

When a lawsuit was filed by the suspect in 2019, the county declined to represent the member. Rather than assigning separate counsel for the member and waiting to see the outcome of the criminal investigations, the county simply left the member to fend for himself.

PBA therefore proceeded with direct defense from the outset, including attorney fees and expert witness fees, which have totaled over \$64,000 so far, with no end in sight.

While conflicts do arise in lawsuits filed in other states, it is rare that law enforcement agencies leave their employees unrepresented.

At least one state—Mississippi—even has a statute that requires that employers provide a civil defense for their law enforcement officers unless a court finds that the officer acted outside the course and scope of his or her employment.

PBA historical evidence shows that it is truly a Tennessee phenomenon where employers are so quick to cast aside responsibility for defending their law enforcement officers.

All Tennessee law enforcement officers need to be aware of this risk and need to join PBA to ensure they are legally protected.

DEPUTY HENDRIX'S LEGACY OF SERVICE WON'T BE FORGOTTEN

By Katharine Jefcoats
SSPBA staff writer
By Zilla Willoughby
Contributor to The Blue Review

Every once in a while, a person comes along who touches countless lives. That is how friends and family remember Henderson County Detective Ryan Hendrix, who was shot and killed confronting an armed subject in Henderson County on Sept. 10, 2020.

A property owner found their car being broken into by the armed subject. The owner and the suspect exchanged gunfire after the suspect located a gun in the car.

Hendrix and other deputies arrived and confronted the subject. They learned he was also wanted for a parole violation. The man initially complied with commands but then grabbed the handgun and opened fire. A round struck Hendrix. The detective's partners returned fire and killed the subject.

Hendrix was transported to a local hospital where he died, but not before donating his organs and continuing to save lives. Hendrix was only 35. He served proudly in the U.S. Marine Corps and with the Henderson County Sheriff's Office for eight years. He is survived by his two children, 9 and 6, and his fiancée.

Over 1,000 people gathered Sept. 13 to honor the life of Hendrix. People of all ages joined in song and prayer as Sheriff Lowell Griffin and several HCSO chaplains spoke about Hendrix.

Pastor David Lewkowicz, one of five HCSO chaplains, put together the 90-minute service. The memorial service included scripture reading, singing and other tributes to the former deputy and SWAT team member.

"The community coming together, that's the big thing," said the pastor.



Fallen Detective Ryan Hendrix

"We wanted to put something together to not just honor the family and honor Ryan, but also the men and women of the sheriff's department, too. They're really hurting.

"It's wonderful seeing the community come together," Lewkowicz continued. "We're all just trying to be as supportive as we can right now."

The sheriff echoed that sentiment.

"Tonight, we're hurting," Griffin said. "The Hendrix family will always be a part of the sheriff's office family. Ryan died protecting the quality of life that so many people in this area enjoy."

Emily Wilkins, Hendrix's fiancée, agreed with the two men but also reflected on Hendrix as a great father.

"I think everyone always talks about how much Ryan loved his job and how he was really great at this job," she said, "but a lot of people seem to keep forgetting that he was an amazing dad. Man, did he love his kids. And everything that he did was for them."

NCPBA staff representative Brandon McGaha, formerly of the Hendersonville Police Department, remembers working with Hendrix when he first came to patrol as a deputy.

"Ryan was always in a great mood and eager to learn," said McGaha. "It didn't matter if you were a city officer or deputy, he was always willing to help."



Ryan Hendrix with his children, Merritt and Elloree



Hendrix served in the Marines before he went into law enforcement.

Detective James Hurn, a SWAT member and fellow detective with Hendrix, remembers him as a “man who always had your back.”

They participated in several operations together, and Hurn mourns with the rest of their SWAT brothers.

After services at Mud Creek Baptist Church, Hendrix was laid to rest Sept. 18 with hundreds of supporters present. He was given full military and law enforcement honors.

During the funeral, Griffin eulogized the fallen detective as a man who left an impression on anyone who spent time with him.

“You knew he had your back and he was family,” said Griffin.

Griffin described Hendrix joining the department as a jailer who quickly became proficient in his job.

“He was phenomenal,” he said. “He treated people with dignity and knew how to de-escalate situations. But he was also ready to go toe-to-toe, if necessary. There was no wondering if he had your back.”

Hendrix entered and graduated basic

training, returning to work patrol. Griffin said he was a “rock star.”

Hendrix continued to climb through the ranks to detective. He served as a field training officer and as a member of the elite SWAT team.

“He loved to be part of the team,” said Griffin.

And he loved serving his community.

Just weeks before he died, Hendrix saved the life of a girl from drowning.

“He left a big hole in our agency and a gaping hole in our hearts,” Griffin said, ending his tribute. “He’s made all of us better in so many ways.”

Hendrix was the fourth of eight children born to Don and Heidi Hendrix and was homeschooled. He was one of seven boys, all born before a girl, Abigail, finally arrived. She spoke after the sheriff about her love and respect for her big brother, and shared sweet memories of their childhood.

She and Ryan were “chess nerds,” but Ryan went on to play in national tournaments. Abigail said he beat her in any hobbies they jointly pursued.

However, when she took up sewing, she thought she found a way to best him. But after she won first place two years in a row at the 4-H sewing competition during the annual state fair, Ryan decided to enter against her.

Abigail recalled laughing at Ryan during his attempts to quilt. “I bought this bright fabric with sunflowers and he bought material with pigs on it,” she said, evoking chuckles from those



A public memorial was set up so residents could pay respects to Hendrix.



A bird's eye view of mourners at the Henderson County Sheriff's Office.

in attendance. "I also watched him sew half his shorts to the quilt one afternoon. He had to undo and redo every stitch."

Abigail said she was sure she'd capture her third first-place honor. It was not to be.

"I saw that bright red ribbon on my quilt," she said. "And then I saw Ryan dancing. I looked at his quilt and saw the blue ribbon."

Oldest brother, Jamin, also spoke of Ryan's infatuation with youth baseball.

"He excelled at baseball," he said. "He started playing at 11 and they took the championship, but he quit at 13."

A few years later, Ryan joined the Marines and fought in Iraq. He then found his career in law enforcement.

In his death, he leaves behind two children and his fiancée. They were set to be married Oct. 17, 2020.

When Wilkins took the podium to talk about her life with Hendrix, she wore

the white dress she bought for their wedding.

Hendrix's heartbroken dad told the mourners that he was thankful for the time that Ryan was on earth. He said his son enjoyed a "life well-

lived, however short." Don Hendrix recognized his son's passion for his profession.

"Ryan was doing the job he was born to do," he said, "and he died doing the job he loved."



Law enforcement officers numbered large among the mourners.

ARKANSAS STUDENT, DAD GRATEFUL FOR PBF SCHOLARSHIP

By Katharine Jefcoats
kjefcoats@sspba.org

Some kids rarely give a thought as to what their parents do every day to make a living for the family.

It's different when one of your parents is a law enforcement officer.

Colby Stallings grew up watching his dad, Danny Stallings, put on the uniform, badge and gun of a police officer and head out the door.

"It was very cool because I was able to learn and be around many policemen and learned what the job was really like," said Colby Stallings. "I learned that it is an unusual job, and all of the officers I know just want to help our community."

Cpl. Danny Stallings is a 24-year veteran of Jonesboro Police Department in Arkansas. He is a member of Northeast Arkansas Chapter of Arkansas Police Benevolent Association.

Stallings said he loves his job.

"I simply loved the idea of helping people that can't take care of



Colby Stallings with his dad, Danny Stallings

themselves," he said.

Stallings' position in the department makes the daily duties he engages in that much more interesting.

"I am currently a motor officer with the department and work all of the accidents and also special events needing escorts," he said. "Also, there are not many jobs that pay you to ride a motorcycle for a living."

As for Colby Stallings, he plans to study exercise science and business at Arkansas State University. He applied

for and won a Police Benevolent Foundation scholarship because he is a child of a law enforcement officer and met other criteria.

"I'm grateful for the PBF scholarship," said Colby Stallings. "It helped pay some tuition during my first semester at ASU."

His scholastic success hasn't gone unnoticed by his father.

"I am very proud of his work ethic in all he does, including school," said Danny Stallings.

RETIRED



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Retired members pay only \$36 per year and enjoy benefits including legal services (from their member date) should covered legal issues arise from the time of active membership. Benefits also include a \$10,000 accidental non-occupational death policy, yearly publications and decals.

Find out more online | sspba.org/retiredmembers

PBA MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS TO HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE

N.C. House Speaker Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, appointed House lawmakers and members of the public to the North Carolina House Select Committee on Community Relations, Law Enforcement, and Justice in August 2020.

The committee was appointed to examine North Carolina's criminal justice systems to propose methods of improving police training and relations between law enforcement and its communities. The committee will review the implementation of the Second Chance Act and Raise the Age to highlight accomplishments thus far.

Members of the House appointed to the House Select Committee on Community Relations, Law Enforcement, and Justice are Rep. John Szoka, R-Cumberland, chair; Rep. Kristin Baker, R-Cabarrus, chair; Rep. Howard Hunter, D-Hertford, chair; Rep. Carla Cunningham, D-Mecklenburg; Rep. Allison Dahle, D-Wake; Rep. Ted Davis, R-New Hanover; Rep. John Faircloth, R-Guilford; Rep. Elmer Floyd, D-Cumberland; Rep. Jon Hardister, R-Guilford; Rep. Craig Horn, R-Union; Rep. Joe John, D-Wake; Rep. Perrin Jones, MD, R-Pitt; Rep. Keith Kidwell, R-Beaufort; Rep. Carolyn Logan, D-Mecklenburg; Rep. Amos Quick, D-Guilford; Rep. Billy Richardson, D-Cumberland; Rep. Stephen Ross, R-Alamance; Rep. Phil Shepard, R-Onslow and Rep. Sarah Stevens, R-Surry.

Members of the public appointed to the House Select Committee are Felicia Arriaga: She is an assistant professor of sociology in the criminology concentration at Appalachian State University. She completed her undergraduate, masters and Ph.D. degrees in sociology at Duke University. She defended her dissertation in sociology at Duke University in May 2018. Her research interests are in the areas of race,



NC State Legislative building in Raleigh

ethnicity and immigration.

Judge Marvin K. Blount III: He serves as a judge for the 3A Judicial District of the First Division of the Superior Court, which presides over Pitt County in North Carolina. He was appointed to the court by Gov. Perdue in 2012. Blount was re-elected in 2014.

Councilman Tariq Bokhari: He has served as a member of the Charlotte City Council representing District 6 since 2017. Bokhari's career experience includes starting the company PFM Hero, serving as the head of innovation and investment for FIS Global, and working for GE Capital, Wells Fargo and Wachovia.

Sheriff Paula Dance: She has served as sheriff of Pitt County since 2018. Dance is the first African-American female sheriff in the state. Dance is a veteran law enforcement officer, having served the public for almost three decades.

Judge Fred Gore: Gore is a district court judge from Whiteville, N.C., and is running for court of appeals. Gore has completed specialized training in order to become a certified juvenile court judge. He is also continuing his 27th year of service in the N.C.

National Guard, the last 11 as a major in the JAG Corp.

Christine Mumma: She previously clerked for the late Supreme Court Chief Justice I. Beverly Lake Jr., who inspired her criminal justice work. Mumma joined the N.C. Center on Actual Innocence in 2001 and later became executive director of the organization. She worked with Lake to establish a national, precedent-setting commission of law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim advocates, judges, defense attorneys and academics that crafted groundbreaking criminal justice reforms.

Sheriff Van Shaw: He is the Cabarrus County sheriff, with more than 30 years' experience in law enforcement. He spent many years with the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation and served as the agency's deputy director before retiring in 2015, when he joined the Cabarrus County Sheriff's Office to oversee the criminal investigation division.

Councilwoman Nicole Stewart: She has served as an at-large member of the Raleigh City Council since 2017. Stewart's term ends in 2021.

Nicholas Tessener: He is a recent Campbell University law school graduate.

Dr. Greg Wallace: He has been a professor of law at Campbell University's Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law since 1995. He teaches constitutional law with an emphasis on criminal procedure, religious freedom, the right to arms, free speech and constitutional interpretation.

District Attorney A. William R. West Jr.: He has served as district attorney for Cumberland County (District 14), N.C., since 2011. He is the president-elect of the N.C. Conference of District Attorneys and is an appointee to the N.C. Human Trafficking Commission.

Troy A. Williams: He has been designated as an expert witness by the North Carolina Office of Capital Defender for first degree and undesignated degree murder cases. He has 14 years of experience as a law firm investigator and criminal analyst. Troy's independent research led to exposing the practice of racial profiling, also called "driving while black" by the Fayetteville Police Department.

District Attorney R. Andrew Womble: He has served as district attorney for Chowan, Camden, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Pasquotank and Perquimans counties (District 1) since 2013.

The Committee on House Select Committee held five separate meetings to discuss community relations, law and justice.

The first meeting was held Sept. 2, 2020. The committee was given an overview of the North Carolina criminal justice system. The committee then received information on law enforcement indicators on community response, use of force and community engagement.

The second meeting was held Sept. 28, 2020. This meeting focused on issues related to law enforcement. During this meeting, the NCPBA spoke to the

House Select Committee about eight issues they should consider moving forward.

- Mental Health
- Response to Non-Police Matters/ Ordinance Violations
- PTSD with Officers
- Whistleblower Protections
- NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
- Procedural Due Process/Uniformity
- Recruitment and Retention
- Officer Safety

The third committee meeting was held Oct. 13, 2020, and focused on issues related to the courts and the criminal justice system. The fourth committee meeting was held Nov. 18, 2020, where the committee heard presentations on the ACORNS Program being implemented by the Raleigh Police Department. The committee's final meeting was held Dec. 14, 2020, where the committee discussed and adopted the report.

The following recommendations were adopted:

1. Create additional statewide law enforcement training requirements and provide additional educational and training resources.
2. Create requirements for law enforcement agencies to report disciplinary actions, resignations, terminations and de-certifications.
3. Create whistleblower protection for officers who report misconduct.
4. Provide law enforcement with additional resources when encountering mental health issues in the field.
5. Provide law enforcement officers with additional resources to receive

mental health treatment.

6. Examine the classification of some lower level offenses.
7. Increase the availability of specialty courts.
8. Ban the use of chokeholds.
9. Require psychological evaluations for all public safety officers.
10. Require law enforcement to report use of force incidents.
11. Mandate the duty to intervene and the duty to report misconduct.
12. Fund a pilot program for student law enforcement career exploration.
13. Establish a system to allow individuals to receive additional notifications of court dates.

Of the 13 recommendations, the committee adopted three presented by the North Carolina Police Benevolent Association. The recommendations adopted that were presented by the NCPBA are:

- Create whistleblower protection for officers who report misconduct.
- Provide law enforcement with additional resources when encountering mental health issues in the field.
- Provide law enforcement officers with additional resources to receive mental health treatment.

Randy Byrd, as president of the North Carolina Police Benevolent Association, submitted a letter to the committee Dec. 1, 2020, prior to the final meeting concerning recommendation No. 2 (create requirements for law enforcement agencies to report disciplinary actions, resignations, terminations and de-certifications).

The following was included:

Most municipal and county law enforcement agencies do not provide independent hearing or review

processes in determining alleged officer misconduct or adverse employment action.

Consequently, rather than a finding of fact and conclusion of law and policy principle, these agencies, whether well-intended or not, use a process open to abuse, all too often leading to decisions that are politically- and personally-motivated.

No professional law enforcement officer wants officers in the profession who discredit the job and abuse our

citizens. They just want fairness.

In the administrative system, false or misleading information in an officer's personnel file is generally limited from public review.

However, if officer conduct is to be subject to discipline maintained in a public statewide database and disseminated nationally resulting in de-certification, loss of career and public humiliation and ridicule, it would seem that allowing a fair hearing for those officers who want to be heard is certainly not too much to ask.

Further, it is worth noting that our U.S. Supreme Court has long held that police officers are not relegated to a watered-down version of constitutional rights, it would therefore appear that for the government to publish information that could impact employment, career and personal reputation, some mechanism to ensure citizen rights and the rule of law surely must apply to those who risk their lives daily to uphold the rights of everyone else.

The NCPBA continues to work hard to be the "Voice of Law Enforcement Officers."

ALABAMA PBA CHAPTER PRESENTS SUPPORTER WITH HONORS

The Mobile County Chapter of the Alabama Police Benevolent Association honored former Mobile County Commissioner Jerry Carl with a plaque for his eight years on the county commission and for his strong support for law enforcement in Mobile County. Carl was recently elected to represent the 1st Congressional District in Alabama. Carl said his office door is always open to PBA.

(Photo and article submitted by Joe Benson) From left to right are Mobile County Chapter President Joe Benson, Congressman Carl and Mobile County Chapter board member Varney Cauley.



SSPBA membership has increased by more than 15,000 over the past four years.

Even through the pandemic, we continued to see steady growth, as law enforcement officers saw the value in PBA services.

Last year alone, SSPBA membership increased by more than 3,400.

Congratulations!

2020 PBF Scholarship Recipients

Alabama

Thomas Floyd
Faith Leverette
Katelyn Ary

Mississippi

Jacey Jenkins
Mollie Moore
Amber Clark
Lundon Taylor

Tennessee

Gabrielle Naillon
Jyclyn West
Sierra Alexander
Emma Stewart

West Virginia

Mason Lantz

Arkansas

Colby Stallings

North Carolina

Christopher Oates
Laura Sloan
Rachel Manukas

Virginia

Grace Goodpasture
Nathan Ellis
Chloe Pascoe
Alicia Blackburn
Emily Neel

Foundation Scholarships

Adara Velga
Shannon Goss
Haley Pyle
Bradley Gonzalez

Georgia

Adara Velga
Robert Boney

South Carolina

Shannon Goss
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NC CORRECTIONS OFFICER RECOGNIZED FOR MENTORING SKILLS

By Katharine Jefcoats
kjefcoats@sspba.org

In September 2020, North Carolina corrections Lt. Derrick Copeland was honored by the state for his volunteerism on the basketball court.

Not bad for a law enforcement officer who started out in the workforce as a pizza guy.

“I was looking for a job, not a career,” said Copeland of how he found himself in corrections. “Then I found I really enjoy corrections.”

He oversees inmates at Alexander Correctional Institute in Taylorsville, an adult facility, but said he thinks he was more influential when he worked a now-closed youth camp.

“I loved working with the teenagers, 13 to 18 years old,” he said. “They are the kids who were tried as adults but were not old enough to go to an adult prison. There were a couple of kids who stand out that I was able to get out of their shell, to help them have a better outlook on life.”

Copeland, 38, is married. Between he and his wife, they parent eight children. His wife is assistant coach to his youth basketball team. His former wife and her husband also lend a helping hand.

“We all get along,” he said of the adults. “It was rough at first, but it’s better for the kids that they see we get along.”

The basketball team “fell in my lap,” said Copeland, when he learned the kids, age 6 to 11, were without a coach.

“I played ball in high school and I always wanted to coach,” he said. “I’ve been doing it now for four or five years and I love it.”

He spends about an hour with the team practicing, reserving the final 10-15 minutes for small talk.

“We talk about our day,” said Copeland.



(Photo provided by the State of North Carolina)
Lt. Derrick Copeland accepts an award for his volunteerism with youth.

“It gives me perspective on how they are growing up and maturing.”

Some of the kids also spend time with Copeland’s own children.

“They play on the trampoline, we go to the park,” he said.

In addition to coaching and mentoring, Copeland works 12-hour shifts, spends time with his family, enjoys building low-cost furniture and operates a small business making shirts. However, he can’t see himself not coaching and mentoring the kids on his team, at least for the foreseeable future.

“If I can keep one child out of jail and see them do something with their lives, it’s worth it,” he said. “I’m about 10 years from retirement and I plan to continue coaching ball. I say, ‘Let them be kids.’ A lot of kids don’t get that. Let them have fun.”

Copeland was recognized for his mentoring by the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, which awarded him a Badge of Excellence in the category of public service and volunteerism. He was one of 32 NCDPS workers lauded for service.

The category honors employees who have made “outstanding contributions

by participating in, or implementing, community and public service projects,” according to NCDPS website.

The site explains that the Badge of Excellence program was established in 2015 to promote a department-wide recognition of employees and celebrate their contributions to the department, state government and North Carolinians.

“These employees embody our state motto, to be rather than to seem,” stated secretary Erik A. Hooks in the announcement of the awards. “Their actions speak louder than words, and they made a difference in the lives of fellow North Carolinians as they help to prevent, protect and prepare.”

Employees were nominated by other DPS employees.

Copeland is a member of the North Carolina Correctional Officers Chapter of NCPBA. Copeland was promoted from sergeant to lieutenant in January, and he and his Seg Life business partners signed up with Savannah-based Nine Line Apparel to produce their law enforcement-inspired shirts.

Seg Life, which can be found on Facebook and Instagram, often raises money for injured officers.

LONGTIME PBA LEADER PROMOTED TO ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF

By Katharine Jefcoats
kjefcoats@sspba.org

If not for a couple of twists in her collegiate career, Joyce Dent-Fitzpatrick might have spent the last 36 years wearing a smock and telling patients to spit in a white ceramic bowl.

Instead, she is in her fourth decade of protecting and serving West Georgia residents and in her first year as assistant police chief, both at the Columbus Police Department.

Dent-Fitzpatrick was pursuing her degree at Columbus State University to become a dental hygienist. As a scholarship student, she needed to carry a full load of classes or lose her financial assistance.

"The only classes that were open were criminal justice classes," she said. "I got into the class and fell in love with criminal justice."

It was the early 80s and U.S. law enforcement agencies were just a few years out from hiring women as officers who worked the road, not as someone's secretary behind a desk.

After earning an associate degree, she took a job at Phenix City (Ala.) Police Department, but another twist sent her in a different direction.

"Columbus (Ga.) was offering take-home cars," said Dent-Fitzpatrick. "So, I went there."

She was hired under conditional employment because she didn't have a four-year degree.

"I was encouraged to get my bachelor of science degree and had a great advisor," Dent-Fitzpatrick said. "He had me taking grad classes, and I'm so appreciative of him for that."

With his expertise and her brains, Dent-Fitzpatrick earned her four-year



Assistant Chief Joyce Dent-Fitzpatrick

degree and, 11 months later, had her master's degree.

"I have no doubt God was guiding me," she said.

Dent-Fitzpatrick started winning awards for her accomplishments, including "Most Influential Woman."

"I was a lot of 'firsts,'" she said.

She also joined the PBA.

"I became a member of PBA, was happy to be a member," said Dent-Fitzpatrick. "I went to meetings and was urged to become more active. PBA prepares you for your future, prepares you for leadership. These guys have it together."

She rose through the West Georgia Chapter to become president, and, later, vice president of the Georgia Division, following advice and guidance from veteran PBA leaders.

"I prayed about it and talked to my husband," she said. "I went ahead and took the reins but maybe not, if not for Patrick Cullinan and Joe Stiles."

Stiles is SSPBA's Georgia Division executive director, and Cullinan is an

SSPBA staff representative.

"They told me 'You gotta make it what you want it to be,'" Dent-Fitzpatrick said.

She attended leadership classes and pondered on community events to inspire involvement.

"It just resonated with me – let's do this for the kids who are less fortunate," she said.

Stiles credited Dent-Fitzpatrick's dedication for making the West Georgia Chapter one of the best in the state.

"Under (Joyce's) leadership, the chapter board really expanded and promoted community interaction to highlight law enforcement officers in a positive and not-often seen light of working for all segments of the community," said Stiles.

For example, Dent-Fitzpatrick made the city council sit up and take notice of the West Georgia Chapter when members started endorsing candidates and making council part of the PBA team.

"We got donations from the community and corporations and never asked PBA for any money," she said. "It was a hodge-podge of somebody who knew somebody else."

There were naysayers and people who doubted the chapter could pull off rallying Columbus to help less-fortunate kids. But her persistence and refusing to take "no" for an answer paid off.

Dent-Fitzpatrick became emotional recalling one of the projects.

"We visited kids in the hospital at Christmas," she said, choking back tears. "An officer got \$100 in \$20s and gave them to older teens. I'm blessed to



Dent-Fitzpatrick during the chapter's Blue Lights and Smiles

say everyone had a project.”

The chapter co-sponsored an Autism Easter egg roll, an event to shampoo and cut hair for 36 homeless people and a Bark in the Park where officers brought K-9s to Fort Benning from all over.

“We had a ball,” she said.

Specifically, Dent-Fitzpatrick helped bring the following events to fruition:

From 2015 to 2020, West Georgia Chapter members have held their “Blue Lights and Smiles” at Christmastime for those children in the hospital and presented CommUNITY Awards to those non-members who helped with this event which grew every year, although Covid-19 prevented interpersonal interaction with the children;

partnered with others to host “Homeless Love” events to feed and provide shampoos, styling and haircuts for the homeless;

joined with Muscogee Sheriff’s Office in hosting Autism Easter Egg Hunts;

collected over 100 pairs of new shoes for children and adults in Africa;

collected new books for children and read to them through Books over Bullets Foundation; and

held a Bark in the Park Glow Party in which police, fire, and military K-9s came together with local citizens and their canines in a festive night with treats for the dogs and food trucks for the humans.

Sheriff Tompkins rescued the event by hosting it under the SO’s blanket liability insurance policy when individual liability insurance coverage (that no one knew about until just before the event) could not be obtained.

Stiles said Dent-Fitzpatrick’s support of the community also included political and legal involvements that helped strengthen the West Georgia Chapter.

“(Members) have been highly successful in political screenings and working with their elected and appointed leaders to represent their members on issues of importance to their membership,” said Stiles. “They have enjoyed many productive meetings with mayors, chiefs of police, sheriffs, city council members and even with the recently-elected DA, who had not been screened.”

Unfortunately, her promotion to assistant chief, effective December 2020, means she can no longer be a part of PBA leadership. However, she remains a member.

Stiles said Dent-Fitzpatrick’s leadership will be missed.

“All who know Joyce are not surprised by this promotion and know it is very well-deserved,” he said. “Joyce has been a great chapter president and division vice president. Her leadership will be missed.”

The feeling is mutual.

“There are great people in PBA and I’m going to miss PBA,” she said.

Stiles said he expects PBA to extend a lifetime membership to her, based on her past accomplishments.

“I believe without a doubt that the Georgia Division Board will nominate and Southern States Board will approve Joyce with their highest recognition of a Life Membership for her leadership and accomplishments once the Covid-19 issues are behind us,” he said.

Dent-Fitzpatrick’s new duties as Columbus Police Department’s assistant chief include overseeing patrol and investigative services, but she said she will not stop being a visible, public part of Columbus.

Stiles said Dent-Fitzpatrick helped to make the West Georgia Chapter one of the strongest in the state with her leadership skills and passion for community involvement.

“Joyce was one of our most (if not the most) active chapter presidents in PBA of Georgia history,” said Stiles. “The West Georgia Chapter is one of the best chapters in the state. It is blessed to have a really great bunch of board members who want to make a difference for their members and have a positive image in their community.”

NEW OIS APP CAN BE USEFUL TOOL FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT



OIS app developer Douglas Parker

By Katharine Jefcoats
kjefcoats@sspba.org

(This article is presented for information only and should not be considered to be legal advice or endorsement.)

The year 2020 brought voluminous changes to the entire world and how people interact with each other. With the spotlight brighter than ever before on volatile interactions between law enforcement officers and suspects, officers found themselves clearly in need of tools to assist them in the event of a shooting or use of force situation.

Doug Parker spent the entirety of his more than 30-year law enforcement career in the Georgia Bureau of Investigation as a special agent. Upon retirement, Parker opened his own consulting business. The app “Thin Blue Defend” grew out of that business.

“This app came about over a course of years,” said Parker. “I worked a lot of use of force cases in the GBI.” Those cases gave Parker valuable perspective on how officer-involved use of force cases were handled.

The ruling in the 1985 U.S. Supreme

Court case *Tennessee v. Garner* held that the right of an officer to “seize” a fleeing suspect should not include the use of force involving shooting.

“Over the years, before *Tennessee v. Garner*, those use of force cases were ‘go out and interview the officer’ who would say he ‘feared for his life,’ end of story,” said Parker.

“That would pretty well satisfy, though not totally, as an agency, that was what we were looking at,” he continued. “A lot of district attorneys would make decisions on their own to take to grand jury or not.”

After the 1985 ruling, Parker said many officers were getting charged with excessive force probably “too quickly” and were having to defend themselves.

Parker said it is his opinion that the public’s perceptions toward law enforcement began crumbling in 2009 when President Obama openly criticized a Cambridge, Mass., police officer who detained a homeowner he mistook for a burglar.

The homeowner, who turned out to be a friend of Obama, was seen by a neighbor trying to force his way into his house. Obama said the officer acted “stupidly” but later said he never meant to “malign” the officer or the Cambridge Police Department.

“Since President Obama criticized the Cambridge officer, things have deteriorated, with the public making judgments about the police not based on facts or information,” said Parker. “As changes start to take place in the perception of officers, the public wants more evidence to support justification of use of force.”

Parker said what evolved was often a rush to judgment after excessive use of force cases were alleged. The situation today is a far cry from the environment

around the time of *Tennessee v. Garner*.

“District attorneys are either charging or taking to grand juries early on for murder, and maybe facts don’t support that,” he said.

The Thin Blue Defend app helps officers document facts and observations surrounding any incident involving the use of excessive force that could lead to an arrest. Parker noted that officers are not lawyers and they do not know what could or could not be important in defending their charges.

In the event of a shooting, law enforcement officers should contact PBA immediately. They should follow the direction and advice of their attorney in regard to every aspect of the shooting incident. The Thin Blue Defend app can help.

Parker used an older Georgia case to illustrate how the app could have helped an officer charged with excessive use of force. He asked that the officer not be identified.

“This officer chased and had to shoot a suspect,” he said. “The officer had served only three or four years. He didn’t know what was important to his defense. As investigators gained information, they went back to him to get his information.”

While an officer takes a passive role in his own defense, Parker said, evidence is not being collected, is deteriorating and could be lost, hampering the officer’s defense.

In this case, the officer showed no obvious injury and denied needing medical assistance. Had he had the benefit of the app, the officer would have been prompted to be seen by medical professionals no matter how he felt.

As it turned out, the officer began having headaches several months later.

“Anything like that helps in his defense,” said Parker. “The officer did not make a statement to police, which is his right.”

The app allows the officer to begin documenting the incident and observations as soon as he or she is able. As previously stated, the officer should speak with and get direction from an attorney as soon as possible after a critical incident.

“Before the attorney gets there, document it,” Parker said. “Take photos of yourself. Your perception. Take note of the weather, barking dogs, how the surroundings affected you. Check on your equipment you have on, for example. An officer wearing 42 pounds of equipment running in hot weather is going to have a harder time chasing someone in T-shirt and tennies.”

Another advantage of the app is the fact it uses buttons to tap instead of requiring typing in information.

“Officers are going through so much emotionally after a shooting, the app helps by requiring buttons rather than typing,” said Parker.

Many sections also provide a recording feature so the officer can speak directly

into the app. There is a screen that includes an officer’s emergency contact, which can be called directly from that screen.

The officer can add to his report when he leaves the scene but information already inputted cannot be changed.

Once the incident is fully documented, and time and date stamped on the app, the officer sends the file to his attorney. If the phone is seized, the officer can access the app at home.

“It’s sobering to think the app could have that much impact on officers across the U.S.,” said Parker. “It provides better documentation. I just hope it helps officers in their defense.”

There is a fee to use the app, but Parker said he’s trying to keep the costs as low as possible. An individual officer can buy the app, or agencies can buy it for department use and have it billed according to the number of officers.

“We’re trying to keep it as cheap as possible,” he said. “It’s another layer of security, putting officer at ease, something else in addition to organizations like PBA that help them.”

Parker is a member of the Georgia

Retired Officer Chapter of the Police Benevolent Association of Georgia.

More information on the app, which was not available through the App Store at the time of this publication, can be accessed through thinbluedefend.com. Parker can be reached at jdarker@thinbluedefend.com.

(Editor’s note: It is important to know your department’s policies. Some law enforcement agencies have policies regarding the use of personal cellphones to take pictures. There is also the possibility that even on a personal cellphone—unless directed by legal counsel to take down information—that the officer’s perceptions and other information would be subject to discovery. If such information is recorded on a departmental cellphone, there is a strong legal argument that there is no expectation of privacy. If the agency pays for and provides the Thin Blue App to its officers, there is also a strong argument that the information stored in the app belongs to the agency. All of these factors have a bearing on whether the information recorded in the app is protected under attorney-client privilege. – Joni Fletcher Cawthon, PBA legal services director)



Nearly 200 police suicides occurred in 2020.

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3 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN THE SSPBA



1. THE LEGAL REPRESENTATION WE OFFER OUR MEMBERS IS THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS!

The PBA provides an attorney to contact you regarding on-duty shootings or serious injuries arising from your law enforcement duties, going to the scene if necessary. The PBA provides an attorney to protect your individual interests if you are named as defendant in any civil or criminal action arising out of your duties as a law enforcement officer. NO CAP or LIMIT. Other organizations say they can match our legal benefits, but in the end, the PBA stands alone on this one.

2. THE PBA TAKES A STAND ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS THAT AFFECT OUR MEMBERS!

The PBA maintains a professional staff of lobbyists to aid in obtaining legislation beneficial to the law enforcement profession. If there is critical legislation out there that will affect your job as a law enforcement professional, the PBA is ready to take action and let your voice be heard.

3. THE PBA PROVIDES YOUR LOVED ONES WITH THE SECURITY OF ONE OF THE BEST ACCIDENTAL DEATH BENEFIT PLANS IN THE INDUSTRY IN THE EVENT YOU ARE LOST IN THE LINE OF DUTY.

We believe that our accidental death benefit is the most generous of any such plan in our service area. Your beneficiary will receive: (1) your base salary for one year if you are killed in the performance of your law enforcement duties (maximum payment: \$70,000), or (2) \$10,000 if an accidental, non-occupational death, or to retired and reserve members, in accordance with the terms and limitations of our insurance policy which underwrites the benefit.

*A full description of these benefits and all others that come with a PBA membership can be found by visiting www.sspba.org.



NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Police officers carry firearms every day to protect and serve those who cannot protect themselves. NRA supports the people who face extraordinary circumstances and act with courage, honor, and self-sacrifice to keep our communities safe.



SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT