

2022 BLUE REVIEW

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE PBA, ISSUE 16

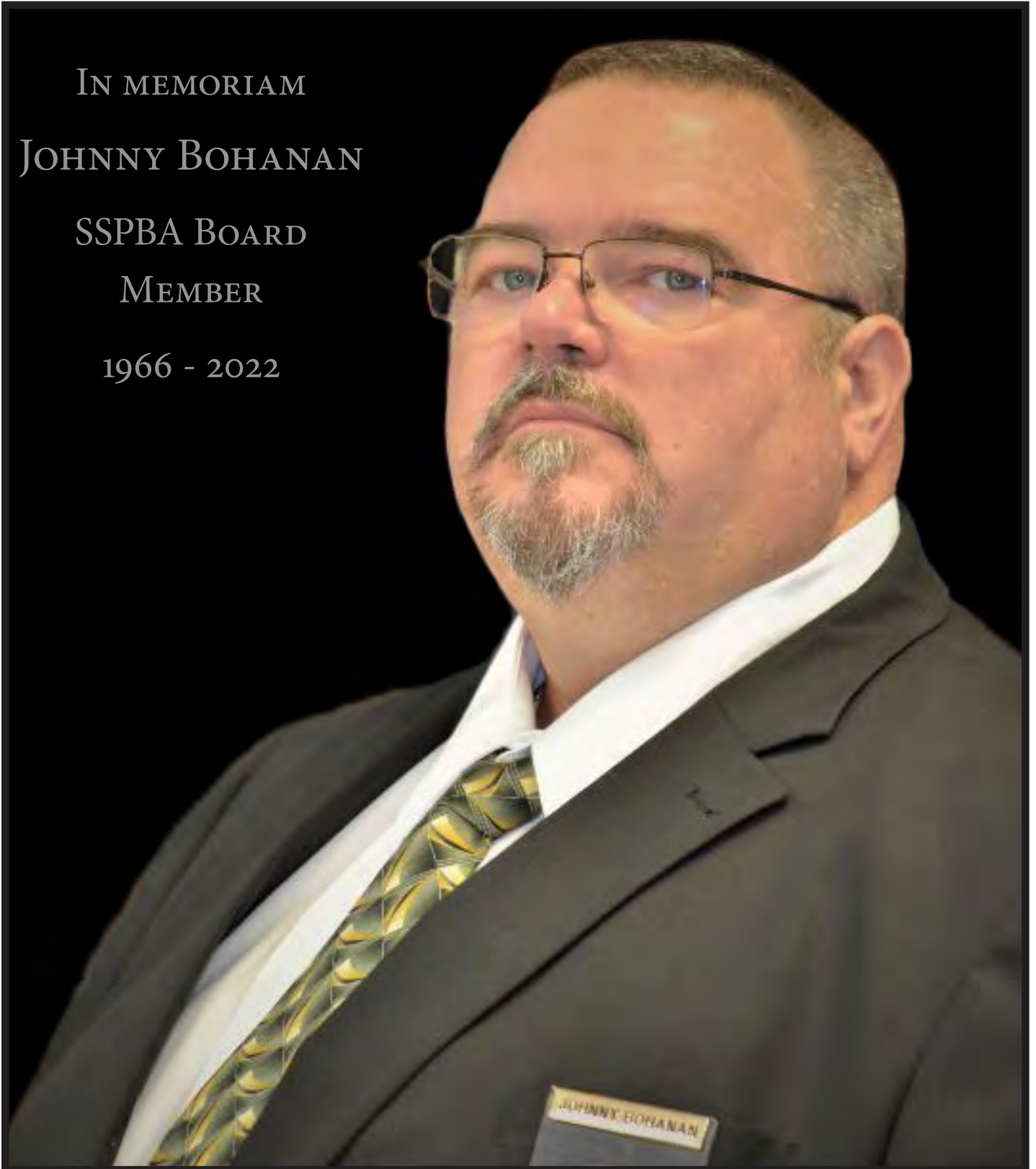
IN MEMORIAM

JOHNNY BOHANAN

SSPBA BOARD

MEMBER

1966 - 2022



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.





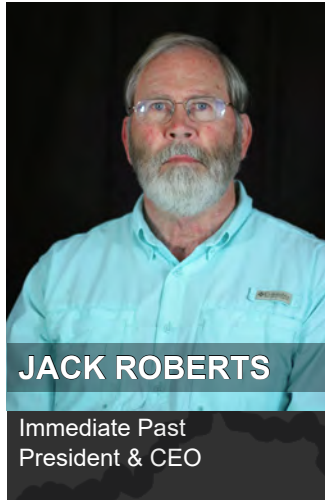
SOUTHERN STATES POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



CHRIS SKINNER

SSPBA President
MS Board Member



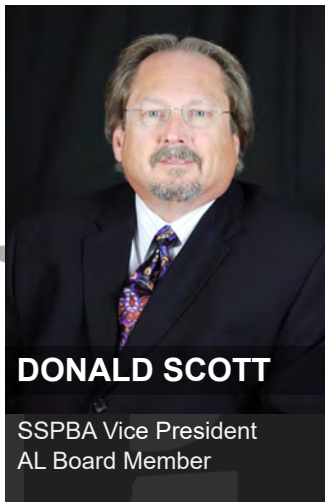
JACK ROBERTS

Immediate Past
President & CEO



DAVE SODERBERG

SSPBA Sr. Vice President
SC Board Member



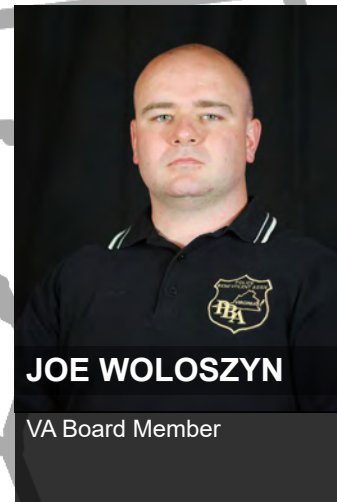
DONALD SCOTT

SSPBA Vice President
AL Board Member



JOE NAIA

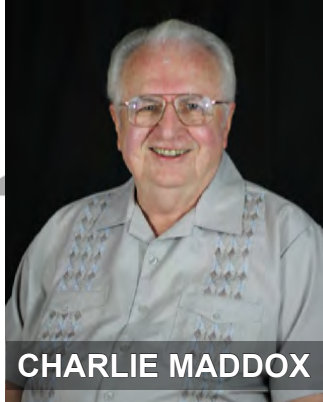
SSPBA Secretary/Treasurer
GA Board Member



JOE WOŁOSZYN

VA Board Member

IN MEMORIAM



CHARLIE MADDIX

Past President
(1933-2019)

IN MEMORIAM



JOHNNY BOHANAN

TN Board Member
(1966-2022)

CONTENTS

2022 **BLUE** REVIEW

4 SSPBA MOURNS LOSS OF PBA
LEADER BOHANAN



12 CORINTH, MS OFFICER
HONORED FOR SERVING HIS
HOMETOWN

19 KENTUCKY SCHOLARSHIP
STUDENT ROOTED IN
LEADERSHIP

27 SCPBA MEMBER HONORS
FALLEN OFFICERS IN BAGPIPE
TRIBUTES



31 BERKELEY CO., WV SHERIFF'S
DEPUTY RECEIVES MEDAL
OF VALOR

35 ARKANSAS SECRET SERVICE
TASK FORCE MEMBER
HONORED



37 TRAINING AND RESOLVE
BRING RESULTS, AWARDS
FOR OFFICER

53 COMMITTED LEGAL TEAM
SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDS VA
MEMBER



RENEÉ DIXON: SSPBA CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Reneé handles the day-to-day operations of the SSPBA under the authority of CEO Jack Roberts and has been with the SSPBA for 36 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."



57

57 MS SECOND GENERATION LEO
WINS OFFICER OF THE YEAR



58

58 K9 'MIRANDA LAMBERT'
JOINS GA TRAUMA SERVICES
INDUSTRY



66

63 VAPBA, PBF PARTNER WITH
HONOR BREWING FOR
FUNDRAISER



68

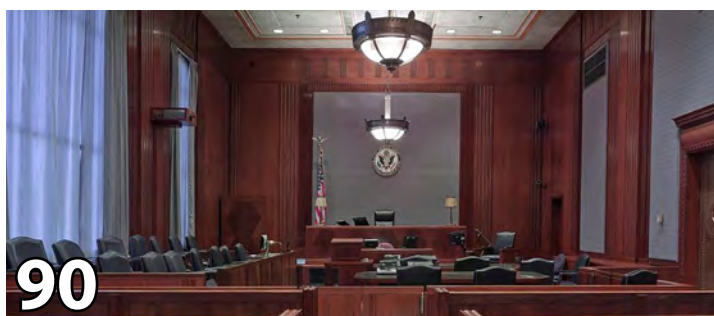
66 KY TROOPER HAMPTON
THWARTS THREAT
OF PUBLIC SHOOTING



75

68 HOOVER OFFICER OF
YEAR COMES FROM
A FAMILY OF OFFICERS

70 TENNESSEE TROOPER BECOMES
65,000TH MEMBER OF PBA



90

75 NC MEMBER FINDS
RECOVERY FROM SHOOTING
'CHALLENGING'

90 NC ATTORNEY EXPLAINS
COMPLEXITIES OF GIGLIO LAW

JUSTIN BLACKBURN
EDITOR
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

jblackburn@sspba.org

KATHARINE JEFCOATS
EDITOR
PAGE DESIGNER

kjefcoats@sspba.org

RANDY BYRD
CONTENT WRITER

rbyrd@sspba.org

CINDY BAUGHER
CONTENT WRITER

SOUTHERN STATES PBA MOURNS LOSS OF PBA LEADER BOHANAN

By Randy Byrd
Director of Foundation and Media Relations

The Southern States Police Benevolent Association is saddened about the passing of board member Johnny Bohanan on June 4, 2022.

Johnny was diagnosed with stomach cancer and, after being hospitalized, was released under hospice care to his home. Johnny passed away the next day, surrounded by his family.

Johnny lived his entire life in Sevier County, Tenn., and began his full-time law enforcement career in 1990. In addition to his public service, and service as a member of the SSPBA Board of Directors, he also served as the president of the Smoky Mountains Chapter and as the Tennessee Division president.

In 2019, he was honored to be appointed by Gov. Bill Lee to serve on the board of directors of the state's retirement system. He also had recently been elected as a Sevier County Commissioner District 4 Seat B.

Johnny was an avid sports enthusiast who coached and umpired Little League baseball and softball in Sevierville and Pigeon Forge for many years. He also enjoyed supporting both his sons in their athletic pursuits throughout the years.

Johnny is survived by his wife, Phillis, and their three children: Holly, Tray and Andrew.

The visitation and funeral service was held June 9 in Sevierville, Tenn. The graveside service was June 10 in Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

A PBA contingent met with the family at the funeral home. They attended the visitation and graveside service to show their respect for Johnny, and offer their support for Phillis and their children.

Included were Chief Operating Officer Reneé Dixon, SSPBA President Chris Skinner, SSPBA Senior Vice President Dave Soderberg, Director of



Johnny with wife Phillis and children Andrew, Tray and Holly



Johnny with son Andrew



Johnny at an SSPBA board meeting



Johnny presents Lifetime PBA Membership to Northwest Tennessee Chapter President John Wesley Bradley

Organizational Services for the Eastern Region Beth Dyke, Operations Manager Joan Fabian, Executive Director of VA Sean McGowan and Director of

Foundation and Media Relations Randy Byrd.

This group was able to spend some

quality time with Phillis and the children. Phillis wanted everyone to know how much Johnny loved the PBA and the PBA staff, and how much she



Johnny with eldest son Tray

appreciated the PBA being there for her family. The group also met with many of the local PBA leaders who were also present to show their respect for Johnny.

President Skinner said Johnny will be missed.


“It was my pleasure to serve with Johnny on the SSPBA board since 2014,” said Skinner. “His insight and input on the board helped guide the critical decisions that we made on behalf of our association and members. He was an enjoyable person to be around and will continue to be missed.”

The SSPBA and the Police Benevolent Foundation were proud to assist the family with a memorial fund for medical and funeral expenses.

(Editor’s note: Beth Dyke, director of Regional Services – East Region contributed to this article. Photographer Wayne Knight contributed photos.)



Johnny presents check to scholarship recipient, Maggie Henderson, with her father



Election 2018


The Tennessee Police Benevolent Association

urges you to support strong, fair and effective law enforcement by voting for the following candidate on **Tuesday, November 6th.**

✓

MARSHA BLACKBURN

US Senate



Endorsed by the Largest Law Enforcement Association in Tennessee
The Tennessee Police Benevolent Association
The Voice of Law Enforcement Officers

Johnny in a political ad with a PBA-endorsed candidate



SSPBA President Chris Skinner presents Lifetime PBA Membership to Johnny



Johnny's service vehicle at the visitation



The final ride



Crowds pay final respects to PBA leader Johnny Bohanan.



Piper plays 'Amazing Grace.'

The SSPBA and PBF want to pay our respects to the nine members who lost their lives in the line of duty in 2022. We were proud to have you as members and were deeply saddened to lose you. May God continue to comfort those you left behind. May He bring them peace and strength to continue on their journey.



Deputy Sheriff J'Mar Colin Abel
Chambers County Sheriff's Office - AL
EOW - June 20, 2022



Sgt. Matthew Ryan Fishman
Wayne County Sheriff's Office - NC
EOW - August 2, 2022



Officer Ivan Mauricio Lopez
Mount Vernon Police Department - AL
EOW - August 22, 2022



Detective Matthew Walker Blansett
Marion County Sheriff's Office - TN
EOW - August 23, 2022



Officer Logan K. Medlock
London Police Department - KY
EOW - October 30, 2022



Sgt. Donald Scoby
Stuttgart Police Department - AR
EOW - December 14, 2022



Sgt. Steven Robin and Officer Branden Estorffe
Bay St. Louis Police Department - MS
EOW - December 14, 2022



Deputy Sheriff Oscar Yovani Bolanos-Anavisca Jr.
Cumberland County Sheriff's Office - NC
EOW - December 16, 2022

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

ACCLAIMED ALABAMA OFFICER CREDITED WITH SAVING LIFE

**By Katharine Jefcoats
Editor**

Alabaster, Ala., police Officer Tim Crocker is no stranger to accolades in his almost 30 years in law enforcement.

Born in West Blocton, Ala., and raised by “amazing” parents James and Donna Crocker, Tim Crocker joined the Alabaster Police Department in September 2005. Over the years, Crocker has been recognized for outstanding service from law agencies, municipalities, the public and even an Alabama senator. Most recently, Crocker was honored with a Commander Award for saving a life – out of state.

Crocker graduated from West Blocton High School and University of Alabama Police Academy. He developed a close relationship with West Blocton police Assistant Chief Jobe Marshall.

“He took the time to mentor me at a low point on a cold Halloween night,” he said. “I joined law enforcement due to my interaction with Assistant Chief Jobe Marshall.”

Other mentors include his father, James, co-worker Joshua White and Ricky Banks, an uncle. Another co-worker, Cpl. David Sharpe, advocates for PBA, which is why Crocker joined the organization, he said.

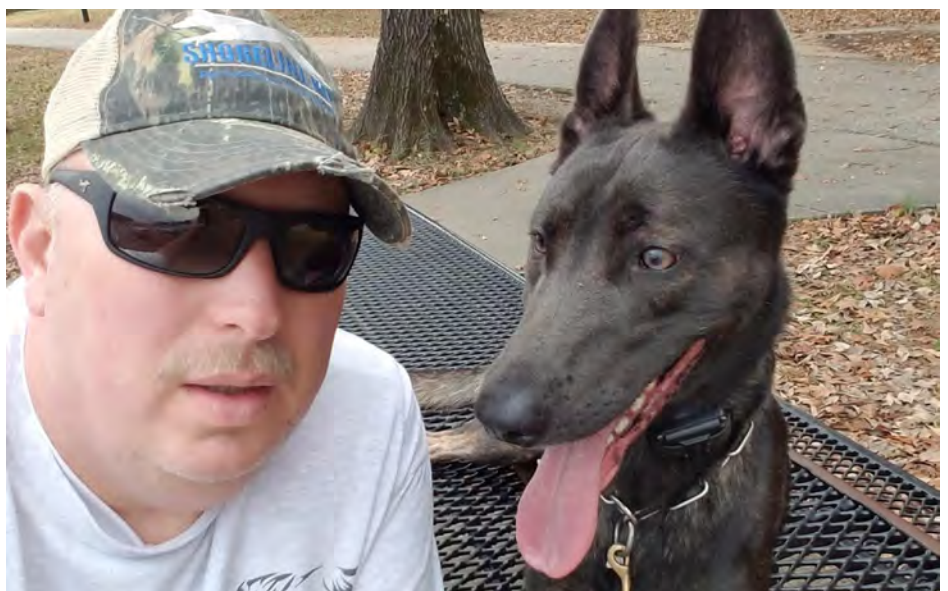
Crocker married Amy Nov. 30, 1991, and they raised two “beautiful” daughters, Haleigh and Ashleigh.

“My oldest, Haleigh, is engaged to my future son-in-law, Sebastián, and expecting my second grandchild,” said Crocker. “My youngest daughter, Ashleigh, is married to my son-in-law, Stephen, and has my first grandchild, Oaklynd, who is 3.”

Crocker, Amy, Ashleigh and Stephen were traveling recently, on their way home to Alabama from visiting family in Missouri, when they happened on a fiery crash on I-55.



Officer Tim Crocker and his wife, Amy, and their daughters, Ashleigh and Haleigh, along with canine family members. Below, Crocker and one of the family pooches.





Crocker with his grandchild, Oaklynd

“As we came to the accident scene, we noticed the driver was still in the vehicle,” said Crocker. “I knew we had to get him out as we saw a fire starting under the hood. My son-in-law, Stephen, and I got to the vehicle where the fire had already spread to the interior but couldn’t initially release the driver from the wreckage.

“We didn’t give up and eventually were able to pull the driver out just shy of the vehicle becoming fully involved in flames,” he continued.

Once first responders arrived, the family continued on its journey.

“I haven’t had any contact with the driver since the accident,” said Crocker. “We left the scene after local first responders arrived on scene. I’m not even sure of his name or where he is from.”

Crocker chalked up his abilities to his training and firsthand experience. He is also a believer in God and being in the right place at the right time.

“We’re here on this Earth to help each other,” he said. “God puts us in places to help others in time of need. If we had been any earlier or later in our timing, this gentleman would have burned alive in his vehicle.”

In addition to staying busy with family, Crocker enjoys camping, cooking, hunting, fishing, and canine work with his wife, who runs her own business, Shoreline K9, from home.

If Crocker followed his other career choice, he likely would not have been prepared to save a stranger’s life.

“I love to cook and at one point I wanted to attend culinary school,” he said.



Crocker is an avid outdoorsman



CORINTH, MS OFFICER HONORED FOR SERVING HIS HOMETOWN

By Cindy Baugher
Administrative Services associate

Corinth police Lt. Aaron Austin is candid when speaking about growing up in his hometown in Mississippi, population 14,381.

Austin said he chose to stay in Corinth when his peers were looking for a way out. A Texas tragedy served as the catalyst for his joining the local police department. More than five years after completing academy training in 2017, Austin was named Corinth Police Department's Officer of the Year for 2022.

"Growing up in Corinth, I always knew I would be the guy that would stay, when most talked about leaving," he said. "I knew Corinth would always be home."

His appreciation for Corinth is evident as he said he is very much a hometown kind of guy. Austin's childhood was spent there, and he now proudly serves as a lieutenant with the Corinth Police Department.

Austin has strong family ties in the area. He worked at his grandfather's used car dealership while growing up, and his parents own a busy sporting goods store. He credits the influence of his close family members for giving him the work ethic and character that he exhibits today.

Austin said he recognizes Corinth as a community that he cares about and wants to serve.

"It's the only place I would work in law enforcement," he said. "Growing up, I would see the police officers in my school or out at a restaurant. Honestly, I had never even considered law enforcement growing up, but the same guys I work with now were the ones I saw as a kid and teenager.

"These are the same local guys like myself that grew up in our town and stayed to serve, which I believe is essential to have in a department," he continued.



Corinth police Lt. Austin with his wife, Ryleigh, and their daughter, Annie

Graduating from Corinth High School in 2013, where he was a member of the National Honor Society and played baseball, Austin went on to receive his degree in business administration from Mississippi State University in 2017.

In 2016, an incident unfolded in Dallas, Texas, during which a sniper took the lives of five Dallas police officers and wounded seven other officers and two civilians. This event served as a catalyst for Austin, and he started to feel drawn to the field of law enforcement.

"I don't really know how to describe it, but God," said Austin.

He pointed out that this was near the beginning of the negative publicity that law enforcement was receiving in the

national media.

"With all the negativity going on, I felt that I had a positive attitude to bring to my city," he said. "With high turnover in my department, and not many applicants, I felt that I needed to be one that steps up to serve.

"'Here am I, send me,' Isaiah 6:8, is a verse I have used continually throughout my career to keep myself motivated and to motivate my guys" continued Austin. "When times are tough, police have to step up and get the job done."

After he was hired by the Corinth Police Department, during his final semester of college, Austin tackled law enforcement training at the North Mississippi Law Enforcement Training Academy in

Tupelo in the summer of 2017.

During his time with the Corinth Police Department, Austin served as a firearms instructor for the department. He is also a four-year member of the SWAT team, serving as assistant team leader and point man running the shield. Austin acknowledged that many see the shield position as a burden, but he likes to be the first man in.

He has also served as the field training officer for four of his years with the department and is the firearms instructor for the department. All of these things, combined with his devotion to his hometown and the respect that his fellow officers hold for him, have earned him the Officer of the Year title, which is presented by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Corinth police Chief Landon Tucker said this distinction is conferred upon the officer from the 40 sworn department staff, “who goes above and beyond the call of duty daily.”

“It exemplifies what it means to be a Corinth Police Officer by hard work and dedication to our community,” said Tucker. “Officer Austin is someone who displays this in our department. When I asked each person who the Officer of the Year award should go to, they all said the same name, ‘Aaron Austin.’”

Clearly, Austin is appreciated by his fellow officers, and it seems his community appreciates and supports the police department as well. Austin described how the locals make it easy to work in the area, “with most people saying ‘Hi’ or waving and sneakily paying for a meal at a local diner when you’re not looking.”

“You see thin blue line stickers and flags when you drive around, and people shake your hand, thanking you for your service,” he said. “The feeling sometimes is overwhelming because I find myself not knowing what to say back, or how to thank those people. It’s a job I want to do and enjoy doing.”

Just as Austin found his hometown to be supportive and understanding of his mission as a law enforcement officer, he credited his membership in the PBA



Lt. Austin named Officer of the Year

as helping him to feel supported and protected. He draws the comparison between the tools his department uses for physical protection while on duty, such as shields, body armor and armored vehicles with the “legal armor” that the PBA provides.

“With the times we live in now, it seems that a lot of people want to take advantage of a situation,” he said. “In order to protect my career, I signed up for PBA. They have the knowledge and understanding of how to serve those who serve. The benefits provided by PBA are a no-brainer, and I recommend it to any officer joining our agency.”

When not on the clock, Austin enjoys spending time with his family. His wife of four years, Ryleigh, is in a community-oriented profession like

her husband. She’s a teacher who also coaches cheerleading at Kossuth Middle School. Together they are parents to two children, Annie, who is 2, and 4-month-old Owen.

Austin also works a part-time job as a bow tech in the family sporting goods store on his days off from the police department. When he does find a free moment, Austin said he enjoys archery hunting and weight lifting, which he calls a great mental release.

He pointed to Dennis Benigno of the “Street Cop Training” series of classes, podcasts and videos, as being the greatest influence on his career, and Jocko Willink as his favorite leader. These two have garnered national praise for their teachings on how to be a good law enforcement officer and leader.

GA BOARD MEMBER CREATES COLORING BOOK FOR CHILD SAFETY

By Glenn Hester
PBA of GA Atlantic Chapter

For years, I had a wish to make a book for children to help them stay safe.

I started my law enforcement career in New York State with the Sullivan County Sheriff's Office and left after five years to return to my home state of Georgia.

I joined the Glynn County Police Department in Brunswick, from which I retired in 2013 with a total of 30 years with both agencies.

I use my magic and puppets for crime and drug and bunco (fraud) prevention presentations for kids and adults. My pig puppet, Sheriff Buford P. Swine, started out as Patrolman Potbelly Pig when I was an active LEO with GCPD.

The puppet did stranger danger themes, gun safety and anti-drug presentations for the children in the schools where I instructed the DARE program.

I instructed and wrote books on the subject matter for LEOs at various police academies throughout the state for many years. I instructed on how to use magic and puppets for crime prevention presentations with my "police magic."

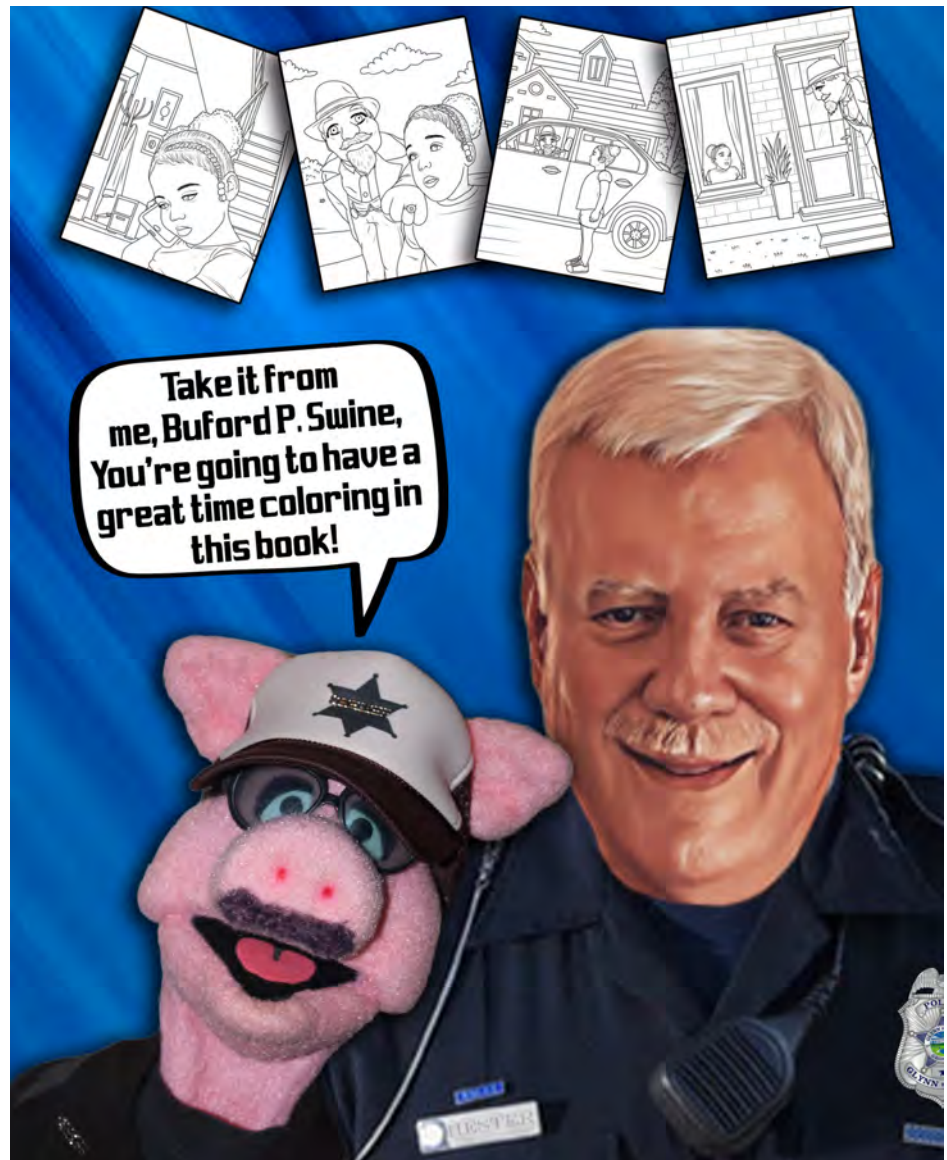
I also showed how to investigate and inspect carnival game fraud, and taught classes on other bunco-related (fraud) crime.

I wrote three books on this: "Police Magician," "Carnival Cop," and "Deceptive Performances." My fourth book, "Tragedy to Triumph: The Path to Police Magic," describes how I got into doing this type of entertainment.

After writing those books, I wanted to do something for children with a book to help them stay safe.

For years, I thought about a comic and coloring style book for children showing the scenarios that I role-played with them at presentations.

My dream finally came through when I



Retired police officer Glenn Hester created coloring book for child safety

enlisted the help of another retired police officer and magician who lives in Florida.

Tim Scarbrough, who writes under the pen name "Dale O. Garrett," retired from his agency in Florida and became a graphic artist. Tim worked with me on posing my 3-year-old granddaughter, Kyra Williams, with my puppets for the different scenes.

It was a challenge for Tim to turn those pictures into cartoon figures, but he did a fantastic job in doing so. Tim exceeded my expectations in producing the

graphics for the book.

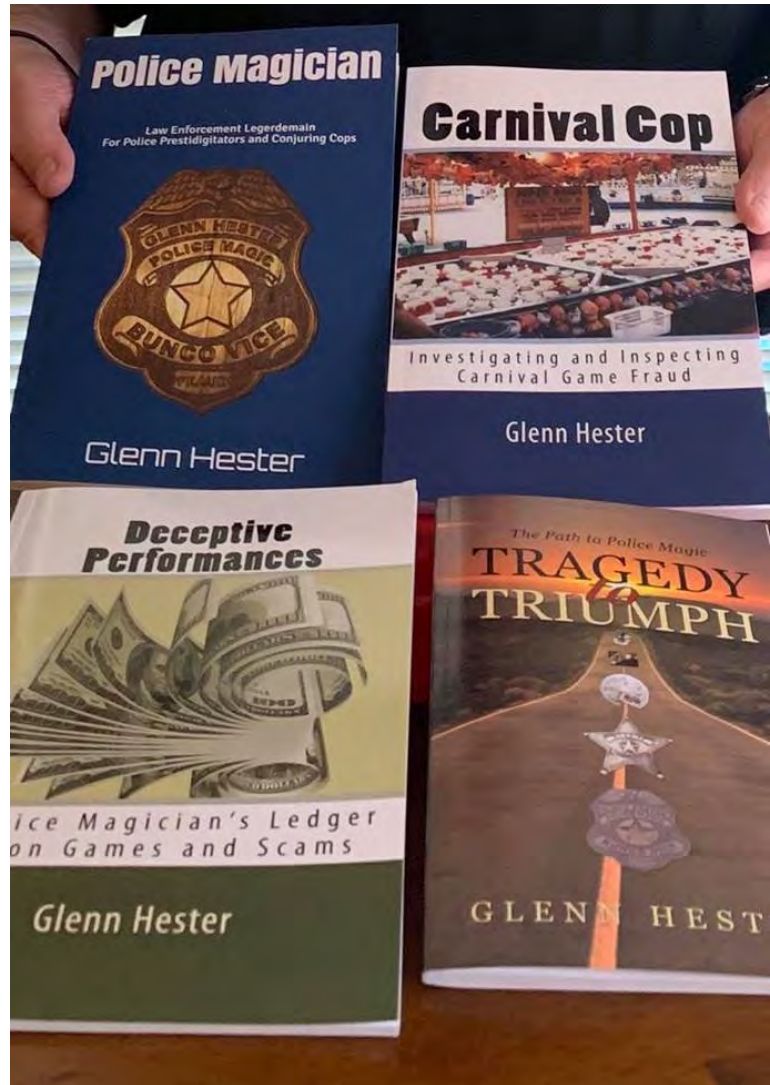
There are eight different scenes and 10 pages for children to color. An added feature of the book is an instructional section for parents to go over the situations by reading and role-playing with their children.

Sheriff Buford P. Swine and the Inspector show Kyra how to protect herself from the "criminal puppet," Hesteni. Tim edited and reworded my "Stranger Danger" script to fit parents teaching their child what to do in different

situations and also had the pages made up to reflect the issues Kyra would be facing.

I still do presentations to those asking but as a “police magician,” not a LEO. With this coloring book, this is the fifth book I’ve authored.

(Hester can be reached through his website, www.policemagic.com, or on Facebook.)



Hester models the child character after his granddaughter.

Hester is proud of the publication of four other books.

RETIRED







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

MEMBERS

NC STATE TROOPER HONORED FOR LIFESAVING ACTIONS



Trooper Thao with his wife, Rebeca, and son Hased

By Randy Byrd
Director of Foundation and Media Relations

For Trooper Cody Thao, growing up in Clovis, Calif., was an experience far removed from the highways of North Carolina. Clovis and the surrounding areas are known for their massive

agriculture operations.

Almost all the nuts, fruits and vegetables found in a grocery store come from the Central Valley. That's not always what people expect when they think of California with its beaches, Hollywood and Los Angeles.

Thao is the oldest of four children.

His father was a Toyota salesman and his mother worked as an auditor for a property management company.


He said his childhood was filled with stories told by his grandfather. His grandfather fought in northern Laos with the CIA against the communists in what is now known by some as the "Secret War." His grandfather wrote down a lot of his memories and Thao spent hours reading his memoirs as a child.

"I was inspired by his stories and always wanted to be a warfighter like him and his generation," said Thao.

After the Vietnam War, his grandparents fled Laos with their children, staying in refugee camps in Thailand before receiving asylum in the United States. His grandmother was also an influence in his life.

"She showed me how to love, protect and sacrifice for others," said Thao.

In 2011, Thao graduated from Clovis East High School. In that same year, he attended the Center for Advanced Research and Technology.

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a police badge. The badge is metallic and features the words "POLICE" and "DETECTIVE" in a circular arrangement around a central emblem. The lighting creates strong highlights and shadows, emphasizing the texture and details of the badge.

More than 167 police suicides occurred in 2022.

We help protect those
behind the badge.

Find a seminar near you:
pbfi.org/behindthebadge

*BlueHelp.org



Thao receives the Governor's Excellence Award



Thao is recognized with Medal of Valor Award

When he attended, it was the only school in the nation to take academic subjects such as biology, physics or government, and allow students to apply them in an experimental and professional environment.

Thao continued his education at the University of California – Davis, graduating with a degree in political science in 2015.

Thao's post-college time led to several jobs including an office job, working on a small organic farm and a year in Aguascalientes, Mexico, assisting with research on identity politics in the region.

When he returned to the states, he relocated to North Carolina where he worked for a Tractor Supply store in Ashe County. During this time, he applied to the North Carolina Highway Patrol.

Thao said he always had a desire to serve others and his grandfather's service was an inspiration. In September 2021, he graduated from the 153rd Basic School and was assigned to Wake County.

After less than a year on the job, on April 8, 2022, in the early morning hours, Thao's actions saved lives and led to national headlines and accolades from the commander of the highway patrol.

Thao was working a red light on the southwest side of Wake County when a call was dispatched notifying troopers that a chase from Johnston County, with the Johnston County Sheriff's Office, had made its way into Wake County.

"My field training officer had always told me to head toward a chase because you never know where it could go, so I started to make my way to try and intercept the chase," said Thao.

As he headed toward the chase, he exited onto Rock Quarry Rd from I-40, trying to anticipate where the chase might go. When he exited onto the ramp, he saw a Johnston County sheriff's patrol vehicle with blue lights activated coming across the overpass.

As Thao started to notify communications of his location, the suspect turned down the exit ramp, traveling in the opposite direction of

traffic. Thao was in the right lane of the exit ramp and the suspect was in the left lane.

In a split-second decision, Thao hit his brakes, turned his steering wheel hard left and collided with the suspect's vehicle. The suspect's vehicle collided with Thao's right rear passenger side. Thao's vehicle spun to a stop.

After notifying communications that he had just crashed, he exited his vehicle and ran towards the suspect's vehicle.

Once Thao saw that the vehicle was empty, he ran to the Johnston County sheriff's patrol vehicle and realized that it, too, was empty. A foot chase had ensued into nearby woods. After a few minutes, as other units arrived, the Johnston County sheriff's deputy was able to locate the suspect, apprehend him and take him into custody. The suspect was charged with driving while impaired.

In a press release, Col. Freddy L. Johnson Jr. praised Thao's quick actions.

"I could not be prouder of Trooper Thao and his quick decision to stop the wrong way driver, his actions most undoubtedly saved lives," Johnson stated.

"His willingness to put himself in harm's way is representative of the lifesaving work our members do each day," the statement continued. "Placing others before ourselves is not just a saying amongst the law enforcement profession, it's a reality of what we do for the betterment of the communities we serve."

Thao received the Governor's Award for Excellence and the N.C. Highway Patrol's Medal of Valor for his extraordinary efforts.

Thao said he is a proud member of PBA.

"Today, law enforcement officers work in such difficult and trying times, it is important to ally yourself with those who will support you," he said. "The way I see it, I train every day to ensure I come home. The PBA supports that mission."

Thao is married to Rebeca, who works as an operations manager for an educational non-profit. They have one child, Hesed, who was born last July.



Thao's grandmother in a refugee camp in Thailand with his aunt and father.



Thao's patrol car after a terrifying collision with a DWI suspect.

KENTUCKY SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT ROOTED IN LEADERSHIP

By Katharine Jefcoats
Editor

To say Kentucky college student Emily Fraim stayed busy in high school may be an understatement.

The daughter of Teresa and Paul Fraim, a retired police officer, Emily managed to log at least 60 hours of community service while maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.54 and playing volleyball for her school.

Her personal trainer and employer, Kyle Webster, said Emily has demonstrated “fortitude and determination” in and out of school.

She graduated Lexington Catholic High School last year and is attending Eastern Kentucky University as a communication studies major. Her father served in law enforcement for 20 years and is a PBA member.

Emily applied for, and was awarded, a scholarship from PBF to help her with college expenses.

“It meant so many things,” she said. “It was an honor to be selected, it was satisfying because all of my hard work was helping me to financially assist with college expenses, making my parents proud and giving me more motivation to keep up my hard work.”

Paul Fraim agreed, saying he knows his daughter will succeed in college and in life.

“She knows what hard work is and has the motivation to achieve what she needs to for her future,” he said. “She is a compassionate young lady and I am blessed to have her for a daughter.”

However, Emily credits her father for setting the example she follows.

“I was always proud to say my dad was an officer and, at the same time, I was scared for his safety,” she said. “Being the child of an officer helped mold me into the person I am today -- staying off drugs, learning the importance

of upholding the law at all times and maintaining dignity and respect not only for myself but for the fact of being the child of an officer.

“Another benefit of having an officer for a dad is that he taught me the importance of personal safety and how to protect myself,” she continued.

Being a member of the volleyball team meant Emily stayed in good physical shape, working out in the weight room and with a personal trainer.

She said she enjoyed the leadership skills she developed as part of the team.

“I have exhibited leadership by always taking the initiative in group projects, clubs and activities,” she said. “I have also been able to do this through my many volleyball teams.

“My position on the team was as setter and, as setter, I was expected to be a leader on and off the court,” continued Fraim. “This was never a challenge for

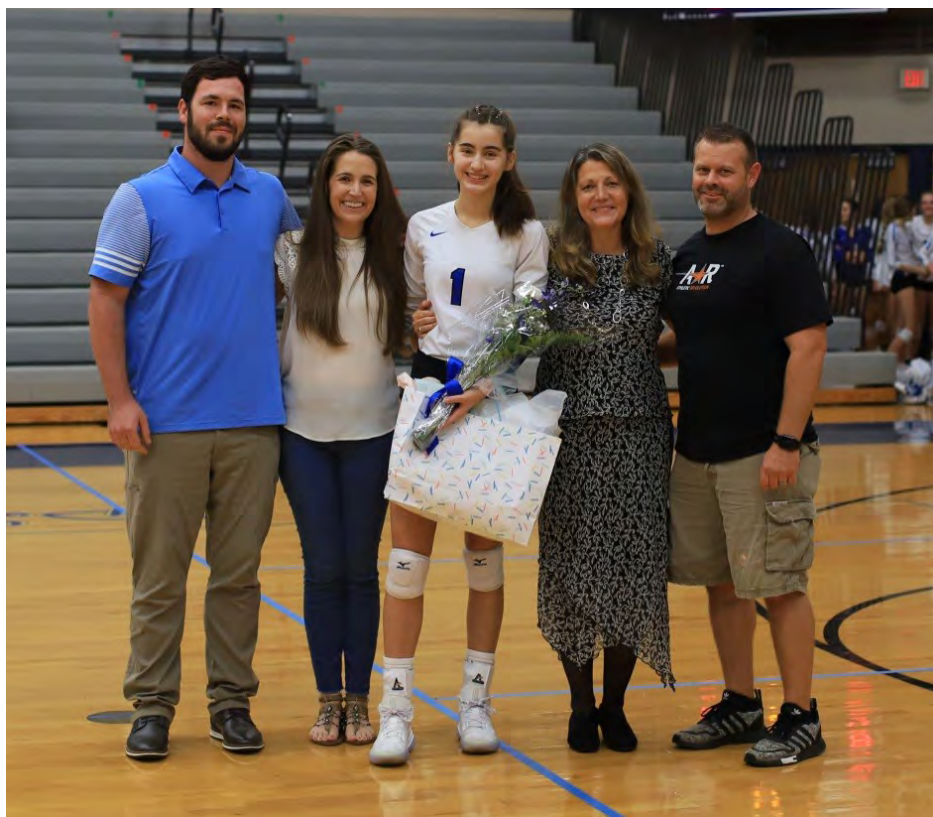
me because my parents always taught me to be a leader.”

Her athletic achievements include offensive MVP Award, American Volleyball Coaches Association and Kentucky Volleyball Coaches preseason watch list, being USA Volleyball SportsSafe certified, 2A State Volleyball Championship, selected to All-Tournament team;

Kentucky High School Athletic Association Academic All-State, AVCA Best and Brightest Award, Prep Spin/WKYT/Crown Trophy for Scholar Athlete of the Week, and six times as Max Prep’s Player of the Match.

“These aspects and experiences have made me into the person I am today,” said Emily.

Emily excelled in her academic studies, too, being inducted into the National Junior Classical League by maintaining an A average in Latin and consistently demonstrating good citizenship through



Emily Fraim excelled at volleyball

honesty, behavior and respect.

She was also accepted into the National Junior Beta Club, National Society of High School Scholars and was appointed a student ambassador and Service Club class representative.

In addition to academics, Lexington Catholic High School requires students to perform a minimum of 60 hours of community service. Emily said this also did not pose a challenge for her.

“I am very glad we are required to get service hours because it obligates us as young adults to be involved and help others in need,” she said. “Being active in community service is very important to me because it shows leadership, kindness and that you care for others.”

Some of Emily’s projects include Christmas activities at nursing homes, EDGE Youth Group, which is a church group for middle and high school parishioners, and raising money

for Kentucky Children’s Hospital Hematology and Oncology Clinic through Dance Blue Public Relations and Communications Committee at Lexington Catholic.

Now in college, Emily is a full-time student and works two jobs. Her academic successes continue.

“In the fall of 2022, I was notified that I made the Dean’s List for my 4.0 GPA,” she said.



ALA PBA MEMBER'S TRAINING AND TENACITY EARN RECOGNITION

By Cindy Baugher
Administrative Services associate

Tyron Ponds, only six days removed from field training, found himself in a situation that evolved into a life-changing moment in Lee County, Ala., on Oct. 20, 2021.

The events on that roadside in Beauregard, Ala., resulted in Ponds being awarded the 2022 Deputy James Anderson Award for going above and beyond the call of duty.

Those same events also led to a nine-month recovery before he was able to resume work as a sheriff's deputy.

Ponds, originally from Camp Hill, Ala., and a graduate of Reeltown High School in Notasulga, Ala., served his country for 15 years in the U.S. Army, completing four deployments, three in Afghanistan and one in Iraq.

He was a sergeant first class (E-7) when he completed his military service. While in the Army, Ponds served as an all-wheeled vehicle mechanic, a recruiter and a maintenance supervisor.

He studied criminal justice at Central Texas College, graduating in 2016. Looking to continue on the path of public service, but wanting to be closer to his family, law enforcement was a good fit for him.

In March 2021, Ponds joined the Lee County Sheriff's Office.

According to a May 21, 2022, article in the Opelika-Auburn News, Ponds initiated a traffic stop after noticing a rider whose motorcycle had no tag. Upon approaching the rider, he realized that the rider left the motorcycle running. The operator refused to show his license and would not identify himself.

When Ponds asked the rider to step off the motorcycle, he instead sped off and a pursuit began.

About a mile and a half into the chase, the rider wrecked. Ponds said that he approached, intending to "execute proper



Deputy Ponds with his family

protocol following a pursuit, but the offender produced a firearm and began to shoot. Bullet fragments struck both my cruiser and myself, causing me to produce my duty weapon."

The article from the Opelika-Auburn News stated that the officer's intense training only two weeks earlier at Fort Benning, Ga., kicked in as he fired shots at the rider to hopefully "stop him in his tracks."

The rider was hit twice and was able to be subdued before being life-flighted from the scene.

Ponds was taken by ambulance to Piedmont Hospital in Columbus, Ga., where his road to recovery would begin.

He initially had two surgeries to clean and treat the bullet wounds.

"I was shot in both hands and the right arm," he said. "Injuries sustained from the incident was partial loss of the left pinky finger and structural damage to the left pinky finger. A bullet struck my right hand, and I had another wound to the right arm."

Further evaluation by Ponds' doctors led to the decision to leave the bullet in his right arm, due to possibly causing further damage to the radial nerve. The damage to the radial nerve left little to no function in his dominant right hand.

After failing to regain functionality in that right hand, despite several months

of physical therapy with a hand and arm specialist, Ponds underwent an additional surgery in April 2022.

This tendon transfer surgery was in an effort to help him regain function in his right hand. Combined with another long stint in physical therapy, that final surgery enabled him to use the transferred tendon to open his hand and make a full recovery.

The healing and recovery process has not been an easy path for Ponds. He faced multiple surgeries and physical therapy as a result of that October morning traffic stop. A long recovery left him eager to return to work doing what he loves.

The Lee County community has been supportive to him and his family throughout this ordeal. Support much like that which he's found as a member of the Police Benevolent Association.

Ponds said he chose to become a PBA chapter member because of the great mentorship opportunities it offers and the resources it provides when and if they are needed. He calls PBA a "great tool and resource to have when you serve in the law enforcement spectrum. It's quite reassuring knowing that someone is in your corner at all times, serving in various roles."

On Sept. 27, 2022, Ponds was honored with the Deputy James Anderson Award. Created by the city of Smith's Station, Alabama, it is an award remembering Anderson, who made the ultimate sacrifice in giving his life while protecting the citizens of Lee County, Ala.

Anderson was killed when he was intentionally struck by the driver of a car while making a traffic stop in September 2009. It is one of the highest honors bestowed by the Lee County Sheriff's Office.

Jessica Daley, president of the Lee County Chapter of the Alabama PBA, said Ponds is deserving of the award.

"He has continued to be a positive influence on his peers and the citizens of Lee County," she said. "He is a true example of what Deputy James Anderson



Family, friends and co-workers welcome Ponds home after surgery



Ponds during his award ceremony

was to the community and very deserving of the award."

Ponds' family -- wife of 14 years, Shantivia, and three children, Hayley, 15, Tyron, Jr. 10, and Harley, 10 -- are undoubtedly proud of him for the grit and determination he's shown in his approach to both his career and recovery.

Ponds said he is excited to return to his role as a deputy as well as being back to 100 percent in his off-time. Aside from spending time with his family, Ponds



Ponds as a U.S. Army soldier

enjoys playing recreational softball, hunting and fishing. In fact, as a hunting and fishing enthusiast, Ponds said he and some friends are looking forward to filming their deer hunts in the coming year in hopes of landing a hunting platform on YouTube.

(Source: Johnson, L. (Opelika-Auburn News May 21, 2022); Returning fire and staying alive; Deputy describes Beauregard traffic stop that became a shootout.)

PBF RECOVERY FUND LEADS TO FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN MEMBERS

By Randy Byrd
Director of Foundation and Media Relations

Officer Justin Siek and Trooper Zach Martin had never met each other when their fight against cancer began. They didn't even work in the same area of the state.

The Police Benevolent Foundation, however, set a friendship and support system in place that continues as a source of strength for both of them.

In June 2022, Siek, with the Durham Police Department, was diagnosed with a rare cancer called stage II oral squamous carcinoma. He immediately underwent emergency partial glossectomy surgery at UNC Rex to remove a tumor and a neck dissection to remove pre-cancerous lymph nodes. The surgery was initially a success.

However, only a few short months afterward, his cancer returned twice as strong. In September, he underwent another similar surgery at Duke University Hospital to remove a stage IV tumor located on the base of his tongue and another dissection to remove lymph nodes.

Intense radiation and chemotherapy treatments at the Duke Cancer Center in Durham were also part of this process. Determined to help his fellow chapter member, Tobacco Road Chapter President Drew Cox reached out to the PBF about setting up a recovery fund to help Siek with his medical expenses.

Over the next several weeks, thousands of dollars were raised to help Siek by alerting members and the public through email and social media. Cox was able to generate further interest through a local television reporter. Julian Grace with WRAL-TV 5 in Raleigh interviewed both Siek and Cox for the story which boosted the fundraising.

In August, Martin, with the NC State Highway Patrol, started experiencing pain on his left side in his groin. The pain proceeded to a point where he



Zach and Justin at Duke Cancer Center

could barely walk. After several months and visits to his personal physician and several specialists, it was finally determined through a bone scan that a biopsy should be performed.

The biopsy required cutting Martin's leg open to get a sample from inside of his femur. The normal procedure requires drilling a hole into the bone to get a sample, but the bone was so brittle that tweezers were used.

A few days before Christmas, the results

came back and Martin was finally diagnosed as having Ewing sarcoma. This type of cancer is best described as a cancer that is similar to lymphoma and bone cancer.

Martin was given the option to do chemo, radiation and chemo, or have surgery that would remove part of the femur and possibly part of his hip, along with more chemo.

A fellow trooper was concerned about what Martin was going through and

contacted the PBF to ask for assistance. The PBF reached out to Martin and a fund was started for him. His story was shared like Siek's.

Reporter Shannon Baker with WNCT-TV in Greenville was gracious enough to do a story at the PBF's request, and Martin and his wife were interviewed for the story. As in the case with Siek, the financial support came pouring in.

During the development of the fundraiser for Martin, he became aware of Siek's story through the PBF and wanted to reach out to him. After Martin talked with Siek, a friendship started.

"We talked about what he had experienced, and what I would experience as well," said Martin. "Justin showed up when I had to have my test done and he and I have been talking to each other every day since that day. He even came to my first treatment and to see me a few days after I had my surgery."

Siek said their friendship "was an immediate brotherhood, and honestly, felt like we have been buddies for a lifetime."

Since his journey started, Siek completed 35 rounds of radiation along with six rounds of chemotherapy. At the end of it, he was able to ring the bell of hope at Duke Cancer Center, accompanied by his family. He continues to be closely monitored at Duke and is seen monthly. As of now, his status is remission.

On Feb. 15, he returned to full duty and hit the ground running.

Martin completed one round of treatment and has started on his second round. Since the recovery fund was started, he has broken his femur, simply by rolling over in bed. He had to undergo major surgery where 40 percent of his femur had to be replaced, and he had a partial hip replacement. He is still recovering from surgery, but is showing improvement day by day.

The efforts of the Foundation have served as a tremendous boost for Siek and Martin.

"The PBF is important to me and my family because it immediately stepped up



NC State Highway Patrol Chapter President Kevin Pearson delivers check to Martin.

to help me and my family during a time of unknowns," said Martin.

Siek agreed.

"The PBF provided the financial resources to relieve the pressure of medical expenses that continued to grow on a daily basis," he said.

Siek is from Butler, N.J. His father was a dispatcher for Butler Police Department and his mother was a homemaker. He graduated from Butler High School in 2004. He played basketball all four years.

After high school, Siek relocated to Florida for a stint before returning home.

He pursued his education at a local community college and worked for a private investigation firm.

Siek eventually came south to start his law enforcement career.

"I have a serious passion for serving the community and felt by becoming a law enforcement officer I could make a significant and positive difference in the lives of so many people, especially the younger generation," said Siek.

The Raleigh Police Department gave him the opportunity and after completing the Raleigh Police Academy, he started his career as



Tobacco Road Chapter President Drew Cox presents check to Siek

a Raleigh officer. He later worked for Boiling Springs Lake Police Department, before transferring to the Durham Police Department. He is an eight-year veteran.

During his career, he has received several awards and commendations to include being named the Officer of the Year in 2018, a lifesaving award in 2019 and Hero of the Canes Game in 2020.

Siek's wife, Kara, works for a local non-profit. They have three daughters, Alexis, 17, Ashlyn, 14, and Olivia, 7, and a son, Joseph, who was born in November 2022.

Martin was born and raised in High Point, N.C. His mother was a stay-at-

home mom until his parents divorced. After they divorced, his mother became a manager of one of the many convenience stores his grandfather owned. His father was a salesman for Leggett and Platt, a manufacturer of engineered components for the home and automobile.

Martin graduated from Trinity High School in 2007. He played football all four years and was named first team all-conference two years in a row as a defensive back. He also wrestled and ran track. He was named a Morehead scholar nominee and outstanding senior.

He continued his education at Beaufort County Community College and

graduated with honors in 2017.

Martin chose to enter the law enforcement profession because of the variety of tasks.

"I wanted to do something different every day," said Martin.

After completing rookie school at Davidson Community College, he started his career with the Belhaven Police Department in 2010. After working with them, he transferred to the Beaufort County Sheriff's office before becoming a trooper. He is a 13-year veteran.

Martin's wife, Ginny, works for the Beaufort County Clerk of Court's Office as a clerk. They have two boys, Greyson is 7, and Lawson will be 2 this year.

The PBF is honored to be a part of these members' recovery and wants to thank everyone who has supported them through their prayers and financial support. For Justin and Zach, PBF wants to say, "You got this."



Siek with his son, Joseph



Martin



Siek with his family



Martin with his family

SCPBA MEMBER HONORS FALLEN OFFICERS IN BAGPIPE TRIBUTES

By Katharine Jefcoats
Editor

Aye, the pipes are indeed calling.

They're calling for North Charleston police Sgt. James F. "Jimmy" Ryan III, from head gear to kilt, to stand in tribute at the graveside of a fallen officer. He pays respect to the uniformed men and women lost in or out of the line of duty, active duty or retired.

"We're in a business in which we lose good people, from collisions to gunfire, heart attacks to helicopter crashes," said Ryan. "We see fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, and sons and daughters called home to God long before their time. It is a terribly trying time for all involved, and it is a time for their families, colleagues and the community to come together and say good-bye to a hero."

There are quite a few pipers in South Carolina, but not many police pipers, he said.

"I have always been of the school of thought that a police funeral should involve a cop playing the pipes," said Ryan. "I am blessed to have a chief who likes when I represent the department in South Carolina, and beyond."

Ryan was raised in a traditional and proud Irish-American family of three boys in Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, N.Y.

"Dad carried a shield and a gun as a court officer at the New York State Supreme Court, eventually retiring as a senior court clerk -- think 'Mac' on (the television show) 'Night Court' -- in 1995," Ryan said. "My mom was a registered nurse who not only worked in some of NYC's busiest trauma hospitals but also taught trauma nursing."

Ryan and his brothers, Kevin Patrick and Michael John, learned to sing in Brooklyn's Irish pubs. They marched in the Memorial and Veterans Day parades carrying the American flag and reveling in the fact that they were not only proud Americans, but proud Americans with



Sgt. Jimmy Ryan is proud to play a role in honoring the lives of fallen officers.

Irish heritage.

"We played baseball and soccer, viewed Mom and Dad as our heroes, and walked the streets of Brooklyn as if we owned them," he said. "Dad never let us forget we were Americans and he always made sure we knew our history. American history trivia, especially American military history, was big in our house, and the Ryan boys all knew the names of the four Japanese aircraft carriers sunk at Midway by the time they turned 8."

Ryan attended Xavier High School in Manhattan, where he was a member of its US Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program. As much as he was rooted in Brooklyn, Ryan said he grew more and more weary of the Northeast and looked hard at colleges in the South.

Having spent eight years with the School Sisters of Notre Dame in grammar school, then four years with the Jesuits in high school, it seemed like a natural progression to move on to the rather structured environment of The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, he said.

And so, the Irish American, Brooklyn boy headed south.

"The Citadel brought me to South Carolina, and better weather, shrimp and grits, and ladies in sundresses kept me in South Carolina," said Ryan.

Once he established himself in the Palmetto State, the only thing left was to choose a career path. Ryan said the service-driven influence of the Jesuits and The Citadel helped him settle on law enforcement.



Little Jimmy Ryan pretends to play the pipes in a New York parade.

“At the end of the day, this job is not about guns and shields and cars jobs, it’s about people,” he said. “I love dealing with people, both the good and the bad and this is the profession to do it. My goal each shift is to do one good thing for someone, and two is even better.”

Ryan discovered he enjoyed the challenges of every day policing.

“You would be hard pressed to find a more dynamic profession than law enforcement, especially in a department with a high operational tempo like

mine,” he said. “I like the variety of calls and experiences that make up my shift, and some nights I simply like to be able to say, after dealing with some ‘interesting’ individuals, ‘I may be a little screwed up, but I am not that screwed up.’ Everything is relative.”

Ryan started his career as a detention officer with Charleston County Sheriff’s Office, eventually moving on to the Isle of Palms Police Department where he served as a patrol sergeant. He’s spent the last nine years with the North Charleston Police Department, where he serves as a

night shift patrol sergeant.

Ryan was exposed to military band music as a child and he learned more about John Philip Sousa and his tuba than the music of Billboard’s Top 40 in the 1980s under the tutelage of his dad.

“My dad was a big fan of military music, especially American and British military bands,” he said. “At a very young age, I knew more about the music of ‘American March King’ John Philip Sousa and ‘British March King’ Kenneth J. Alford than I did any contemporary American musician.

“He had a fantastic stereo system and stacks of LPs of American and British military bands that he played for hours on end,” continued Ryan. “Many of those albums were Scottish regimental bands playing the Great Highland Bagpipe.”

The elder Ryan’s love of the Great Highland Bagpipe led him to eventually start taking lessons himself.

“He joined the Clann Eireann Pipe Band in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, and played with them for a number of years,” Ryan said. “I loved attending band gigs and marching in the numerous parades in the New York metropolitan area. I took lessons on the pipes for a bit, but it was not the ‘cool’ thing to do at the time, so it went by the wayside.”

But in January 2000, Ryan’s beloved father died of cancer. He returned to Brooklyn for final services and burial, and re-connected with old friends.

“I was standing outside the funeral parlor on an absolutely freezing night when the gentleman with whom Dad started taking lessons 30 years prior walked up,” said Ryan. “He was absolutely inconsolable, and through tear-filled eyes he looked at me and said, ‘Jimmy, did you ever learn to play the pipes?’”

Ryan told the man he’d played around but never took it seriously.

“Jimmy,” he said, “it’s now time,” Ryan said he told him.

Ryan returned to Charleston and said he sought the expert tutelage of Pipe Maj. Sandy Jones, then-director of piping and drumming at The Citadel and director of



Ryan pays final respects to fallen officers whenever asked.

the North American Academy of Piping and Drumming.

"I, and many others, have been so fortunate to have such a world-renowned piping extraordinaire in Sandy," said Ryan. "It took a little bit, but he had me playing, and later competing, with the Charleston Police Pipes and Drums. Twenty-three years later, I am still playing, both as the Honor Guard piper for the North Charleston Police Department and on my own time for weddings, funerals and retirement parties."

Ryan gets requests to perform for all sorts of events throughout the Southeast. He said he refers them to his chain of command to make the requests "official," and approval usually comes soon thereafter.

"I don't mind getting loaned out, as friendships that will last the rest of my life have been born at some of these events," he said. "I discovered small South Carolina towns of which I had

never heard, and even learned about the Lizard Man of Scape Ore Swamp when I played for the former sheriff of Lee County.

"Roughly two hours up the road in Myrtle Beach is the Coastal Carolina Shields Pipes and Drums, a band made up primarily of 'my people,'" continued Ryan.

Ryan submitted an essay he wrote when his friend, sheriff's Deputy Joe Matuskovic, was shot and killed in the line of duty in September 2014.

"Cop funerals are very important to me.

"During my time in this business, I have been privileged to be in positions that have afforded me the opportunity to train new police officers as a field training officer, field training manager, and well as during guest instructor time at the academy. The guest instructor time primarily involves scenario-based,

hands-on training on the practical problems range.

"At the end of the training week, the guest instructors are given a few minutes to give a farewell speech and perhaps impart a tidbit of wisdom or two upon South Carolina's newest police officers. There are three points that I hammer home, the most salient being the importance of attending police funerals.

"The schedule of a police officer is a demanding one. He or she is tasked with juggling working at God-awful times of day, often working off-duty jobs in addition to that to help make ends meet.

"A part time job on top of a full-time job and, to make things a little sportier, throw in a loving family to which he or she must attend.

"It is that loving family that the police funeral is all about.

"On the day we suit up in our finest dress uniform. We polish our leather gear, square away our cars, and do our best to be proud representatives of the folks for whom we work. We come in before or after a night shift, losing precious sleep and knowing well that we will pay for it later.

"We stand in the heat, the cold, the rain, and perhaps even snow. We find ourselves physically and emotionally drained by the events of the day.

"We do it for those left behind.

"We do it for the children who have lost their father or mother. We do it for the father and mother who face the task of burying their child. We do it to show our love for them. We do it to show our solidarity with them. We do it to show them that they, too, are part of our law enforcement family, and that they will always be our family. We do it for each other, as we must rely on each



Follow us on Facebook to stay up to date with all of the SSPBA's legislative activity.

Like us on
facebook



other at these times. Lastly, we do it for ourselves, for we'd like someone to stand with our families.

"This morning, as we stand at Blessed Sacrament Church and say goodbye to Joe, we will do so shoulder-to-shoulder with his family. We will stand strong as we will be standing as many. To his family and the community, our presence will say, 'Joe was our brother, and we share in your grief.'

"We will stand as many, and someday, when Joe's little boy is old enough to understand, he will see photos and videos documenting the day. He will see row-upon-row of people paying their last respects. He will see miles of emergency vehicles accompanying Joe to his final resting place. He will see the helicopters pass overhead and hear the bagpipes and the bugle. He will hold a folded American flag in his hand.

"He will look at his siblings and say, 'Dad must have been one hell of a man to have so many people come out for him.'

"One hell of a man,' indeed, and one we were so immensely proud to call 'brother.'"



First-grader Jimmy Ryan and his dad were profiled in an early newspaper article as father and son bagpipers.



Ryan with former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley

BERKELEY CO., WV SHERIFF'S DEPUTY RECEIVES MEDAL OF VALOR

By Cindy Baugher
Administrative Services associate

Great courage in the face of danger is how the dictionary defines valor.

The Berkeley County, W.Va., Sheriff's Office recently awarded the Medal of Valor to its own Deputy David Knotts for his actions Nov. 26, 2022.

It is clear that Knotts' actions that day were the epitome of courage in the face of danger.

"While commuting to work there was a call for a reckless driver," said Knotts. "A deputy, who was also on his way into work, stopped that vehicle. Then, a corporal and myself responded to his traffic stop as back up.

"The suspect ultimately fled in his vehicle at a high rate of speed through a busy shopping area and we pursued," he continued. "The suspect made a left turn behind a shopping center and the first two officers followed."

Knotts said he decided to go right, because he surmised the suspect was trying to get back to the interstate.

As the pursuit and Knotts started coming back together, the first officer called "shots fired" over the radio.

"The suspect had shot several rounds at an oncoming Martinsburg Police Officer, and actually struck his patrol vehicle right above the windshield," said Knotts.

"I then saw the suspect vehicle crest the hill coming toward me, and start shooting through the windshield at me," he continued.

The suspect ran off the road and was trying to continue driving, he continued, so in an effort to prevent him from causing further harm in the vehicle, Knotts said he hit him with his patrol car as the suspect was still shooting through his windshield.

"At that point the threat was over," said Knotts. "And all that happened before I clocked in for the day."



Officials honor Knotts with Medal of Valor

Knotts appeared to take all of this in stride as simply a part of a day's work in law enforcement.

"I just can't picture myself doing anything else," he said. "I love the community that I live in and I want to have an active role in making it safe."

Knotts grew up in West Virginia, though he moved around a little since his stepfather was in the Air Force. Both his father and stepfather served in the military and law enforcement.

Even his mom is involved in the law enforcement field. After she went back to school and earned her degree, she works for the FBI.

Knotts joined the Army and shipped off to basic training in Spring 2014. His MOS was 13M, which is a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System crewmember.

As he puts it, "I basically shot telephone pole-sized rockets off the back of a truck."

He deployed to Iraq in 2016 as part of Operation Inherent Resolve, where he provided artillery support to Iraqi Security Forces and coalition forces. Knotts, who once ran a marathon in Kuwait while carrying 75 pounds on his back, seems to have a knack for finding a way to handle things that need to be handled.

After attending rookie school at West Virginia State Police Academy, Knotts started his career in law enforcement with the Martinsburg Police Department before moving on to the Berkeley County Sheriff's Department.

He was a member of the Special Response Team when he worked for Martinsburg PD and serves with the SWAT team as part of the Berkeley County Sheriff's Office.

Knotts is also a part of the PBA, pointing out that he became a member when one of his coworkers encouraged him to do so. After looking at the benefits of membership with the PBA, he calls it a "no-brainer."

These days, when he's not policing, he enjoys "anything outdoors" such as fishing, shooting, riding his motorcycle and chasing his kids, Tristan, who's almost 5, and Addalyn, who's almost 2, around the yard.

Knotts pointed to both his father and stepfather as being influences in his career and Gen. Patton as an admired historical leader.

When it comes to his favorite quote, he said it's Theodore Roosevelt's "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." Using his vehicle as a means to curtail a criminal who is shooting at him aligns nicely with this quote.

WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS RECORD MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

By Cindy Baugher
Administrative Services associate

Recruiters of the SSPBA have clearly done a remarkable job of assuring the men and women in law enforcement that SSPBA provides valuable benefits, as total membership numbers are now higher than ever, approaching 67,000.

On Oct. 26, 2022, SSPBA recruiters met in McDonough, Ga., for a recruiter workshop led by Chief Operating Officer René Dixon.

The newest recruiter working with SSPBA is Mike Miller. He is serving to bring members on board in the state of Alabama. A total of six recruiters are now working to help officers understand the importance of SSPBA membership.

A highlight of the recruiter workshop is the presentation of the annual Recruiting Award, given to the recruiter who has signed up the most new members for SSPBA. This impressive distinction was earned by Kris Jarvis for six consecutive years: 2017-2022.



COO René Dixon addresses the recruiters

Over the course of his recruiting career with SSPBA, Jarvis has facilitated the addition of approximately 16,000 new members in Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina.

"I still recall the first member I signed up on April 1, 2011, at Gordon Police Department, located in Wilkinson County, Ga.," he said. "I also remember and honor, the 11 officers I have signed up who have been tragically killed in the line of duty."

In 2012, Jarvis was promoted to recruiting manager and training coordinator, where he assumed day-to-day management of the recruiting staff while continuing to recruit new members himself.

In 2019, Jarvis was again promoted, to director of development. In this role, he continued his previous responsibilities while also leading workshops to review operational processes.

In September 2022, Jarvis was promoted to director of operations. He continues to manage the day-to-day activities of the recruiting program, focuses on operations and assists with the implementation of directives from COO René Dixon.

"It is truly an honor and privilege to be part of an organization that provides me the opportunity to make a positive impact in the lives of law enforcement and their families," said Jarvis.



COO René Dixon with Kris Jarvis and his 2020-2022 awards for Most Recruited

PBA SCREENING PROCESS UNSURPASSED IN EFFECTING CHANGE

By John Midgette
Director of Governmental Affairs

The PBA political screening process is a time-honored tradition that has been in place for decades and was created by our founder, Charlie Maddox.

This process involves the members deciding which races to get involved in, along with the issues they want to address politically, to improve the law enforcement profession and the working conditions of our members. Once these issues are fine-tuned, questions are developed to be asked during the candidate interview.

After approval from the legal staff, the questions, along with background on the issues, are mailed to the candidates with an invitation letter. This allows the candidate the opportunity to prepare for what is essentially a job interview and to understand the significant issues facing officers.

On the day of the interview, the candidate meets with the screening committee. These screenings allow members to come into close contact with first-time candidates as well as those who have held elected office for many years.

This group of members volunteers their time to grade the candidate's responses to the questions and make recommendations to the appropriate board on final endorsements. Once the endorsements are made, all candidates are notified of the results.

The board then goes to work to help the candidates get elected. This includes using social media, making campaign donations, press conferences, attending campaign events and informing members about who the board has endorsed.

The PBA was active in the interview and endorsement process during the 2022 primary and general election cycle in five states. Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Alabama and Virginia endorsed 228 candidates on the local,

state and federal levels.

These endorsed candidates were running for U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress, governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, insurance commissioner, agriculture commissioner, labor commissioner, court of appeals, district attorney, sheriff, county commissioner, city

council, court clerk and judicial seats.

Every member reading this writing has the opportunity to be part of our political effort.

Members who would like to be involved in the screening process in 2023 should contact the division president, chapter president, executive director or staff representative in their state.



Georgia state Rep. Lauren "Bubba" McDonald with members after interview.



Hopewell, Va., City Council candidate Michael Harris (c) with PBA members.



NCPBA President David Rose (l) with U.S. Sen. Ted Budd



District court judge-elect Jennifer Wright (l) with Mobile County Senior Vice President Andrea McDonald.

PBA LEADERS RECEIVE ADVANCED CORRECTION CERTIFICATES

By Randy Byrd
Director of Foundation of Media Relations

Wardell Williams and Wendy Bryant-Sellers received their advanced corrections certificates from the North Carolina Criminal Justice and Education and Training Standards Commission Aug. 12, 2022.

The certificate is one of the highest honors that probation and parole officers can earn in their profession and is based on a formula that includes years of experience, higher education and training.

The two were recognized during the regularly scheduled meeting of the commission.

Williams serves as the senior vice president of the North Carolina Police Benevolent Association Division board. He became a lifetime member in 2018. In September 2022, he retired as a chief probation and parole officer for the North Carolina Department of Public Safety after 27 years of service

Bryant-Sellers serves on the executive board of the Corrections Chapter as secretary. She has been a probation and parole officer for 27 years.

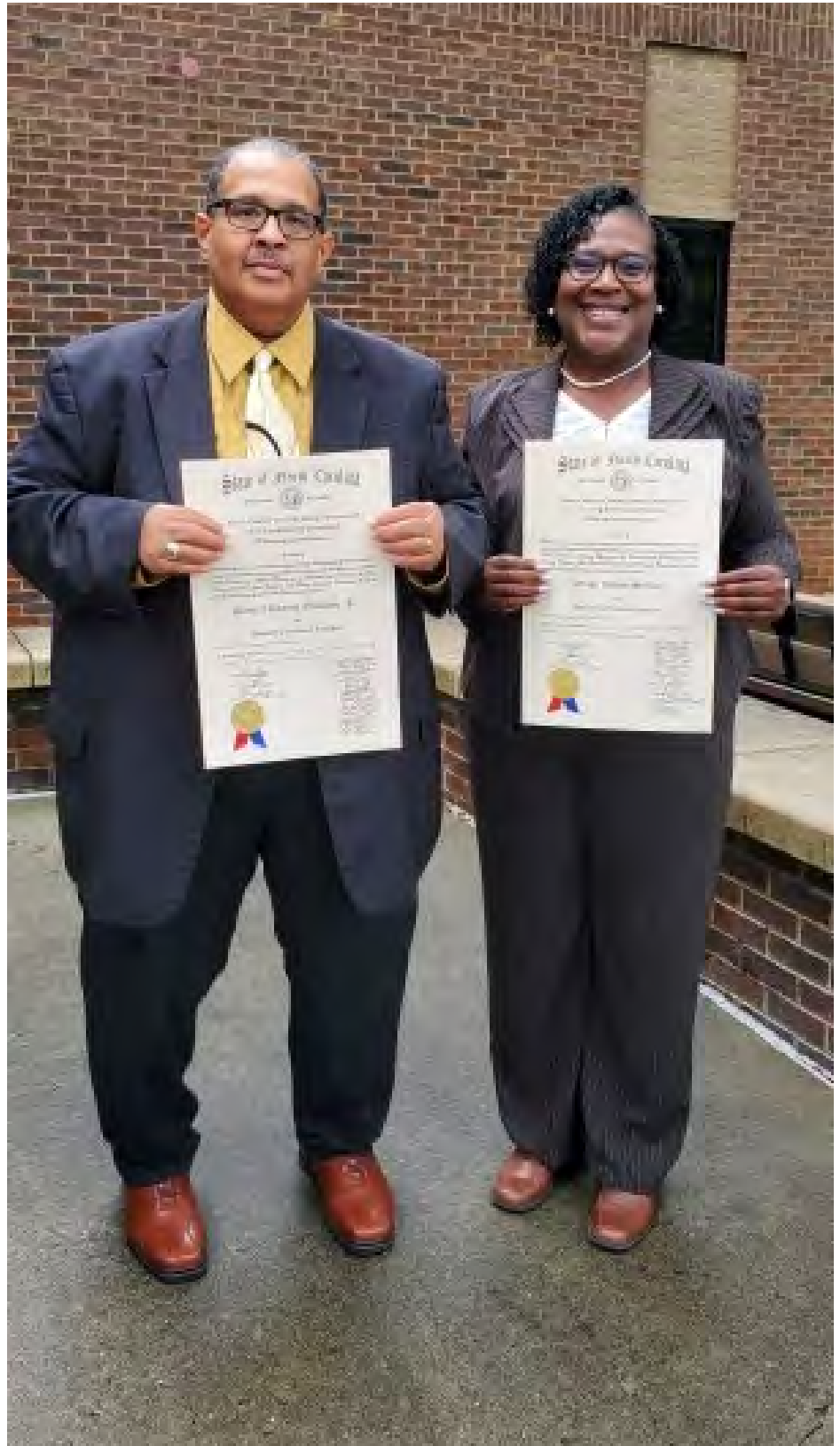
For Williams, the PBA is one of the finest associations that he has had the privilege to be a part of.

“From day one, PBA has been about professionalism within law enforcement, dedication and care for its members, and benefits and services that surpass all others,” he said.

“They have also afforded me opportunities for growth, training, experience and networking that I wouldn’t have otherwise had.”

Bryant-Sellers said she values her time and work with the PBA.

“The PBA stands shoulder to shoulder with officers that need support when they have been wrongly accused or mistreated in the workplace,” she said. “It has been



Williams and Bryant-Sellers

an honor to be part of this association and I look forward to working with the

PBA for many years to come.”

ARKANSAS SECRET SERVICE TASK FORCE MEMBER HONORED

**By Katharine Jefcoats
Editor**

Being homeschooled, Hot Springs, Ark., native Matthew Cheatham competed against one student – his sister, who is two years older.

It wasn't exactly the environment for being honored or recognized for achievements, so Cheatham, who works as a detective at Hot Springs Police Department, was humbled to be nominated for its Officer of the Quarter.

"I was nominated for a few reasons to my knowledge," said Cheatham. "I spent one month living in a different state for training with the Secret Service. I did that to learn and bring back the knowledge to my department. My supervisors noted my hard work and determination.

"During that time frame, I issued a large amount of warrants and was able to solve many cases," Cheatham continued. "I gave up a large portion of my personal time to help my department and community.

"I can say that I worked a large-scale forgery ring case, where I was able to identify many actors in a large scale scheme of identity fraud," he added.



Cheatham on the job

But Cheatham, 27, did not realize he was destined for law enforcement until he decided to attend college. He was raised by his dad, a lineman for Entergy, and his stay at home mom, who educated him and his sister at their Hot Springs home.

Cheatham said he spent all his free time hunting in the woods or fishing on Lake Ouachita. He was also athletic, playing basketball and soccer.

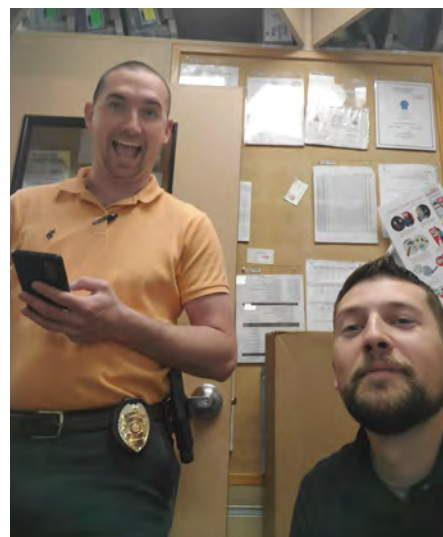
When he graduated high school in 2012, Cheatham got a job driving a forklift in a warehouse. He hated it.

"I decided quickly that I needed to attend college and get a better job," he said. "When I went to sign up for classes, I signed up for criminal justice because I wanted to work for the game and fish commission.

"After going to a few classes, I realized that I wanted to work for the police department," he continued.

His education proved enlightening.

"As a kid, I thought all police did was write tickets," said Cheatham. "But after learning about all the career paths, opportunities and different facets of the job, I knew it was for me.



Cheatham and a coworker



Cheatham became an officer at 22

"The real reason everyone wants in this job differs, but the underlying common factor is to 'help people,'" he continued. "Same as every job, it needs to appeal to what you like and pay enough for the bills. To quote an old sergeant of mine, 'I love this job, but I sure as hell would not do it for free.'"

Cheatham graduated with honors from Nation Park College with a major in criminal justice, in 2017. He then attended police academy in Camden, Ark., and applied for the Hot Springs Police Department.

However, during the hiring process Cheatham was in a bad motorcycle accident, leaving him unable to walk for six months.

"Once I healed, I went to work for the Garland County Sheriff's Office as a jailer," he said. "I realized quickly that I wanted to be on patrol, so the next try out date, I again put in to work for the Hot Springs Police Department.

"I got the job when I was 22," continued Cheatham.

Cheatham worked patrol for three and a half years before being moved into investigations, as a property crime

detective. He works primarily fraud and forgery crimes.

Upon his promotion to corporal, he became the youngest person holding that rank at this department. He was also selected to serve as a task force officer with the U.S. Secret Service.

He made the decision to join PBA early in his career.

“Around a year into my career, I was involved in an incident where I wish I had PBA to assist,” Cheatham said. “After that, I signed up and encourage all new officers to do so, as well.”

Cheatham is married to a woman who keeps him grounded.

“I have a wife who is my rock,” he said. “I’m the cynical rain cloud, and she’s the rainbow. We have been together for four years and married for two years.”

He still enjoys fishing and being outdoors.

“Bow fishing has become one of my biggest hobbies,” said Cheatham. “I really enjoy chasing large grass carp and enjoying the fight.”

“I do a lot of hunting, fishing, four-wheeler riding, anything outdoors really,” he continued.

Cheatham said his skills include more than chasing bad guys and helping people.

“I am a jack of all trades, from auto mechanics, carpentry, plumbing, to flooring, I do all my own work and improvements,” he said. “I am always trying to learn new things and remain open to ideas. I make it a point in my life to not be quick to anger.”

“On a hobby-related note, me and some friends were able to catch a grass carp that was only a couple pounds off the state record,” he continued.

His philosophies echo in his favorite quote, “Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid,” from the Bible, Proverbs 12:1.

While he said he recognizes the importance of having veteran law



Cheatham said he enjoys fishing and hunting.

enforcement officers as sounding boards, Cheatham said he stays grounded by friends outside the field.

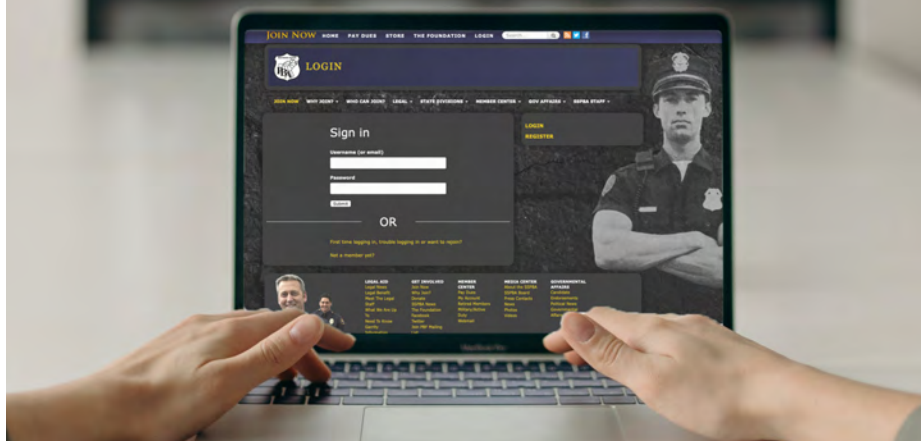
“Oddly, the greatest influence in my career has been the people outside law enforcement,” he said. “It’s really important to keep friends that have done work in this field.”

“(But) We are surrounded by negativity and other depressing things. Having friends and family to keep you grounded is a huge factor to happiness,” Cheatham continued.

“Having people who don’t only talk about this career will help us realize that we still need to enjoy life outside work,” he added.

Make sure your account information and beneficiaries are up to date!

**Login to your account at:
sspba.org/do/startLogin**



TRAINING AND RESOLVE BRING RESULTS, AWARDS FOR OFFICER

By Cindy Baugher
Administrative Services associate

Anthony Cowan realized his lifelong dream of serving in law enforcement when he became an officer with the Monroe, La., Police Department seven years ago.

Since the age of 2, Cowan had wanted to be a police officer. He said it's "the only thing I've ever envisioned myself doing."

Cowan started his career with the Monroe Police Department following his college graduation from the University of Arkansas at Monticello and after attending the North Delta Training Academy in 2016.

In October 2022, after serving for six years, he was honored for Heroic Policing by Brandon Brown, the U.S. attorney for the Western District in Louisiana.

This award was presented to Cowan based on the key role his actions played in the case of U.S. vs. Montrelle Jones in the Western District of Louisiana. The events of that evening, according to U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Louisiana, were as follows:

"These charges stem from an incident on Jan. 14, 2022, when a Monroe Police Department officer (Cowan) who was working off-duty security at the Neville High School basketball game on the school campus was alerted by several individuals that there was a group of males fighting outside in front of the gym. As the off-duty officer made his way outside to break up the fight, he observed approximately 30 individuals who were in an agitated state gathering in the foyer of the gym. The officer immediately went inside the foyer and observed Jones lift up his shirt with his left hand and saw he had a Glock-style handgun with an extended magazine secured in his waistband. The officer went to Jones and placed one hand on the weapon and the other on his shoulder and brought him to the nearest wall. He placed Jones' gun on the floor and took Jones into custody. The officer

observed several people flee from the foyer. Jones was escorted to the police vehicle and secured. The gun was taken into evidence and identified as a Glock Model 17, 9mm pistol."

Less than a month after the encounter that sent Jones to prison for 78 months, Cowan found himself in a similar situation. He was working again at a high school basketball game. As the game wrapped up, he received information that gangs were about to have a confrontation outside the gymnasium. Cowan investigated and observed Jaylond Roberson in the parking lot armed with a handgun.

"Approximately 50 yards away, I observed a group of gang members congregating," he said. "Based upon Roberson's actions, I knew there was possibly about to be a shooting. I immediately approached Roberson, disarmed him and placed him into custody. This was definitely a déjà vu moment for me, due to the similarities of these incidents. Over the past three years, we've had serious problems with gangs and the crimes they commit."

In his time with the Monroe Police Department, Cowan has served in many roles. He worked on the SWAT team for five years, patrol unit for four years, the High Enforcement and Apprehension



Cowan with his wife, Karylon



Cowan accepts Heroic Policing Award from Brandon Brown, the U.S. Attorney for the Western District in Louisiana.

Team for three years, and he is assigned to the metro narcotics unit.

In addition to the heroic policing award, he was also recognized in 2022 by the Monroe Police Department with the Valor Award. This is an award created to commend officers who exceed expectations by going over and beyond their assigned duties. Cowan was the first and only recipient of the Valor Award.

While growing up in Memphis, Tenn., mostly between South Memphis and the Frayser area, he encountered both challenges and excitement. He said he believes that “a lot of the challenges I

faced growing up shaped me to become the person that I am today.”

On a personal note, Cowan said, “My beautiful wife, Karylon Cowan, and I have been married for four years,” he said. “My wife is a middle school teacher and head basketball coach. In our off time, we love to travel abroad. We have a 1-year-old daughter, Kayleigh Cowan.”

He is a member of PBA and said the legal protection they provide him is the main reason for his membership. Aside from the guidance that an organization like the PBA provides, Cowan said he also appreciates the importance of individual mentors.

(Sources: Department of Justice, United States Attorney's Office, Western District of Louisiana. (2022, September 22). Monroe Man in Possession of Firearm at Local High School Sentenced to Federal Prison. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdla/pr/monroe-man-possession-firearm-local-high-school-sentenced-federal-prison>

Monroe Free Press. (2022, February 12). Roberson jailed on firearms charge after Wossman-Carroll game. Retrieved from <https://www.monroefreepress.com/roberson-jailed-on-firearms-charge-after-wossman-carroll-game/>)

BACK THE BADGE CAR SHOW A SUCCESS FOR PBA OF GA CHAPTER

By Patrick Cullinan
SSPBA staff representative

In late winter 2021, the board at the Augusta's River Region Chapter was looking for a new way to fundraise.

They had enjoyed success in the past with the Rock for Cops concerts, Race for the Fallen 5K, Brothers in Blue Bash, Sgt. Greg Meagher gun raffle and the 12 Guns of Christmas.

However, they did not want to rest on those accomplishments and were eager to come up with something they had not done before that would be enjoyable for all ages and would resonate with the community.

Board member Jamey Kitchens has been a "gearhead" most of his life, and like many others in law enforcement, he has owned his share of hot rods. His garage holds a 1973 Corvette Stingray his wife owns and a 1987 Buick Grand National that is his.

Driving a stroked and turbocharged 86 Mustang GT making about 600hp led him to the idea of a car show. He felt the chapter could capture the attention of many in the community and assured his fellow board members this could work. Thus, the first Back the Badge Car Show was born, and was held June 2022.

"Regardless of your walk of life, socio-economic background, age, race, etc.," said Kitchens, "everyone appreciates a nice car. People identify with them."

There was a popular song 30 years ago, "The Song Remembers When." This could also apply to vehicles. Baby boomers see a Shoebox Chevy and equate it to their youth. When Gen Xers see a Fox body Mustang, IROC-Z or even a Grand National, they may feel transported back in time.

Add in Chevilles, first generation Camaros, Roadrunners and Cudas, and pretty soon you will have your hands full with all manner of "this one time" or "I shouldn't have let that one go" stories.



Iconic DMC DeLorean, easily identified by movie fans and car enthusiasts

The climate surrounding law enforcement for the last decade or better has been trying at times. The Augusta area was certainly not immune to this. Progressive agendas and calls for defunding, along with several questionable high-profile incidents, have strained law enforcement relationships within communities to the breaking point.

With this in mind, the chapter wanted to have something that would bring the community together, a common ground, if you will. What better way than inviting

the community to come and show off their incredible machines?

As an added bonus, they invited all local agencies to send their best-looking department vehicles for a law enforcement pavilion. This was especially popular as the Georgia State Patrol brought out one of their new ZL1 Camaros.

For five months, the chapter planned and put together the logistics to make it happen. Chapter members reached out to business partners from past events and

made new ones in the process.

A flyer was created and members began sharing it everywhere -- social media, car shows, drag races, just name it.

The chapter offered varying sponsorship levels and categories for all makes and models. A local businessman stepped up and donated BBQ so that they were able to feed not only the participants but also the spectators for free.

Another local business donated RC Colas and Moon Pies to be handed out. The chapter was fortunate enough to have the Columbia County Merchants Association allow members the use of the fairgrounds. This provided not only plenty of show space but also parking and restroom facilities.

To say the chapter was pleased with the success of their first car show would be an understatement. By the time it was all said and done, the event raised a substantial amount of money for the Police Benevolent Foundation.

As with any operation, “planning, planning, planning” was the key. From registration to positioning of the participants’ vehicles to trash collection, everyone had a job and a responsibility. As with all operations, there were lessons learned to help plan for the next event.

A car show is truly like “Field of Dreams,” as in, “If you host it, they will come.” The connection made with the community can pay just as many dividends as any monies raised. The planning for the second annual event is under way and is set for May 2023.



DEDICATED HOPEWELL, VA POLICE DETECTIVE NABS TOP AWARD

By Katharine Jefcoats
Editor

Law enforcement has held a fascination for Shawn Grant since he was a child growing up in Prince George County, Va.

The Hopewell, Va., police detective chalked up his interest to a drive to help people.

"I always had a fascination with law enforcement ever since I was a kid," he said. "I always thought helping people was something I was really good at."

"I joined the volunteer fire department in my hometown when I was 16 and started a real interest in public service," continued Grant. "I became an EMT in 2008 and held my certification until 2016."

Prince George is mostly rural farmland, so the only thing to really do on weekends was to hang out in someone's field around a bonfire, Grant said.

The childhood pastime seems apropos given his first career choice.

"Initially, I wanted to pursue a career firefighting but kept my options open and applied to both fire and police positions at the same time to see which happened first," he said. "When I turned 19, I started working at Riverside Regional Jail in Prince George County and ultimately was hired by the Hopewell Police Department in 2012."

Grant was raised primarily by his grandparents in Prince George. His grandfather was retired from the US Navy and the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

"My grandfather, he passed away in 2017 but has always had the largest impact on any part of my life," he said. "My grandmother was an in-home babysitter for kids ranging from infants to basically teenagers. I have a younger sister, and we are only 16 months apart."

While a student at Prince George High School, Grant played freshman football but concentrated on after-school jobs



Grant has had a notable career.

starting at 17. He graduated in 2008.

"I'm currently working on getting an associate of science degree in criminal justice from California Coast University, online," said Grant.

Grant has developed a notable career in his 10 years so far at Hopewell. He was nominated as Hopewell's Officer of the Year for 2022 by his long-time friend, Lt. Jacquita Allen.

"Long story short, I was assigned to the Street Crimes Unit from 2019 until late 2021 when I was 'temporarily' re-assigned to the Criminal Investigations Unit due to some staffing issues with both units, some promotions and retirements," he said.

"I was pretty much thrown into being a major crimes detective with little knowledge of investigating these specific types of crimes including homicides, aggravated assaults, robberies, frauds and sexual assaults," continued Grant.

About two months into learning the new position, Grant responded to, and closed out, a homicide that occurred Christmas Day 2021 in a relatively short period of time.

But the work that he dedicated to that specific case and another homicide investigation he worked on about two months later got a lot of recognition and he was urged to put in for the spot permanently by other officers and his

chain of command.

"When the official position opened to the rest of the department, I applied and ultimately placed No. 1 on the list," said Grant. "I was officially made a permanent CIU detective earlier this year."

During his career, he achieved several other awards as well, including the Good Conduct Award, Safe Driving Award, Firearms Expert Ribbon, a few Excellent Police Duty awards and multiple Unit Citation Awards.

"Also, in 2018, I received the Life Saving Award after being credited with saving the life of a man that was stabbed multiple times by his roommate," said Grant.

In addition to his position as CID detective in the Major Crimes Unit, Grant has worked as a SWAT Team operator and sniper, FTO and driving and firearms instructor.

He's also a member of PBA, joining to have legal protection and assistance if he ever needed it.

"It just makes sense to have support from like-minded individuals and from people who know the 'ins and outs' of the job," said Grant.

In his spare time, Grant enjoys working out in the gym, riding his motorcycle, spending time with family.

"I'm not married, but I am currently in a long-term committed relationship," he said. "My girlfriend has two daughters that I claim as my own as I have helped raise them since they were both very young."

At the gym, Grant is a member of the "1000-Pound Club." "This means that, in the gym, I was able to bench press 315 pounds, squat 315 pounds and deadlift 405 pounds, a combined weight of at least 1000 pounds," he said.

He is also a bourbon hunter. According to www.thebourbonroad.com, "Bourbon hunting is trying to acquire those rare, dusty and allocated bottles of bourbon that everyone desires to have on their shelves."

FUNDRAISING CONCERT TO BENEFIT OFFICERS IN NC A SUCCESS

By Randy Byrd
Director of Foundation and Media Relations

On Jan. 25, 2023, the Capital Chapter of the North Carolina Police Benevolent Association and the Police Benevolent Foundation hosted the Backseat Revival Concert to Support Those Behind the Badge in Cary, N.C.

Backseat Revival is a Raleigh-based alt country/rockabilly duo with Wyatt Crabtree as the lead singer playing guitar and Mike Anderson on drums and percussion.

Crabtree comes from a one-man band and rockabilly honky tonk show named Joe's Cousin. No band members, no roadies, just him performing with vocals, guitar and a foot drum.

Joe's Cousin performs at roadhouses, bars, honky tonks, music halls and other venues with raw, original music, with Crabtree putting his own spin on the coolest covers. The band is named after his cousin, Joe, a cowboy in Texas.

Mike Anderson has played in bands who have shared the stage with the Black Crowes, Hootie and the Blowfish, Widespread Panic, The Romantics and Toad the Wet Sprocket, and has been active in the North Carolina music scene since 1985.

Crabtree and Anderson formed Backseat Revival early in 2019 and have played several successful shows in and around the Raleigh area. Both are retired officers and were founding members of the Cary Chapter several decades ago.

In addition to the awe-inspiring live music, professional auctioneer Benjamin Farrell auctioned off several items at intermission.

Farrell is a former officer who got into the auction business to raise money for his young son, who had numerous medical issues.

Farrell had previously attended an auction school and sent emails out to everyone he worked with. The response



Frontman Wyatt Crabtree

was overwhelming and the donations came pouring in, making the auction an incredible success.

This led to him creating Custom Benefit Auctions with the focus on charities that help those in need. Farrell does 170 events a year.

The auction items included a beautiful Thin Blue Line flag that was donated by artist Donna Pell, a wooden American flag donated by woodworker Brian Diyorio and 10-42 Custom Wood, a mountain lake getaway donated by John and Chris Midgette, a beach house getaway donated by Steve Gillooly and Associates Realty LLC, paintings by artist John Kiernan and Blue Line Studios, and a custom knife forging trip

donated by Jason Redman and Redman Steel.

The concert was further supported by platinum sponsors, sponsors, hosts and patrons.

Platinum Sponsors:

Sen. Danny Britt Jr.
Piada Italian Street Food
James Payne, attorney at law
Rep. Donny Lambeth
Scott Lassiter, Wake County Soil and Water District supervisor

Sponsors:

Gross Law Offices
Lucy Inman
Sparrow Law Firm
Ellis & Winters LLP
Rep. Donna White

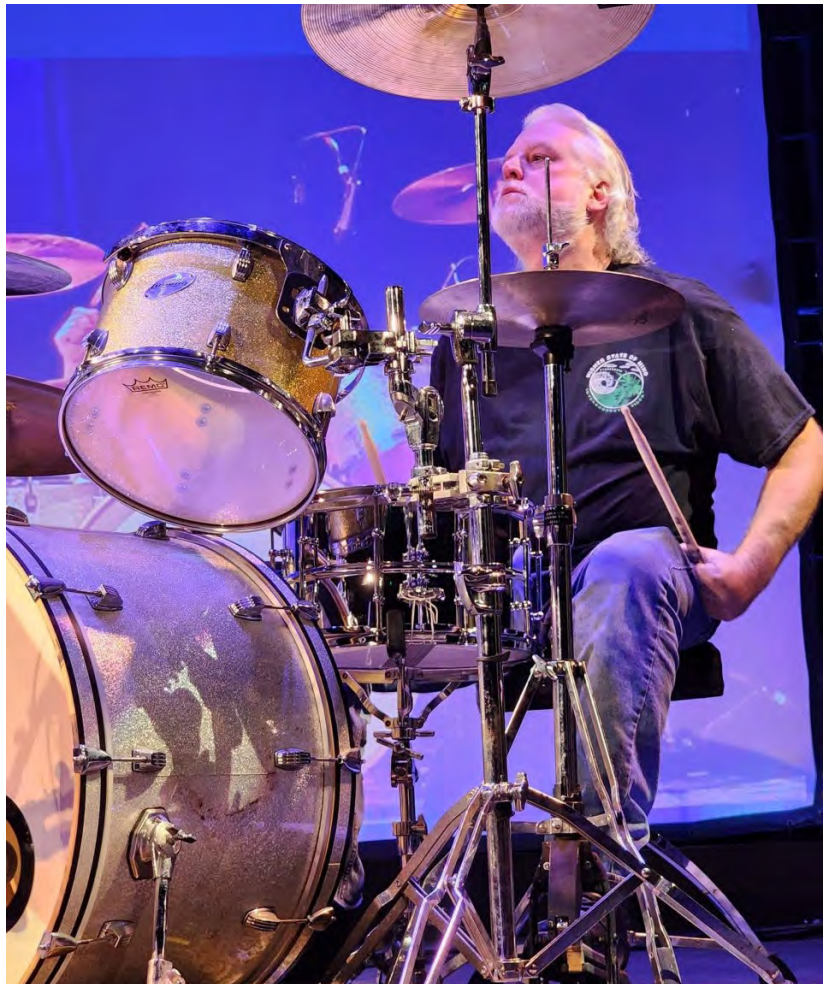
Hosts:

Charleen Dardinski
Beechler Tomberlin PLLC
The Law Offices of Wiley Nickel
Rep. Dianne Wheatley
Law Offices of Anna Smith Felts PLLC
Mayor Blake Massengill, Fuquay-Varina

Patrons:

Jeff Huser
Sen. Mary Wills Bode
Club Pilates of West Cary
Rep. Dennis Riddell
Rep. Timothy Reeder

The Capital Chapter and the PBF would like to thank those who attended the concert, along with the band, auctioneer, the Citizens Assisting Police team and the Cary PD Support Group, who donated their time. This gratitude also extends to those who donated auction items and financially supported this event. This support will continue to help the officers and families we serve through Foundation initiatives.



Drummer Mike Anderson



Capital Chapter President Andy McFeaters welcomes everyone to the concert



NCPBA President David Rose thanks concert-goers for their support



Auctioneer Ben Farrell presents John Kierman paintings



Backseat Revival frontman Wyatt Crabtree and Mike Anderson on drums



Artist Donna Pell (l) with auction winners Jim and Karen Smith



Apply for our 2024 Scholarships

Application window opens Dec. 1

Applications due June 1, 2024

Find out more at:

<http://www.pbfi.org/scholarships-2/>



Congratulations 2022 Scholarship Recipients!

Alabama

Michael Jenkins
Darby Keefavuer
Madison Knowlton
Lena Spears

Arkansas

Sydney Anderson
Kade Cartwright
Chloe Weathers

Georgia

Ane'ya Thompson
Adara Veia

Kentucky

Emily Fraim

Mississippi

Megan Campbell

North Carolina

Hailey Kessler
Kaegan Young

South Carolina

Jordan Lester

Tennessee

Dayton Carson
Atlee Dean
Nathaniel Glenn
Kaylei Malone

Virginia

Alicia Blackburn
Grace Goodpasture

Foundation

Atlee Dean

Jack L. Roberts

Reed Richard

Scan for more info



ALA CHAPTER PRESIDENT NAMED PBA MEMBER OF THE YEAR

**By Katharine Jefcoats
Editor**

Sgt. Steve Johnson has been described as “insightful and knowledgeable,” and “responsive” to the needs of the members of the Jefferson/Shelby PBA Chapter in Alabama.

But he said no one was more surprised than he was to win the honor of PBA Member of the Year in 2022.

“When I got this award, I was shocked,” said Johnson. “I feel that I should be giving PBA an award for all that I have learned and gained for this.”

Johnson has worked for Pelham Police Department for 21 years. Prior to that, he was a reserve deputy in Shelby County, having grown up in Homewood, Ala. His parents, now deceased, were Walter and Carolyn Johnson.

He graduated high school and said he “always” wanted to be a police officer.

“I had several Homewood officers on my street where I grew up and was always drawn to police work,” said Johnson.

One officer in particular made an impression upon him, Rick Davidson, now retired from Homewood.

“One of my friends and I used to terrorize West Homewood Park on ATVs when we were teenagers and Rick is the one who finally caught us,” said Johnson. “We left mud tracks back to my friend’s house, and he tracked us down after we lost him in the chase.

“Years later we met and figured that out and became fast friends,” he continued. “He has always been there as a friend and a mentor. He has taught me a lot over the years but really did a lot to help mold me and guide me when I was a young new officer.”

Johnson owned and operated a wrecker service for 10 years before making that leap into law enforcement.

Once he became an officer, he discovered



Sgt. Steve Johnson is honored as PBA Member of the Year



Johnson has served the residents of Pelham, Ala., for 21 years.

the benefits of being a member of PBA.

“I joined PBA for the benefits and protection,” Johnson said. “I would tell officers that joining PBA is a must. Don’t do the job without it.”

Along the way, Johnson rose from a member to board member, secretary, vice president to chapter president. He has also served on the scholarship committee, reviewing applications and awarding money from the Police Benevolent

Foundation to deserving students.

His successes did not go unnoticed. Jon Riley, senior vice president of Alabama PBA, nominated Johnson for Member of the Year. In his letter to Donald Scott, Alabama Division president, Riley praised Johnson for his loyalty and dedication to the organization.

“Steve brings years of experience, leadership and integrity to the Alabama PBA board,” Riley stated. “Steve’s ability to communicate and work with people on various issues is just one example of his natural leadership skills.”

Riley continued, stating that Johnson is known in law enforcement for a strong work ethic and dependability.

“These same values are also quite evident in his work as a chapter president,” the letter stated. “Steve is responsible for one of the largest PBA chapters in the state of Alabama.”

The admiration and respect are mutual.

“It is a great pleasure to be a part of PBA and be on a chapter board,” said Johnson. “I continue to learn a lot from this position and look forward to serving for a few more years.”

A memorable moment in his career came Johnson’s way when someone approached him as an adult to say Johnson made a positive impact on them when they were younger.

Having been an officer more than two

decades, Johnson has seen the ebb and flow of the public’s perception of law enforcement.

“The negativity? I just don’t let it get to me,” he said. “I try to take each day as it comes and try to do what I can to overcome the negativity.”

Whichever way the wind blows, Johnson said he has never thought about quitting.

His favorite hobby is running.

“I started running about 12 years ago for health reasons,” he said. “I became addicted to it. Running is my time to kind of forget about problems or whatever is going on. The way you feel after a run, it is a natural high. The health benefits have been substantial.”



Above, left, Johnson thanks members of the Alabama Division, including President Donald Scott (seated at left). Johnson said he got into running about 12 years ago to improve his health.





RACE4^{THE}FALLEN

Glow Run
#R4TF



The Race for the Fallen Glow Run benefits the families of fallen law enforcement officers through the Police Benevolent Foundation. The race is a great opportunity for your chapter and members to come together with citizens in the community for a **GLOW**ingly awesome night of fun for a great cause.

To bring the race to your area, please contact **Randy Byrd** at:
rbyrd@sspba.org.

For more information about the race, including upcoming locations, visit:

RACEFORTHEFALLEN.COM

TENNESSEE OFFICER HONORS DAUGHTER IN BERLIN TORCH RUN



Sgt. Dean Ray and his daughter, Madison

By Cindy Baugher
Administrative Services associate

Knoxville police Sgt. Dean Ray speaks enthusiastically about Special Olympics, and his dedication is obvious when discussing the program for athletes with special needs.

“I can’t put a price on the smile on an athlete’s face during Special Olympic events, especially seeing my daughter participate like everyone else,” said Ray.

Ray and his wife, Kristie, are the parents of Taylor and Madison. Madison is intellectually disabled and on the autism spectrum. When she first asked her dad to run in the Law Enforcement Torch

Run six years ago, he readily agreed.

Of course, when Madison was invited to the Tennessee state games four years ago, he promised he’d run again as she participated in her favorite event, bocce ball.

It has since become a tradition for Ray to show his support for Madison and her teammates by running in the LETR, both at the local and state levels. Another tradition the two have is to take the Polar Plunge every January in a chilling fundraising effort for Special Olympics.

Ray has been named as one of only 125 law enforcement officers worldwide to be a part of the Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg for Special Olympics at

the Special Olympics 2023 World Games in Berlin in June 2023. Ray will be the only representative from his home state of Tennessee.

The path to Ray being chosen for this honored group has been eight years in the making. It was about that long ago that Madison became a Special Olympics athlete and began participating in events for the Greater Knoxville Special Olympics Chapter.

It’s no wonder Ray became a public servant and a volunteer with an organization as worthy as Special Olympics. He said he is a hometown kind of guy with family ties that run deep in the area.

Ray grew up in Corryton, a rural community in Knox County. He graduated from Gibbs High School in Corryton in 1993 where he was a part of the National Honor Society and Scholars Bowl and lettered in tennis.

After high school, Ray started as an engineering major at the University of Tennessee. He joined the cadet program at the Knoxville Police Department in 1995, mainly for the tuition reimbursement the department offered. Ray then attended the police academy and took a break from college for a few years.

He received his bachelor of science in criminal justice administration in 2009 from Bellevue University. Once he became a member of the Knoxville Police Department, he found out just how much he enjoyed and appreciated the camaraderie and the day-to-day variety that police work offers.

Throughout his career, Ray served in many roles -- school resource officer, K-9 handler, UAV (drone) Team, and EOD, where he is assigned. His law enforcement years have been spent entirely with the Knoxville Police Department.

“With a blink of the eyes, 27 years have passed,” he said.

Since 1996, Ray has been a member of the



Sgt. Dean Ray with one of Madison's fellow Special Olympians

Police Benevolent Association. He joined the PBA for its legal representation and because it is a voice for law enforcement. Ray is an active member, having served on the Knox County Chapter board in roles such as secretary, grievance committee and PAC committee.

His wife has worked for PBA almost as long as Ray has worked for Knoxville PD.

Ray credited his father-in-law, Gene Sasscer, as the reason he started working at the Knoxville Police Department. He was a sergeant at the KPD when Ray first met him.

In naming him as the greatest influence in his career, Ray said, "I'd like to think that I've adopted traits from him and all the supervisors that I have worked for in the past and present."

Those positive traits have guided him in the right direction as he was recently promoted to sergeant. He was selected Officer of the Month after several nominations.

According to a recent article from the Special Olympics Tennessee website,

"This Torch Run event is called the Final Leg because it represents the culmination of Torch Run events that have occurred previously throughout the world. The Torch Run Final Leg is not only a salute to the athletes from around the world who will compete in the Special Olympics World Summer Games, but also an honor for the participating law enforcement officers and Special Olympics athletes who comprise the Torch Run Final Leg Team.

"Dean's commitment to our Law Enforcement Torch Run program, and Special Olympics in general, made him an easy choice to represent Tennessee in the Final Leg Torch Run," said Jennifer McAfee, Law Enforcement Torch Run director for Special Olympics Tennessee. "I am excited for Dean as he gets to be a part of such an amazing event."

"The hope is that the Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg for Special Olympics can increase awareness and help spread the ideals of the Special Olympics program to everyone.

"Law enforcement officials and Special Olympics athletes, unified as a part of the Final Leg Team, will serve as true Guardians of the Flame™ and promote the powerful messages of inclusion, acceptance, and ability, every step of our

Final Leg journey to promote the 2023 World Summer Games.”

For the Ray family, witnessing the love and joy that the athletes have when they see the officers carrying the torch is a humbling experience. Madison will not be participating in the World Games, but Ray said he will be honoring her as he runs the Final Leg of the LETR. Ray said he feels a little shocked about this great honor and is looking forward to the opportunity to promote inclusion and provide a chance for the athletes to compete.

(Source: Special Olympics Tennessee. (2022). Knoxville Police Officer Selected to Represent Special Olympics Tennessee in Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg in Berlin for 2023 World Games. Special Olympics Tennessee. <https://www.specialolympicstn.org/news/knoxville-police-officer-selected-to-represent-special-olympics-tennessee-in-law-enforcement-torch-run-final-leg-in-berlin-for-2023-world-games?locale=en>)



Sgt. Dean Ray



Ray with the torch



Ray presents medals to Special Olympians

COMMITTED LEGAL TEAM SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDS VA MEMBER

By Joni Fletcher Cawthon
Director of Legal Services

Heather Howard
PBA attorney, Abingdon, Va.

On April 25, 2022, Officer Johnathan Brown of the Bristol, Va., Police Department stood beside PBA attorney Heather Howard as the jury foreman read the verdict: not guilty on all charges.

That verdict culminated over a year of stress, tension and exhausting work as Brown and Howard put together the comprehensive case necessary to defend Brown against multiple state charges — including first degree murder — arising from the shooting death of a suspect after Brown was dispatched to a motel in response to calls of shots being fired.

On March 30, 2021, multiple individuals had called 911 to report shots heard at the Rodeway Inn. Four Bristol officers, including Brown, responded to the motel within five minutes of the first 911 call.

The Bristol Herald Courier later reported that, “Motel surveillance footage shown in court revealed the 911 calls were sparked by (Johnathan) Kohler firing five shots from the window of his 1994 red Ford Mustang while parked in the rear parking lot of the motel.

“Footage also shows that shortly after firing those shots, Kohler drove to a different parking space — one closer to the motel rooms — and sat there until officers arrived.”

The Rodeway Inn was known to BVPD officers as a high-crime location with a reputation for drug activity and violent crime.

Officers arrived on scene shortly after 3 a.m. They parked off site and approached the motel on foot. Officers cleared the middle courtyard area of the motel and proceeded to clear the back parking lot.

There was only one person in the back parking lot; he was sitting inside a red Ford Mustang with the vehicle running. Officers approached the individual, and his erratic behavior quickly elevated him



(L-r) Dr. Jeff Frederick, trial consultant, Officer Brown, Heather Howard and Kevin Hubbard, trial tech.

to the level of suspect.

The suspect, later identified as Johnathan Kohler, refused to keep his hands visible while one officer ran his identifiers through dispatch. Kohler disobeyed commands to turn off his vehicle so the officers could get him out of his car and do a Terry search for weapons.

Kohler then backed out of the parking space. A rookie officer used his rifle to try to bust out the driver side window in an effort to get Kohler to stop. Brown was providing cover for the other officers and, as the car backed up, Brown moved in the “tactical L” formation to ensure he had a clear backdrop and a clear line of sight to be able to return fire if the suspect fired on an officer.

Kohler put his car in drive and drove his vehicle at Brown, who was standing in front of Kohler’s car after he backed it out of the parking space. Brown fired six shots into the vehicle, killing the suspect.

The entire incident was recorded on security surveillance video. A motel surveillance camera was mounted on a pole above a retaining wall about 40 feet above the parking lot. Two officers recorded audio and video from their body-worn cameras.

It was later discovered that the suspect had threatened a woman inside the motel and that he had a Glock under his seat — loaded, with a round in the chamber. Kohler also had a safe inside his trunk with extra loaded magazines and ammunition.

The autopsy revealed that the suspect was under the influence of methamphetamine. His level was almost 10 times higher than the presumptive limit to safely operate a motor vehicle in Virginia.

It was also revealed that the suspect was on bail from Sullivan County, Tenn., for 20 criminal charges. One of the felonies was for using his car as a deadly weapon against a Bristol, Tenn., police officer.

On the night of the incident, shortly after the shooting occurred, Brown contacted PBA and requested the assistance of Howard. He was familiar with her because back in 2018, she had assisted Brown with a shooting incident before he joined PBA.

Howard helped him with that incident at no cost but told Brown that he would have to promise her that he would join PBA. Fortunately for him, he followed through on that promise.

On the morning after the Rodeway Inn shooting, Howard went to the hotel, viewed the scene, spoke to VSP agents and attempted to obtain surveillance footage. That request was denied.

At the time of this shooting, Brown was 32 and had been employed by Bristol PD for four years. He is a former U.S. Marine Corps MP and USMC battalion tactics trainer. He was qualified as an expert marksman at BVPD with rifle, was a BVPD SWAT team member and a SWAT sniper.

Despite the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and its investigation, only five weeks later, Brown was indicted for first degree murder, use of a firearm during the commission of a felony and shooting into an occupied vehicle.

Prosecutor Donald Caldwell from Roanoke — the most senior prosecutor in the state — handled the case. The Virginia State Police special agent assigned admitted that Caldwell called him and told him to bring his file and to appear before the grand jury to seek an indictment before the agent's investigation was even complete.

Brown and Howard didn't know about the grand jury presentment until the indictment was secured. Brown was asleep when Howard called him with the unexpected news that he had been indicted.

The prosecutor called Howard after the indictment was secured and said, "As you know, this case is all about one thing: the video."

The three other officers on scene were never interviewed by VSP.

However, VSP did conduct a Leica scan of the crime scene, which later turned out to be crucial to Brown's defense. A Leica scanner captures the image of an environment in 3D.

Howard has been a PBA attorney since 2015. She is a former deputy commonwealth's attorney and has been in private practice since 2012 with Jessee, Read & Howard P.C. in Abingdon, Va. Upon receiving word of the indictment, Howard was immediately in contact with

PBA. In Brown's words, "It was very comforting to know that Heather was on the case and that PBA offered full support."

As Howard began preparing her defense, she knew that expert witnesses were going to be crucial. An experienced use of force expert, Kevin Davis, was retained, and his expertise proved to be fundamental to the defense of the case. Dr. Jeffrey Frederick, a jury consultant, also was retained.

"We conducted a focus group in a demographically similar location to avoid tainting the local jury pool," Howard said. "The focus group results were sobering. After that, other experts were brought onto the team to try to close the gaps that were identified from the focus group results."

Dennis Burrell, a Ford Mustang modifications expert, was brought onto the defense team and ultimately testified to the performance enhancements of the suspect's racing-modified Ford Mustang. Jason Latham and Kip Stavrou of Complete Digital Forensic Solutions were retained to forensically examine the digital video footage.

A forensic audio expert, Doug Lacey, was retained to assist CDFS with forensically processing the audio on the body worn camera footage, and Mark Johnson (Visual Law) was retained to create a 3D animation interactive demonstrative exhibit.

"Heather put together the most top-notch defense team," Brown said. "She met with some experts that we ultimately didn't use. She formed the defense as she met with these experts. Slowly, she put together enough experts that we knew that the defense was solid."

"The experts repeatedly said that they couldn't believe that I had been charged," he said.

Due to extraordinary media publicity, over 100 potential jurors were summonsed. Voir dire was a slow and cumbersome process. A jury was seated at the end of the second day of voir dire.

The prosecutor was so confident in his case that he allowed someone to

be on the jury who had been threatened with a gun by the suspect. On the other side, Brown and his defense team were happy with the jury that was set and were confident as the trial began.

During the prosecution's case in chief, the other three police officers on scene were never called to testify on behalf of the prosecution. This decision forced Howard to call the other three officers as defense witnesses, which enabled the prosecutor to cross-examine the officers with leading questions. One officer was on the stand for six hours.

The prosecutor failed to have the raw surveillance video or the body worn camera videos forensically examined, and he simply played the raw video footage for the jurors and proclaimed it was murder. The surveillance video was recorded by a security camera mounted high on a pole, so it was important to educate the jurors that the jurors could not "believe" what they were seeing because the angle of the surveillance camera created a parallax effect in the video.

Similar to looking at a vehicle's gas hand from the passenger seat and thinking that you are about out of gas, the parallax effect allowed the jurors to see something entirely different from an overhead angle than what the officers saw and experienced at ground level.

The defense team transformed the prosecution's raw surveillance video evidence into the defense's best evidence by overlaying the surveillance video and body cam audio with the VSP Leica scan.

The camera match overlay was then used by the defense's photogrammetry expert to create a 3D animation interactive exhibit that allowed the jurors to view the scene from any perspective, including Brown's, and allowed the jurors to measure how far Brown was standing from the front of the vehicle when the suspect put the car in drive.

The 3D animation exhibit revealed that Brown was five feet, three inches away from the front of the vehicle when he fired the first shot to defend himself against the deadly threat the suspect presented.

The 3D animation ultimately relieved Brown from the stress of having to testify

in his own defense because the jurors were able to see exactly what happened from the examined video footage without the parallax effect skewing their view.

The prosecution presented its case in a day and a half. When the defense began its case, it started with the technical presentations. The next day of testimony included some of the witnesses who had been present at the Rodeway Inn and had actually made the 911 calls.

One witness cried when she heard her voice on the recording of the 911 call as she recalled how scared she had been at the time.

Jury instructions proved to be problematic because there are no model jury instructions in Virginia that contemplate an on-duty police officer being charged with murder. The Virginia model jury instructions summarize the law only as it pertains to a civilian defendant.

Howard had to create proposed jury instructions to properly frame the law for the jurors as it applied to an officer-involved shooting. The prosecutor insisted that the protections in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Graham v. Connor* only applied in civil cases, not in a criminal case.

Hence, the prosecutor objected to Howard's jury instruction that the jurors should view the matter from the perspective of a reasonable police officer on the scene at the time of the shooting. The prosecutor repeatedly refused to refer to Brown as "Officer Brown." He was only "Mr. Brown" in his eyes.

Ultimately, the judge made it clear that the jury would be instructed to consider the actions as a reasonable officer on the scene, a key decision for the defense. After hearing seven full days of evidence, the jurors deliberated roughly an hour before returning a not guilty verdict on all charges.

Brown was expressive when talking about his defense team.

"I can't imagine that any attorney could have done a better job than Heather," he said. "She was amazing. I can't believe the amount of time she took to put together our team. The hours she worked on this case were insane.

"And Mark Johnson deserves so much credit — he was so invested in the case," Brown continued. "He and his wife flew in the weekend before trial and provided so much help. This was the first time that Mark Johnson had used his 3D animation technology in a criminal case, and it had a major impact on the jury."

Brown added, "Dr. Frederick was extremely meticulous, and his jury consulting efforts were extremely useful."

Brown said that since his first shooting, he has told people that they should join PBA. "Simply put, you can afford it and you need it," he said.

He said that most of Bristol PD is in PBA now because of his case.

"I tell officers, 'Don't hesitate to join — you never know how things will turn out,'" Brown said. "A lot of people saw my case and couldn't believe I was charged. Without PBA, I know I wouldn't have been able to have the experts I had on my case."

After the trial concluded, Brown submitted his resignation. He said that while rank and file officers were completely supportive throughout this ordeal, he didn't get much support from the top, even after the trial. His charges were also expunged.

Brown said that he is relaxing now and has gone back to an old job that is not in law enforcement. He said he may look to go into federal law enforcement at some time in the future.

But for those officers on the streets now, he said, "It's ridiculous not to have PBA."



The Southern States PBA proudly waives your dues as long as you are deployed through the United States military. Please send us a copy of your military orders that show the dates of your service by email, fax or mail.

We appreciate your patriotism and dedication in defense of our country!

**Find out more online.
sspba.org/activeduty**

ALABAMA MEMBER NAMED FIRST RESPONDER OF THE MONTH

By Randy Byrd
Director of Foundation and Media Relations

Jefferson County sheriff's Detective Noah Parsons was named the First Responder of the Month in February 2022 by the Line of Fire gun shop in Moody, Ala., for his actions on a domestic violence call.

Domestic violence in America is well-known to law enforcement officers and is borne out by staggering statistics.

According to the National Coalition against Domestic Violence, 10 million people a year are abused by an intimate partner, and the presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500%.

The same organization says that 1 in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year, and 90% of these children are eyewitnesses to this violence.

Parsons was nominated by a domestic violence victim after he responded to her house when her then-spouse was threatening to commit suicide with a firearm in front of her and their children.

He and his partner responded and were able to take the husband into custody. The victim and the children were unharmed.

The victim and Parsons were later interviewed by morning reporter Stoney Sharp with an ABC affiliate in Birmingham. The interview was for a segment called "Talk of Alabama."

During the interview, the victim praised Parsons.

"Noah Parsons literally saved my life," the victim said. "He was one of the first responders to show up at my home in Birmingham on a domestic violence call. There was an incident in my home, and I was afraid for the safety of myself and my young daughters. Noah made sure that my daughters I and were safe and physically OK."

Parsons spoke about his actions that day.

"Once we got inside, we got everything secured," he said. "My first thought was to get to the family and make sure the kids were OK. I've got kids of my own and that is the first thing I want to make sure (of)."

On the show, Sharp read compelling comments the victim made about Parsons.

"There is a song, 'Rescue' by Lauren Daigle, that truly represents the literal rescue that God sent for me in the form of Noah and his partner," Sharp read.

"Noah deserves this honor and I hope that he is chosen for this," Sharp continued. "While I no longer reside in Alabama, I keep in touch with Noah and his family, and have been blessed with the friendship and support that this has brought to my life."

Parsons is originally from West Jefferson, Ala. His father was a tugboat mechanic and his mother was an administrative assistant for a local university.

At Bessemer Academy, he played football on two championship teams. He graduated in 2010. He furthered his studies at the University of Alabama in Birmingham where he majored in criminal justice and minored in psychology. He graduated in 2016.

Impassioned by the desire to make a difference in the lives of others is what led him to the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office in that same year.

After completing the academy, he began work as a detention officer. His next stop was on patrol and then to investigations as a property crimes detective.

Soon thereafter, he moved into his assignment in Youth Services where he investigates cases involving juvenile victims or suspects.

Along the way, he has been influenced by those who took interest in his development. He credits his partner, Shane Williams, who took him under



Parsons

his wing as a young patrol deputy and then also as a young detective. Williams not only showed him how to investigate crimes but how to show great care for the victims.

A favorite quote from Maya Angelou drives his empathy with victims, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

He also credits Sgt. Michael Jackson and retired Lt. Ellen Scheirer with helping mold him into the six-year veteran he is today.

Parsons is married to Emma, and they have a daughter named Blair. He also has a 13-year-old son, Crafton, from a previous marriage.

In his spare time, he is an ardent video gamer.

MS SECOND GENERATION LEO WINS OFFICER OF THE YEAR



(L-r) Looney is recognized at Memphis Hustle game. Looney with his parents.

By Cindy Baugher Administrative Services associate

Olive Branch Police Department's Officer of the Year for 2022, Zane Looney, credits his late father for encouraging him to go into law enforcement.

Looney also considers his father, Gary, the greatest influence in his career. Gary passed away in March 2020 from a sudden illness. Looney said he is proud to carry on the family legacy of working in law enforcement.

Father and son attended the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officer Training Academy in Pearl, Miss., and turned 21 while attending there. Looney was 21 when he started out and his father started at the age of 18 as a jailer, then advanced to a DeSoto County deputy at 21.

"My father was my biggest role model and, being around him so much and seeing how many people respected him, I was encouraged to follow in his footsteps," said Looney. "Also, being there to help someone on probably their worse day, is what it's all about."

Now that he's a two-year veteran of the police department, Looney is proud at the honor of being recognized as the Officer of the Year. His accomplishment was celebrated on court during a recent Memphis Hustle basketball game.

Looney attributed this recognition in

part to a drug bust he made on one of the highways that runs through Olive Branch. He also received Officer of the Month for September 2022 for making another drug bust.

In addition, he was named Officer of the Month for July 2021 for finding two suspects who shot through an occupied house.

"I love working interdiction," said Looney.

Actually, for the past year, he has been doing interdiction when he's not getting other calls, and seized about 180 to 185 pounds of marijuana as a result.

Looney's assignment with Olive Branch is patrol, although he's hoping to one day become a trooper for the Mississippi Highway Patrol.

He grew up with role models in his family because, "almost my whole family was either in the military or law enforcement or both," he said.

Looney spent his childhood in Waterford, Miss., which he describes as a small town located between Holly Springs and Oxford. Since there wasn't much to do there, he spent his time going to school, playing sports and hunting with friends.

"I enjoyed being raised in the country in such a small place," said Looney.

With his dad in law enforcement and his

mom a school teacher, it's no wonder that Looney's career path unfolded into serving others. He cited his father as his favorite leader.

"After seeing my father do so well and succeed to the point of being deputy chief at a sheriff's office, and then being chief of police at another, and seeing how so many respected him, despite the hate for law enforcement," Looney said. "That has really encouraged me."

Looney also has his father to thank for urging him to join the PBA. His father told him early on that "everyone" in law enforcement should be a part of PBA. Taking his father's advice, he was quick to sign up with the PBA while at the academy.

In his rare moments of spare time, Looney enjoys hunting, golfing, traveling and spending time with friends, although following in his father's footsteps keeps him busy and focused.



Officer Looney

K9 'MIRANDA LAMBERT' JOINS GA TRAUMA SERVICES INDUSTRY

By Katharine Jefcoats
Editor

Former Cobb County dispatcher Gordy Powell started A-1 Bio-Cleaning Service after discovering a need to help families deal with the aftermath of traumatic incidents.

"I went to school in the late 80s to become an EMT and that's when I discovered the need for the trauma cleaning service," he said. "I discovered that, after traumatic events, families were left with the aftermath. Sheila, my bride of 34 years, was my first business partner and I could not have pulled this off without her."

In addition to crime, trauma and death scenes, the restoration business helped families in hoarder houses and estate closeouts. While employees handled the physical requirements of such situations, Sheila focused on emotional needs.

"Sheila was our first 'Miranda Lambert,'" said Powell. "She was the one who we used to comfort, support and cry with victims."

Miranda Lambert? Yes. In keeping with the Powell tradition of naming their pets after legendary country music singers – think Johnny Cash and Merle Haggard -- the couple named a miniature Australian shepherd they adopted after the popular female performer.

How does a puppy fit into the trauma cleaning business?

"Just recently we had a client in our offices," said Powell. "Her husband committed suicide in his truck. She came to take the truck home after the cleaning and repairs. She told stories of her husband and would tear up. I told her about Miranda and asked if I could bring her in from my office."

"She agreed and Miranda alerted at her feet," he continued. "Miranda will sit, lay and press herself up against ankles to alert. Miranda then climbed onto her lap and was cleaning the tears from her eyes as she wept."



Photos credited to Meghan Smith Photography

Powell with therapy K9 Miranda Lambert

Powell said to watch and witness the transition to where the grieving process turns into healing is the best part of having Miranda as part of the business.

"To see her engage and to distract the trauma away for even an instance, one can see the healing process begin," he said. "Miranda does not stay with a family or individual, although we will stay as long as needed, and return if required. But she and I are so close that if I was to leave her, this would create an anxiety for her."

Miranda's response to police officers has been a welcoming one. The pair works closely with Euclid Police Department in north Georgia, nestled between Cartersville and Rome.

"Departments have told us that they have used their K9s in the past to assist in grief and recovery, but state that their K9s can be overwhelming and intimidating just by their looks," said Powell. "As you see, Miranda has a welcoming and engaging appearance."

When Powell gets a call for Miranda's presence, the scene needs to be vetted before he can commit for her.

"Examples may be, 'Is the person receptive to a dog'? Some are terrified or may have allergies," he said. "Miranda is not allowed in hoarding conditions because this is where she can become just a dog and will be intimidated and distracted by odors rather than the task at hand."

"Miranda has been used at a scene where there was no cleanup required, but they needed her to calm down the wife to be able to ask questions about the investigation," Powell continued. "Miranda's command for service is 'engage' to where she focuses, and her follow-up command is 'cakes and cuddles' for her to hug and console. 'Cakes and cuddles' was a phrase I took from my daughter. It's what she said to her stuffed animals in bed."

The idea of law enforcement agencies and private businesses bringing in therapy dogs trained in soothing trauma victims is slowly catching on. Miranda works only in metro Atlanta.

"With her being a first of her kind in the trauma industry, she has been traveling to many trade shows to share her story," said Powell. "Sometimes when she is sharing her story, a call for her need may come in while she is in Reno or Vegas. Hopefully, someone will soon duplicate this in the Atlanta area so we can refer each other in times of need. Since her travels and introductions, there are now two companies in Australia, a few in Canada and several in the U.S. that are duplicating her process. Even our breeder has been contacted to get another dog from the same bloodline."

Powell said A-1 Bio-Cleaning service evolved over the years into Georgia Clean in 2010.

"As the company grew through the years, I did it with bringing on new partners that added growth that allowed me to let Sheila eventually retire," he said. "With growth, we also created change. We helped Georgia lawmakers in 2021 make Georgia the first state to regulate the trauma cleaning industry. There were some bad actors that fed on people's loss



K9 Miranda Lambert ready for work



A Euharlee, Ga., police officer with K9 Miranda Lambert

and misfortune by taking items from homes while they were supposed to be performing a service.”

Powell added that he is fortunate to experience the growth the company has enjoyed over the years.

“We have 12 employees which include both owners,” he said. “Our focus is primarily on crime, trauma and death scenes. We also work with families on hoarding cleanup and estate cleanouts. The trauma services we provide make up about 85 percent of our services.”

Because Miranda’s services have proven so successful, Powell said he wished he’d come up with the idea sooner.

“Miranda has generated a new fascination for what can be done with a dog,” he said. “I wish I had this concept years before to where there could be little Mirandas for other companies. The need is there. When we travel for trade shows and conferences, we do get asked about the process for duplication.

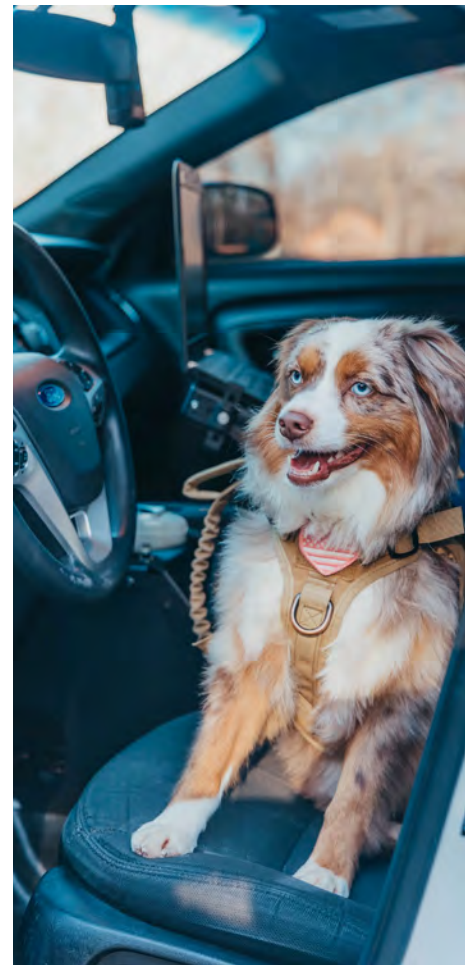
“She was dubbed the ‘most famous dog in the restoration industry’ at the

RIA, Restoration Industry Association International conference,” continued Powell. “They even gave her her own conference badge to wear. She has become a fun marketing tool for Georgia Clean.”

Powell said there are several attributes pet owners should look for in deciding whether to put a puppy or adult dog into training for therapy services.

“Pick one that is easy on the eyes and is a smaller size so it can be snuggled with,” he said. “It all depends on the dog’s maturity, intelligence to learn and its nature should you decide to use an adult dog. It must check all the right boxes.

“I prefer starting from a puppy, so you and the dog can become dependent on each other,” continued Powell. “I spend more time with Miranda that I do with my wife. She is my second life partner, we go practically everywhere together. There have been a few times that we share Miranda with public safety departments, and they will get a rescue dog to have as their department therapy dog for events that require one.”



Check out our foundation's site: pbfi.org



Get information on:

Scholarships

Glow Runs

PTSD Seminars

Fundraisers

BE ON GUARD AGAINST UNTRUTHFULNESS ALLEGATIONS

By Dale Preiser
SSPBA senior staff attorney

“Is there anything else you need to tell us about?”

Often, this is the final question of the interview, and it is designed to be a “loaded question.” In the investigation environment, there appears to be a trend of departments determining that they cannot find any violation but then deciding that the officer committed deception or untruthfulness during the interview and therefore should be disciplined.

Consequences of such findings include disciplinary action up to termination and, of course, the dreaded Giglio determination which brands an officer as having no credibility to testify in court. Giglio determinations are typically the death knell for an officer’s career.

A key problem is that officers may be powerless to avoid a finding of deception or untruthfulness. Why? Because at the initial level, it is a subjective determination. “I say it is, because I say it is.” So, what recourse is there?

Defenses to truthfulness charges include the doctrine of simple mistake, confusion, ambiguous questioning, the inaccuracy was not willful, and or the “untruthful” communication was not material.

Inaccuracies in reports are common. The reasons are often plentiful: caseload too heavy, not enough time for perfection, time passage since the incident, etc. Contradictions in statements are common. Recollections are imperfect and many factors can influence recall. Medical or psychological issues or conditions often impact memory and accuracy in statements. Critical incident scene trauma often promotes an officer’s inability to be completely accurate.

Obviously, being truthful in administrative investigations is imperative. Additionally, preparation for the interview is key. Completeness



in reporting is essential. Because of the principle of untruthfulness by omission, it is easy for management to manufacture untruthfulness charges by simply contending that the officer did not tell the “whole story.”

In an effort to protect officers from charges of untruthfulness in regard to administrative investigations, PBA attorneys recommend the following:

Be truthful, and

Include this language or something similar in your response:

“I am making this statement to the best of my recollection and ask that if you have any additional questions or need clarification of my responses, please let me know.”

In regard to statements provided as part of criminal investigations, we recommend the following:

Contact PBA to request representation,

In coordination with the PBA attorney, request a cool-down period -- preferably

up to 72 hours -- before giving a statement:

Be truthful, and

Include this language or something similar in your response:

“I am making this statement to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I reserve the right to amend this statement for the purpose of clarification. My recollection may differ from other officers or any audio or video of the incident. It is well-established that officer perceptions during critical incidents differ perceptually, and any inconsistencies are not intentional or to be considered as evidence of untruthfulness.”

As soon as someone issues a finding that an officer “lied,” whether by statement, report, omission or otherwise, the officer should contact SSPBA, who will screen for coverage and assignment to a local attorney to evaluate the allegations and ascertain potential defenses. A final determination of untruthfulness should be based on an objective determination.



Recovery and Memorial Funds

In addition to the comprehensive benefits package that PBA offers its members, the PBF works to raise additional funds for the families of fallen officers and those who are experiencing unforeseen financial hardships.

Last year, the PBF assisted 19 members!

For a fund to be successful, there are questions that can be asked before making a request.

The more “yes” answers, the better the chance of success.

- Has the member or their beneficiary given permission for a fundraiser?
- Is there a monetary goal of the fundraiser?
- Is there a local chapter in place?
- If so, are the chapter members going to be involved with the fundraising?
- Is the agency of the member willing to promote the fundraiser through their social media and media contacts?
- Are there local businesses in the member's jurisdiction that will contribute to the fundraiser or otherwise promote the fundraiser through their social media?
- Does the member or chapter/division leader making the request have any media contacts that would be willing to do a story?

For more information on the PBF and its initiatives, please scan the QR code or visit:

pbfi.org/about-us



VAPBA, PBF PARTNER WITH HONOR BREWING FOR FUNDRAISER

By Randy Byrd
Director of Foundation and Media Relations

In November 2022, the Virginia PBA and the PBF partnered with Honor Brewing Co. in Chantilly, Va., to raise funds and bring awareness to Foundation initiatives.

Honor Brewing Co. donated a portion of its proceeds for the month of November to the PBF. PBA staff and PBA members were also invited to speak to customers about the PBF during November events.

According to its website, Honor Brewing Co. was founded by Army veteran Allen O. Cage Jr. After retiring from the military in 1996, Allen founded a successful payment processing company in northern Virginia, which he owned for 20 years.

With his military background, Allen said he felt it was important to start a business that would not only honor those who served this country, but ensure that those who made the ultimate sacrifice would never be forgotten.

Its website also highlights that through its support of various charities and 501(c)(3)s throughout the country, Honor Brewing Co. began connecting with Gold Star families, the immediate family members of those who lost their lives during active military duty. These Gold Star families and Honor Brewing Co. have built bonds, and the Honor team is committed to making sure that their loved ones' names, faces and stories will always be remembered.

The Police Benevolent Foundation serves as an extension of this mission to help families of fallen officers, provide scholarships for their children and conduct PTSD seminars to help them deal with the trauma they experience on the job.

Retired U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Joe Woloszyn served as a military police dog handler. He now serves as sergeant with a police agency and as president of the VA Police Benevolent Association.



Honor Brewing Co. employees present check to PBA members



Woloszyn presents appreciation plaque to Cage

"The bond between those that serve in the military and law enforcement is very special," said Woloszyn. "Both know the dangers of putting their lives in harm's way in service to others and the long-term effects of what they see on the battlefield and on the streets. And as in my situation, military veterans often continue their service by becoming officers.

"I am very thankful for what Honor

Brewing Co. does for veterans and the PBF," he continued. "We are looking forward to the continued relationship."

Cage agreed.

"We are honored to partner with the Police Benevolent Foundation and support the important work they do," said Cage. "Our law enforcement officers put their lives on the line every day to keep our communities safe, and we are grateful for their service."

ARK PBA MEMBER TAKES TOP AWARDS FOR BRAVERY IN SHOOTING

By Katharine Jefcoats
Editor

Hot Springs police Officer Stephen Parrott has about two years' worth of experience in uniform but is already making his mark in Arkansas law enforcement.

Parrott and other officers across the state were recognized in 2022 by Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge at a Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Awards luncheon.

Parrott and another officer stopped a shooting outside Hot Springs Convention Center where a commencement ceremony was being held in May 2022.

Rutledge praised the officers, according to a press release.

"(The officers') quick reaction and bravery halted extremely dangerous situations that easily could have turned into further tragedies," said Rutledge.

"Each of these winners sacrifice so much to protect our communities," she continued. "I cannot thank our law enforcement officials and their families enough for all they do on a daily basis."

In the same release, Hot Springs police Assistant Chief Billy Hrvatin said the officers saved lives.

"The heroic actions carried out by (the officers) on that night potentially saved countless other victims from injury or death," he said. "Not only did they make the difficult decision to use deadly force, they did so without hesitation and without any due regard to their own safety."

Parrott said later he appreciated being honored.

"It was greatly appreciated to be one of the three officers to receive the Officer of the Year Award and Officer of the Year for the southwest region and Officer of the Year from the Arkansas Chiefs Association," he said.



Parrott is awarded top honors for bravery during a shooting incident in 2022

Parrott is a Texas native who spent most of his life in Hot Springs. His father is a family practice doctor. His mother is a stay at home mom who competes in power-lifting events.

He has four brothers who are in high school or college.

Parrott graduated from Lakeside High School in 2015, where he played football and received the Brandon Burlsworth Award, he said.

Parrott then attended Henderson State University and graduated in 2019 with a bachelor degree in criminal justice.

He became interested in becoming a police officer with the hopes of being able

to help people. With that goal in mind, Parrott attended ALETA in Camden.

It didn't take long for Parrott to realize the benefits of a PBA membership.

"I believe they provide a good and necessary service," he said. "My time with PBA has shown that to be true."

He's also developed mentors.

"I have had many people who have helped me with my journey as a police officer," said Parrott. "The few who I believe have had the greatest impact on my career so far would be Lt. Zaner, Sgt. Langley and Sgt. Franklin. I have had the pleasure of being on shift with them for most of my time at the Hot Springs Police

Department. They have helped me better understand this profession and what it means to serve the community.”

For now, Parrott’s personal life includes “a beautiful girlfriend” and a cane corso, an Italian breed of mastiff, named Athena. He also enjoys weightlifting, reading, traveling and PC gaming, and he is a fan of “Star Wars.”



Parrott with his cane corso, Athena



Parrott said he enjoys spending time with his ‘beautiful girlfriend.’



Parrott with his parents and one of his four brothers.



Parrott with his girlfriend and a fellow officer.

KY TROOPER HAMPTON THWARTS THREAT OF PUBLIC SHOOTING

By Cindy Baugher
Administrative Services associate

In a time when reports of school and church shootings seem all too common, Kentucky State Trooper Aaron Hampton was able to prevent a possible tragedy before it began.

On Sunday, Nov. 20, 2022, after receiving a call for service in regards to a person making threats of a public shooting, Hampton began investigating. Multiple law enforcement agencies in Hart, Barren and Warren counties assisted with the matter.

As Hampton and fellow troopers looked into things further, preliminary indications were that a person sent virtual messages regarding threats of a mass shooting. His target? Schools and or churches in the Barren and Warren counties areas.

In under an hour, the suspect was placed under arrest and charged with second degree terroristic threatening. The case has since been turned over to the FBI.

Hampton and his colleagues were motivated to bring this threat to a swift resolution, considering the relevant statistics.

According to a website maintained by the FBI, "The FBI has designated 61 shootings in 2021 as active shooter incidents. These incidents resulted in 103 people killed and 140 people wounded."

These active shooter events included shootings in public places where the shooters' actions were not the result of another criminal act.

The report goes on to share the increase of these type occurrences: "For the period 2017-2021, the data reveals an upward trend: the number of active shooter incidents identified in 2021 represents a 52.5% increase from 2020 and a 96.8% increase from 2017."

Data like this was the impetus behind the quick action and agency cooperation

on this case. Law enforcement knows that threats like the one Hampton was handling are not to be taken lightly.

Cooperation and teamwork are vital in this career, Hampton said. He's been policing for four and a half years, and when he was asked to name the greatest influence in his career, he said that he's had "too many influences to name throughout the years."

"I have been lucky enough to surround myself with great units who are very knowledgeable and do their job well," said Hampton. "Every LEO knows how hard the job can be, so having a great group of guys you enjoy working with makes all the difference."

He said he is "very proud to be a member" when referring to the PBA

and said he became a member because in this particular profession, an officer can never be protected enough. He said that membership in the PBA is a way to ensure his future as well as being important to help make sure his family's future is protected.

That family includes his wife, Kristen, whom he met at Lindsey Wilson College in 2011. The two have been married since 2013. They learned of her pregnancy, with son Jensen, just before Hampton was set to leave for the Kentucky State Police Academy.

Consequently, she was on her own for the majority of the pregnancy and about four weeks afterward. He said she is "one of the strongest people I know." Nowadays, they enjoy hiking and biking together. When any chance presents itself to fish,



Hampton with wife Kristen and son Jensen

camp or golf, they try to take advantage of it, he said.

Hampton said he appreciates the down time because he was taught early on the importance of hard work. He and his twin brother were raised in Harlan County, Ky., to a father who was a coal miner and a mother who worked for the Commonwealth Attorney's Office.

Hampton said the region itself, about 25 miles from the Virginia state line, makes people tough because they work for everything they have.

After ironically being voted "Most Mischievous" in his senior year, he graduated from Harlan High School in 2011, and went on to college at Lindsey Wilson. He graduated in 2015 from Somerset Community College with his associate degree in criminal justice.

While acknowledging it seems to be the cliché answer, Hampton said his reasoning for becoming a law enforcement officer was to help people.

"When I was younger, I watched my cousin fall into the deep end of a swimming pool and almost drown," he said. "I jumped in the pool and was able to get him out in time. Since that day I have had this urge to help people in need. Law enforcement allows me that opportunity almost daily."

It was in his official capacity as a highway patrolman that Hampton achieved his first 15 minutes of fame. A few years ago, he held a crying baby at a restaurant so that the mother could finish her meal. The child's grandmother snapped a photo, shared it online and the photo post went viral. He even got

to appear on Kelly Clarkson's show to highlight his kind deed. He said that experience was "definitely a wild ride."

Hampton said his parents taught him about such kindness, adding that they are the greatest leaders in his life.

"They instilled in me a perfect balance of discipline and trust and taught me right from wrong," he said. "They also taught me that helping someone in need is one of the most honorable things you can do with your life."

(U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-incidents-in-the-us-2021-052422.pdf/view>)

UNDERSTANDING THE FIRST RESPONDERS MENTAL HEALTH ACT

By Brandon McGaha
NC staff representative

The North Carolina Police Benevolent Association is working with the legislators this session to address the troubling pattern of officers continuing to take their own lives.

Reps. Mike Clampitt, Donna White, Jason Saine, and Tim Reeder, MD, have introduced the First Responders Mental Health Act (House Bill 523). This legislation will help officers get the mental health treatment they need by providing lifesaving resources with little to no cost to the officers.

In an effort to streamline the treatment, the legislation requires that a mental condition must be examined by health care provider who must establish, within a reasonable medical certainty, that employment activities caused the mental condition. It also requires that the condition must be caused by a singular incident or be caused by the cumulative effect of their profession.

Covered conditions are stress, mental injury or mental illness that is medically diagnosed as an anxiety disorder, conduct disorder, depression,



Rep. Clampitt

obsessive-compulsive disorder, sleep-wake disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder as described in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association.

An eligible officer would receive reimbursement of up to \$5,000 for any out-of-pocket medical expenses incurred, including deductibles, copayments or coinsurance costs, for a diagnosis of a mental condition caused by their job.



Rep. Saine



Rep. Reeder

If the officer's treatment plan requires leave, an officer can receive a monthly benefit equal to 75 percent of the first responder's monthly salary or \$5,000 a month, whichever is less.

This benefit may only be used for 12 work weeks in 12 months and can be used in conjunction with a medical reimbursement benefit.

The NCPBA wants to thank the primary sponsors for their efforts with this legislation and is committed to gaining the support to pass this much-needed legislation into law.



Rep. White

HOOVER OFFICER OF YEAR COMES FROM A FAMILY OF OFFICERS

By Don Fletcher
Alabama Trooper Magazine

When Blake Walker was named Hoover Police Department's Officer of the Year for 2022, it wasn't the first time he had been recognized for valor during his career in law enforcement.

Blake, who earned Officer of the Year honors in 2016 as a patrolman with the Prattville Police Department, has also received numerous commendations from several different local, state and federal agencies during the nearly 11 years he has protected and served the public.

A second-generation policeman, Blake has garnered a commendation letter from the US Drug Enforcement Administration and a certificate of appreciation from the US Department of Veterans Affairs, for his response and aid to a suicidal veteran.

He has also collected numerous other commendations during his career, including those for arrests of automobile burglars, robbery suspects and an attempted murder suspect, as well as several "atta-boys" from agencies for which Blake and his K-9 partner helped solidify drug arrests by locating narcotics.

His latest OOTY designation stemmed from an incident during which Blake and several other officers arrested three men who robbed a pharmacy delivery driver at gunpoint.

"As I was responding, I noticed the suspect's vehicle leaving the area and started to follow the vehicle, waiting on another unit to assist," Blake said. "I attempted to conduct a traffic stop, but the vehicle fled and a short pursuit occurred. The driver ended up crashing into a power pole and one suspect fled the vehicle on foot."

Blake said he held two suspects at gunpoint as his partner pursued the



Walker with his K9 partner, Nina

third on foot, eventually taking him into custody. The weapon thrown behind a daycare center by that suspect was recovered, as were another weapon and the stolen pharmaceuticals.

The 2016 Prattville Officer of the Year award stemmed from Blake's actions during response to a two-vehicle crash. One of the vehicles was ablaze when he arrived, and its owner could not be accounted for.

"I went over to the vehicle that was on fire and noticed the driver was unconscious and pinned under the steering wheel," he said. "I couldn't get the driver's door or the passenger's open due to the heavy damage to the car. I busted out the passenger side window and crawled into the vehicle while the fire was spreading towards the interior of the car. I was able to free the driver and pull him out of the vehicle while other officers assisted with pulling me out of



Blake and Ashley Walker are expecting a son this summer.

the vehicle.”

Reports show that the car became fully-engulfed in flames just seconds after the injured driver and the heroic officer were pulled clear.

A three-sport athlete -- football, baseball and basketball -- at Evangel Christian Academy in Montgomery, the city of his birth, Blake was part of a state championship basketball team in 2008, his senior year.

He was offered several football and baseball scholarships but decided to continue a family tradition. He earned a bachelor of criminal justice degree from Faulkner University in 2016 after taking a break to attend the Alabama Basic Police Academy before joining the Lowndes County Sheriff’s Office as a

deputy.

Blake, a PBA member, said he was predestined to become a law enforcement officer. His father served 32.5 years with the Montgomery Police Department and now works part-time as an Alabama State Trooper.

His brother is a patrol captain with the city police force in Prattville.

“Law enforcement is the family business,” he said. “I’m a second-generation law enforcement officer. I was raised to put others before myself, and I always wanted to follow in my dad’s and brother’s footsteps to serve others.”

He said his father has been his greatest influence during his career.

“My dad is the prime example of what a

police officer should strive to be,” he said. “He lives and breathes law enforcement work. He has had a very successful career and continues to make a difference in the community.”

Another major influence on his career is Hoover PD Lt. Caleb Pittman, who serves as the department’s SWAT commander.

“Lt. Pittman puts his officers’ needs and well-being over his own,” Blake said. “He leads by example and has his officers’ backs. Lt. Pittman worked a patrol beat (last Christmas) so that an officer could take off to be with his family. In these troubling times for law enforcement, supervisors like Lt. Pittman are needed to keep the morale afloat.”

The HPD officer, who said his favorite quote, from Mahatma Ghandi, is “Be the change that you wish to see in the world,” has worked with K-9 partner Nina in the department’s Narcotics Division for nearly six years.

He took a brief hiatus from wearing a badge when he and his wife, Ashley, moved to Mobile so she could complete medical school.

Blake and Ashley, now a family medicine doctor in Hoover, have been married for 10 years. They have a daughter, Madison, whom they call “Maddie,” who is nearly 3 years old, and are expecting a son in July.

After his wife completed her education, the couple moved back to Prattville, where Blake joined his brother and brother-in-law as PPD officers. While with that agency, he served as a field training officer and an FTO instructor.

The veteran officer said an incident that involved his brother convinced him of the importance of PBA membership.

“PBA offers so many great benefits to law enforcement officers,” he said. “My brother was involved in an officer-involved shooting when I was younger. He always preached to me to make sure I took care of my family and myself. With PBA, that is made possible.”

TENNESSEE TROOPER BECOMES 65,000TH MEMBER OF PBA

By Randy Byrd
Director of Foundation and Media Relations

For Reggie Edge, it has been a long journey from the streets of Boston, Mass., to becoming a Tennessee State Trooper and now the 65,000th member of the PBA.

Along the way, he had to deal with parents who sold drugs and a father who was abusive and in and out of jail. Raised by his grandmother and the foster care system, Edge decided he would take a different path with his life.

In 2015, he graduated from Newton North High School. During high school, he was a solid football player who played both defense and offense. After high school, he attended Bridgewater State University and graduated in 2020 with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

Edge worked security for the New England Patriots during his time in college and shortly thereafter. A home game at Gillette Stadium for a wild card game with the Tennessee Titans would change his career trajectory and his life. As Edge said, "It was pure timing."

The Patriots ended up losing the game and, as part of his job, he was in the tunnels near the buses for the away team.

At the time, Edge said, "I was at a crossroads in my life and didn't feel like Massachusetts was home for me after a lot of setbacks."

He had just finished school in May and had been trying to get a job in law enforcement. Also, he had just broken up with his girlfriend of four years.

By chance, he spoke to retired Trooper Brett Bumpus who was working security for the Titans. Edge asked him what it was like living in Tennessee. A sales pitch ensued about the Tennessee Highway Patrol and the beauty of the state.

Edge was then introduced to the



Edge (r) is the 65,000th member of PBA

lieutenant colonel of the patrol, who later became the colonel. The colonel gave Edge his card and asked him to send him a resume. This led to an application and job offer.

After completing basic school, Edge became a trooper in 2020.

His involvement in a shooting in 2022 led him to the PBA.

"It made me realize that the job comes with a lot of risks, and I knew I needed the protections the PBA offers," said Edge.

His life's motto serves as an inspiration to others for overcoming adversity: "Stop looking for fair and look for opportunities, because if you keep looking for fair, you will miss the opportunity."

TWO-TIME OFFICER OF THE YEAR WINNER IS PROUD PBA MEMBER

By Katharine Jefcoats
Editor

Reynolds police Cpl. Sean Humphrey's Army father moved the family around quite a bit before settling in Marion County, Ga., after he retired from Fort Benning.

Humphrey is now four years into his service at Reynolds Police Department. Reynolds is another small town, just west of Fort Valley, and Humphrey is leaving his mark there.

"I received Officer of the Year in 2020 and then again in 2022," he said. "It was such an honor to be called Officer of the Year. I always give 100% of myself to any job I do, and it felt great to be honored."

Humphrey describes Marion County as a "small, rural county with lots of agricultural land." The most recent Census information shows a population of slightly more than 7,000.

The family lived in Buena Vista, which boasts about 1,500 residents.

Humphrey embraced the one-red light town where it was possible to know just about everyone and Friday night high school football was church.

"Our small town has one red light, one high school and one elementary school," he said. "The people you start kindergarten with are the same people you graduate with."

"I really enjoyed hanging out with friends at the little store across the street from the high school," continued Humphrey. "It is what we did every day after school, and we all looked forward to it."

"Friday night football was the highlight of our week, and the tradition continues to this day, as my youngest son is on the varsity football team," he concluded. "Everyone in town always goes, even if you don't have kids on the team. There is just not much else to do."

Rounding out the Humphrey children were an older brother, Vernon

Humphrey, and a younger sister, Amanda Bloodworth.

Humphrey graduated from that one high school, Tri-County, in 2004. As a student, he enjoyed being in the marching band.

He graduated four years later from Georgia Military College with an associate degree in general studies. In 2012, Humphrey earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Columbus State University.

His professional career started out half-heartedly in banking, however, not law enforcement.

"I wanted to get into law enforcement after high school, but while in college I got a job at Synovus bank," said Humphrey. "I stayed in banking for 11 years but decided my heart was just not

in banking anymore. I decided to pursue a career in law enforcement, something I wanted for many years."

However, even after leaving banking, Humphrey took a year exploring another career before finally settling on law enforcement.

"After getting out of banking, I was a high school math teacher for about a year before I got into law enforcement," he said. "I absolutely love math. Give me some numbers to figure out, and I'm a happy camper."

By the time Humphrey started mandate training at GPSTC in Forsyth, Ga., his brother was already in law enforcement.

Humphrey's duties and responsibilities include serving as LASO officer, TAC officer, evidence custodian, state certification manager, field training



(L-r) Antoinette Holloway, president of PBA's West Georgia Chapter; Freeman Johnson, retired MCP, member; Cpl. Sean Humphrey, secretary; Shannon Zeisloft, vice president, and Jackie Lee, retired CPD.



Reynolds police Chief Lonnie Holder with Humphrey

officer and an instructor for the Reynolds Police Department.

In addition to those specific positions, Humphrey works a normal 12-hour shift doing traffic and taking calls.

"I enjoy staying busy, and having all these responsibilities ensures that I always have something to do," Humphrey said. "Having all these responsibilities makes me feel accomplished. I enjoy working with the community. The Reynolds Police Department provides me with that opportunity.

"I take full advantage of being able to talk with the residents, get to know their families and bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community," he continued. "I work extremely hard at my job, but also with anything else I am tasked with."

Humphrey may have gotten his studious nature and strong work ethic from his parents.

"My dad was in the Army," he said. "My

mom was in the Army until she met my dad, then she retired and became a stay-at-home mom.

"Now that my dad is retired from the Army, he is a professor at Columbus State University, division president of the National Association of Blind Veterans, and he just recently completed his doctor of philosophy," Humphrey continued.

However, his law enforcement mentor is his chief at Reynolds, Lonnie Holder, largely because Humphrey came into law enforcement later in life than some other officers.

"I was 32 years old when I applied to be a police officer with Reynolds Police Department, so I was not as young as most," he said. "Chief Holder saw something in me and gave me the opportunity. Chief Holder is quick to acknowledge when someone does something good. Chief Holder has taught me that you must first learn to follow, before you can lead."

Holder believes in leading by example, a standard Humphrey also demonstrates.

"Chief Holder would never ask an officer to do something he is not willing to do himself," said Humphrey. "Chief Holder is known for coming out and working a 12-hour shift with his officers, sometimes at night, and always willing to give a helping hand.

Humphrey added that Holder is "highly respected" in not only the city of Reynolds, but the entire county.

"There have been numerous occasions that Chief Holder has gone above and beyond for everyone, and he has taught me that you must treat everyone with respect and dignity," he said.

After becoming a police officer, Humphrey joined PBA, to protect himself and his family in the event he becomes involved in an incident where he needs an attorney.

He is secretary of the West Georgia Chapter. Antoinette Holloway is president, and Shannon Zeisloft is vice president.

His family begins with his "best friend," wife Brandi. They have been together for 19 years, married for more than 17, and are parents to two boys, Hunter, 17, and Jason, 16.

Humphrey said he enjoys watching "Survivor" and fishing with his family.

The veteran officer said he is compassionate but firm and fair when he encounters people suspected of committing crimes. There's no judgement on his part on the decisions made by others, and he believes in second chances.

"I believe that just because you commit a crime doesn't make you a bad person, it means you've made a bad decision, and it can be turned around," said Humphrey. "I always treat everyone with respect, being fair, firm and professional. I love my job and I love working with the Reynolds Police Department. It gives me great pride to be doing something where I can take the knowledge I have learned through life experience and career training to better our community and the people in it."

MEET AUGUSTA'S RIVER REGION CHAPTER PRESIDENT

By Cindy Baugher
Administrative Services associate

The famous four-legged philosopher from the funny papers, Snoopy, is credited with this captivating quote, "There's no sense in doing a lot of barking if you don't really have anything to say."

This nugget of wisdom happens to be a favorite quote of Augusta's River Region Chapter President Larry Bracken. As evidenced by his career accolades and proven leadership abilities, Bracken chooses daily to let his actions do the "barking."

With a career spanning 26 years, Bracken has learned about the business of law enforcement and how to be an effective leader. These are skills he puts to good use as he heads up Augusta's River Region Chapter. After joining the PBA in 2013, he spent a few years "just being a paying member."

But he soon realized that he wanted to become a board member. Then, not long after joining the board, he found himself elected the chapter president.

"I have been blessed to have a board that shares the same enthusiasm that I do with efforts to raise money for the PBF and give back to the community," said Bracken. "Our chapter has hosted the Race for the Fallen, Back the Badge Car Show, Rock for Cops Music Concert, Brothers in Blue Bash and various raffles.

"We have also hosted women's self-defense seminars for Realtors in our community and worked closely with the Rotary Club of Augusta to provide training classes on human trafficking," he continued. "I feel like there is no limit to what we can accomplish and provide for those who need it the most, the officers and their families. As the chapter president, I have the honor of serving on the state board of the Georgia division. In 2022, I was elected to be the vice president of the PBA of Georgia."

The PBA's goal of supporting law enforcement officers is important to

Bracken. He had early exposure to the life of a law enforcement officer. He was only 2 when his father, who served in the Army, died in a car accident. His grandparents helped his mother, a graphic designer, raise him.

So, it was only natural that he absorbed from his grandfather, a retired Army sergeant major military police officer, what it means to serve. When it came time to decide on a career, Bracken knew it would either be the military or law enforcement.

Because he and his wife were in the process of starting a family, he chose law enforcement so that his children could have a grounded childhood in one location instead of moving around with the military. He calls choosing law enforcement, "the best decision I could have made."

Although he never joined the military, he did do contract work in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2011 with the Department of State. He was embedded with the U.S. military, whose mission was to provide advanced training to the Afghan National Police after they graduated from their police academies.

He has also worked to further his education, graduating from Thomas University with a bachelor of science in criminal justice in 2020. In addition, he is enrolled at Columbus State University, taking classes at Command College.

Bracken was born in Augusta and made his home there. Although Augusta has a population of just over 200,000 people, it still has a small-town feel with many

"mom and pop" type business owners that he formed bonds with over the years.

He has worked for the Richmond County Sheriff's Office in Augusta, the Grovetown Department of Public Safety and the Richmond County Marshal's Office during his years in law enforcement.

Since 1996, when he started out, he's worked a variety of specialty assignments -- K9 unit, narcotic unit, DUI Task Force, traffic division, Interstate Criminal Interdiction Team and the Crime Suppression Team. In 1999, he was recognized with the Officer of the Year award and, in 2000, was named Investigator of the Year.

While working on the Crime Suppression Team in 1999, Bracken was conducting stakeouts in areas that were being hit hard with car jackings. While on this assignment, he was able to stop a carjacking that was in progress and take the suspects into custody.

Those suspects were subsequently charged with several previous car jackings that had taken place in the area. In that same year, there had also been a string of robberies at hotels along I-20 from Columbia, S.C., to Atlanta.

Augusta had been hit several times. Bracken and his colleagues were doing stakeouts at hotels close to I-20. Once again, he found himself at the right place at the right time and was able to apprehend the suspects and link them to numerous other robberies. These two acts combined culminated in Bracken being named Officer of the Year.



Bracken with his family



Bracken and Air Force One

In 2000, he was promoted to the rank of investigator in the narcotics division. After working on a six-month investigation, that started out as a 3-gram bag of cocaine, he was able to arrest the supplier with 11 kilograms of cocaine. And that investigation led to Bracken being named Investigator of the Year for 2000 for his department.

Bracken said Capt. Scott Gay with the Richmond County Sheriff's Office is the person who's been the greatest influence on his career. He said that Gay had a way of connecting with his subordinates and making the hard-to-swallow assignments seem like they were the greatest thing ever.

"He showed his people that just because he had rank, he was not above getting dirty and working the assignments with us," said Bracken. "He has risen through the ranks over the years and though we do not even work for the same agency, we still talk often and I always lean on him for advice."

Bracken has chosen several examples after which to model himself. When others speak of him and his leadership in the PBA, it is with the utmost praise and respect.

Ben Harman, the senior vice president of Augusta's River Region and a PBA of Georgia regional director, had high praise for Bracken.

"I have been a member of the Augusta River Region board for nearly 10 years, and throughout my tenure we have seen very successful, very active presidents lead our chapter," said Harman. "Larry Bracken was elected as the president in 2017, after serving as a board member, because of his passion and dedication to our members."

"After taking over, Larry continued to lead with the same passion and dedication that I saw in him as a board member," Harman continued. "He continued the tradition of being involved in political screenings and fundraising for PBF, but came up with new ideas. He saw our chapter host the Brothers in Blue Bash, which was largely successful and also a huge undertaking."

"Thinking outside the box, we hosted a car show that was such a success for us and the attendees that it has become an annual event," he continued. "I believe that what makes Larry so good at being a chapter president is that he not only pushes the chapter to continue all these events and political screenings, but he gets the rest of the board passionate about it."

"Our board is less like an added responsibility and more like a family because of his leadership," Harman concluded. "'Lead with integrity of heart and with a skillful hand,' Psalm 78:72."

Patrick Cullinan, staff representative of the PBA of Georgia, echoed Harman's sentiments.

"Larry is the president of Augusta's River Region Chapter and the vice president of the PBA of Georgia," said Cullinan. "Larry is a respected leader who is devoted to his chapter. Under his leadership, Augusta's River Region Chapter became the first chapter in Georgia to exceed 1,000 members, and continues to grow from there."

"His chapter holds political screenings for all local and state elections and has had great success with getting increased pay and retirement for many of its members," he continued. "Larry knows the value of his team and recognizes that he can't do it alone."

Bracken and his wife, Nicholle, his high school sweetheart, have been married for nearly three decades. She, like her husband, is in a community service field. She has worked as a teacher in the Columbia County School System for 26 years. Together they have four children, two girls and two boys, and are eagerly awaiting their first grandchild in June 2023.

He describes himself as a typical southern guy who enjoys hunting, fishing, traveling and camping. Bracken's dedication to his career and his track record of outstanding PBA leadership are priorities for him.

NC MEMBER FINDS RECOVERY FROM SHOOTING CHALLENGING

By Angie Tullis
NC Patrolman's Journal editor

Just two and a half years into her career, Sampson County Deputy Caitlin Emanuel found herself answering a call that would alter the course of her life.

It was early on a July morning. She was sitting at a gas station within her beat, when the 2 a.m. calm was interrupted by the static of her radio. Communications indicated that a stolen vehicle had just been reported on nearby Sir Lane. Emanuel and her partner, Deputy Tyler Spell, were dispatched to respond.

Upon arrival, Emanuel noticed a vehicle matching the description just off the roadway. It appeared to have sustained damages and was positioned hazardingly in a ditch. She drove past slowly, scanning the vehicle for occupants, but no one was inside.

She notified communications and her partner that she was going to continue further up the roadway in an attempt to locate the suspect. After several moments of searching, she decided to circle back -- that's when she noticed a man walking in her direction. She felt it was unusual due to the early hour and the remote location, but he began waving her down.

She stopped and exited her patrol car. The man began telling her that he lived in a nearby house and had witnessed the wreck. As the conversation progressed however, Emanuel sensed that his demeanor had begun to change.

Without further warning, the man put her in a stranglehold. She was able to unholster her firearm, but during the struggle, two shots were fired into her thigh and foot. Her femur was broken and her heel bone was shattered.

The offender released her and fled on foot. Emanuel was finally able to notify her partner and communications that she'd been shot.

Moments later, her partner arrived and applied a tourniquet to her wounds.



Emanuel, her husband, Trent, and their dog, Ruger

She was airlifted to the closest hospital for treatment.

The offender, 36-year-old Michael Wathall Jr. of Pennsylvania, was apprehended a few hours later.

Emanuel spent two weeks in the hospital and underwent three surgeries. She is learning to walk again. Her recovery has been a challenge physically, but the emotional trauma has also been difficult.

"I knew I was going to die that night," she said.

Despite it all though, she said she wants to return to law enforcement. She credits the mentors in her life, like her sergeant, field training officer and partner for teaching her, supporting her and encouraging her. She also credits her husband for his support.

"My husband, Trent, has been my absolute sidekick through my recovery," she said. "He has definitely lived up to the 'for better and for worse, in sickness and in health.' He's been beyond supportive through each season of this



Emanuel with Deputy Tyler Spell

event in our marriage, especially my decision to return back to duty."

Emanuel's favorite quote is from Babe Ruth, "Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game."

She said it resonates with her more than ever now.

TN OFFICER LEAVES LEGACY OF COUNTRY MUSIC AFTER DEATH



Police officer and country music singer Jeff Carson died suddenly at home

By Katharine Jefcoats
Editor

In one of his last interviews, country music singer Jeff Carson talked about getting back into the business that had brought him fame and accolades.

When he became disillusioned as a singer, Carson started a second career in 2008 as a Franklin, Tenn., police officer. While he mulled over what the fates had in store for him, Carson continued to serve his community, spent time with his wife, Kim, son Dayton and their fur babies, Bailey and Mack, and tinkered with his 1972 Chevrolet Chevelle.

“I will be mid to late 60s by the time I am ready to retire,” he said in the interview with the PBA. “I really do not think that far ahead, I just live for the moment and work it one day at a time.”

Sadly, Carson, 57, died suddenly of a heart attack at his Franklin home March 26, 2022. His wife of 35 years was nearby when he collapsed.

“He’d gone out to get the mail and our son’s graduation invitations were there,” said Kim Carson. “He set the mail down on the counter and walked into the other room. I heard a loud bump. He’d collapsed.”

Although he was rushed to the hospital, Jeff Carson would not survive. His fellow police officers flooded the emergency room and began to pray, said Franklin police Detective Brandon Sandrell.

“There was a bunch at the hospital,” he said, “smiling and trying to uplift Kim but knowing it was not good.”

Jeff and Kim Carson married in 1987 and moved to Nashville so he could

pursue a career in music in 1989.

“He placed second in a talent show in high school and got into the music business,” she said. “We met while he was performing in Branson. We got married and did what anyone would do to get into music business – we moved to Nashville. He was still doing music while doing police work.”

About 17 years into their marriage, their only child, Dayton, was born. Kim Carson said she and Jeff were anxiously anticipating Dayton’s 2022 high school graduation – an event Jeff did not live to see.

“Having him at home has been most helpful,” she said of her son. “It’s helped save me, but I hate to see what Jeff has missed. I have to power through for him. Our son has such wonderful things ahead. We were dreading the change of graduation, but there is so much change without Jeff being here. Graduation is not the worst thing. We’ve already gone through the worst thing.”

Dayton Carson was awarded one of the 21 scholarships issued in 2022 to the children or stepchildren of law enforcement officers. He is attending Middle Tennessee University, pursuing a degree in music.

Kim Carson said she and her son are doing OK.

“I’m working full-time and try to keep Dayton going, and he’s in school,” she said at the beginning of March 2023. “That’s what we do. Some days are much harder than others, that is for sure.”

The first anniversary of her husband’s death was fast approaching at that time.

“We have reached the month of the year anniversary,” she said. “I’m dreading all of that. It’s all just so hard at times. Jeff’s family will be up at the end of the month, so that’ll be most helpful.”

Country music fans may well recognize Carson. He took home an Academy of American Country Music Award for his video, “The Car,” in 1996. The song also

hit No. 5 on the Billboard chart. He also won Country America's Top 10 New Stars Award the same year.

In September 1995, his recording of "Not on Your Love," went to No. 1 on all the charts at the time, including Gavin, R&R and Billboard. After "The Car," his next single, "Holdin' Onto Somethin'" entered into the top five on the Billboard charts.

In 2001, Carson received a Christian Country Music PowerSource Magazine award for "Scars and All," from the album *Real Life*, taking the No. 1 spot on the PowerSource Christian Chart. The single "Real Life" also got him into Billboard's Top 20 after being off the air for several years, topping at No. 14.

In 2019, Carson re-recorded and re-released "God Save The World," which charted in the Top 40. In addition to three albums, he recorded numerous singles.

Not bad for a Tulsa, Okla., kid who learned "You are My Sunshine" harmonies in the backseat of his parents' car, and who picked up a guitar after meeting a fellow guitarist at church.

"My first experience with music was in church," said Carson in the PBA interview. "One week, an evangelist brought his wife and son to our church, and their son was a couple of years older than me, and I looked up to him. He played the bass guitar, and I remember loving the way it sounded, so Mom and Dad bought me my first bass guitar. Mom always played the banjo and acoustic guitar so later I picked up the acoustic and started learning the chords from guitar chord books."

When Carson was in the fourth grade, his family moved to Gravette, Ark., where he graduated high school. While there, Carson and a couple of friends took second place in a school talent show performing their rendition of "Seven Bridges Road."

As much as he loved music, Carson said he grew "jealous and jaded" toward the industry and gave up the guitar.

"I'll admit, I was jealous and jaded toward the music business when I left," he said. "I literally hung up my guitars



Carson with his only child, son Dayton

and didn't so much as strum one for approximately five years or more."

In 2008, Carson put his second love into play by joining the Franklin Police Department.

"While traveling the country during the mid to late 90s, in my career as a country music recording artist, I played everywhere in this country, except for Hawaii," he said. "During that time, I always showed my support and admiration for those in law enforcement. I collected patches and badges from different departments around the country. The only other job

I ever wanted, other than being a country artist, was in law enforcement."

During his years as a police officer, Carson joined the Middle Tennessee Chapter of the Tennessee Division of PBA and received four commendations from his department for outstanding work on the job.

Sandrell said Carson took advantage of his concert schedule to go on ride-alongs with local police departments.

The two met in 2010 while on the Flex Unit, an undercover team that worked in plain clothes to catch criminals. He

remembered when Carson used his musical talents to contain the threat of a man suffering a psychotic break.

“Jeff and I went in, and Jeff noticed a guitar in the corner,” said Sandrell. “Jeff picked it up and began strumming it. The guy paused and stared intensely. It was amazing. He was calm. I just can’t express how awesome Jeff was.”

Sandrell said he was a fan before he ever met Carson.

“I remember being young and liking his songs,” he said. “We talked about his being in music.”

The pair visited a karaoke bar in Gatlinburg. Without an announcement, Carson started getting up to sing his own songs. People began to notice and were thrilled, he said.

“He got up there like a champ,” said Sandrell. “The bar started to realize, ‘Hey, this is the real guy.’ The karaoke guy was excited, they took pictures.”

When Carson performed in the middle of nowhere, Sandrell said he and fellow officers wore shirts with his name on it and embarrassed him by whooping and hollering for him.

Sandrell said as talented a performer as Carson was, he was also a great officer.

“He loved both sides of it,” said Sandrell. “He loved helping people and making music. Old country coming back, I could see him getting bigger and bigger. He knew both sides of it.”

Carson also loved practical jokes and pranks.

“We pranked each other, and both of us pranked others together,” he said. “He’d put an air horn under a chair so when someone sat on it, it would honk and scare you to death. He had an old man mask, which was silicone, legitimately scary.”

“If you knew Jeff and didn’t like him, you’d really need to re-assess yourself. He was all around fun, enjoyable and easy to work with,” Sandrell continued.

During a walk along the riverbank, Carson found a snakeskin more than 2



With a photo of Officer Jeff Carson behind them, Kim and Dayton Carson show off scholarship funds awarded to Dayton from PBA.



Franklin police Sgt. David Mullins, who serves as the senior vice president of the Middle Tennessee Chapter, presents a scholarship check to Dayton Carson.

feet long. Carson and Sandrell stopped at a store and noticed a fellow officer who was “deathly afraid” of snakes pull up to the gas pumps and get out to pay.

“While he was inside, Jeff stuck that snakeskin under the seat with the head sticking out,” said Sandrell. “We parked across the street to watch what happened.”

The officer got into his car, pulled away from the pumps and suddenly slammed on his brakes and ran away from the car.

“He was going to call a wrecker so we had to tell him what was really going on,” Sandrell said.

Kim Carson said she recalled her husband pulling a toy lizard across the floor to scare other officers and “always doing stupid pranks.”

“They showed videos of some of the pranks at his funeral,” she said.

Those same officers have surrounded Kim Carson and her son with love and kindness.

“The funeral was unbelievable,” she said. “I am absolutely thankful to all the people who came, it was just amazing. It all goes back to the police department and all they’ve done. I am most thankful.

“He felt like he was fortunate to do both professions he loved,” continued Carson. “He was a great police officer. He appreciated the job and the opportunity.”

Sandrell said he will never forget Carson. “He made the days go faster,” he said. “The days are much slower with him gone.”



Photo at left is credited to Jeremy Westby/2911 Media. At top left, Kim and Dayton enjoy a campfire at their Tennessee home. At top right, they show off a guitar that memorializes the late Jeff Carson.

WEST VIRGINIA STATE FIRE MARSHAL IS ALSO PBA MEMBER

By Cindy Baugher
Administrative Services associate

When the average citizen thinks of law enforcement agencies, the fire marshal's office is probably not what comes to mind.

In fact, many people may not even realize that it is a branch of law enforcement. But in all actuality, it is a highly-specialized type of law enforcement that is tasked with a wide range of duties, including fire investigation -- arson and explosive --, public fire education, fire code inspections, plans review, and licensing of blasters, pyro-technicians, electricians and home inspectors, among others.

The West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office has 38 sworn law enforcement fire marshals and has been serving West Virginia since 1909.

The website for the West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office shares the following information about the agency:

"State Fire Marshals are sworn law enforcement officers who have the statutory responsibility to investigate the origin and cause of fires and explosions and any related crimes throughout the State of West Virginia. They are vested with arrest powers.

"The investigative division is the premier arson and explosion division in the State of West Virginia. If the cause of a fire is determined to be criminal in nature, the State Fire Marshal investigates the incident.

"Our investigators are highly-trained and provide expert analysis and assistance to state and local agencies in fire origin and cause determination and arson investigation.

"State Fire Marshals investigate violent crimes involving arson and arson-related crimes. They conduct fire scene examinations, make origin and cause determinations, provide expert witness



Vacchio is a fire marshal in West Virginia and a PBA member

testimony, and assist other agencies and prosecutors with investigations.

SFM's are certified as fire investigators through the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI) or the National Association of Certified Fire Investigators (NAFI).

"State Fire Marshal investigators have advanced training in fire scene examination. They are responsible for all aspects of the investigation including: evidence collection, photographic documentation, explosives recognition,

electronic communications analysis, interviews and interrogation, and arrest procedures.

"When warranted, the fire marshals make arrests and provide expert testimony at trial."

The fire marshals of West Virginia have varied backgrounds, including military and public safety. Those who are from a public safety background come from either the law enforcement or fire safety side, or both.

Many have attended and completed both

law enforcement academies and fire department training. Others may have completed just one or the other.

All of the marshals have been certified internally by the agency for their assigned tasks, and a select few have chosen to further their knowledge by taking advanced training for specific, crucial certifications.

All of these credentials, combined with the necessary annual continuing education hours, mean that the West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office is one of the most highly-trained law enforcement agencies in the state.

The West Virginia Fire Marshal's Office staff has its share of PBA members, one of whom is Joe Vacchio. After he was born in New York City and raised in a small Long Island village, the public safety career path of Vacchio began with the volunteer fire service in his home state.

He later became an AEMT-III, now known as a cardiac technician/paramedic. At an early age, he realized his desire to work in public safety and law enforcement.

His first job in public safety was as a medical technician, non-sworn, for Nassau County Police Department, and his second was as a police officer for the City of New York.

The list of academies he has attended for rookie school illustrates how well-rounded his training has been -- Nassau County fire academy, Nassau County emergency services academy, New York City police academy, Fairfax County fire and rescue academy, Fairfax County police academy, Virginia State fire marshal's academy.

His law enforcement/public safety resume parallels that of his training. After starting with the police, Vacchio transitioned over to fire and rescue, and then to the fire marshal's office.

All in all, Vacchio has been in the public safety arena for 45 years, with about 27 of those years devoted to law enforcement.

Among his accomplishments, he lists two accredited certifications from the National Association of Arson Investigators -- certified fire and explosives investigator and certified vehicle fire investigator.

He earned his third accredited certification, certified fire investigative instructor from the National Association of Arson Investigators in July 2019.

Another achievement for Vacchio was his assistance in writing the PowerPoint program for the ATF's accelerant K9 program, and being credited with closing multiple fire events, including the multi-jurisdictional theater bomber, for which he received an award and commendation.

Vacchio joined the PBA after learning about its benefits early on from his time with police departments. In regard to the PBA, he said that he "tells (others) the truth and lays out the basic facts relating to the benefits, advantages and protections afforded to those that join the PBA."

In his field, there's never a guarantee as to what the actual job will look like from day to day. Vacchio has experienced compelling specialty assignments throughout his career.

In 1995, he worked with the Fairfax County's urban search and rescue team at the FEMA headquarters in Washington, D.C., to assist with the Oklahoma City bombing emergency.

He was designated a part of the Great Falls Fire Rescue swift water rescue team in East Grand Forks, Minn., during the Red River flood of 1997.

The terror attacks of 9/11 saw him deployed as a first responder to the Pentagon, where he remained on-duty at the site for 10 days.

Following that assignment, he led a volunteer team of Fairfax County firefighters to New York to assist with family support. After the Hurricane Sandy disaster of 2012, Vacchio helped

with relief efforts on Long Island.

His assignment with the West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office, Fire Investigations Division, keeps him busy with comprehensive investigative duties.

In addition to the regular responsibilities that the officers in this department handle, they are also called upon to fill positions in other agencies, such as court officers and corrections officers on an as-needed basis.

In the investigations division, there is one deputy and 10 assistant fire marshals. There are nine fire marshal investigators who cover 55 counties comprised of 24,038 square miles. Vacchio estimates the annual number of investigations between 550-750 fires.

Vacchio points to his father, Joseph Vacchio Sr., as the greatest influence in his career for teaching him and showing him the importance of drive, both from a personal and a professional standpoint.

He also had good examples of leadership in two fire chiefs that he served with, Chief William "Billy" Quinn and Chief Glenn Gaines. He said they each "instilled dedication to service, work ethic and a drive to learning and being educated in your field of expertise."

Vacchio's varied experience, together with his drive for furthering his education and professional training, has resulted in an impressive career within the niche that is the West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office.

He stays busy but enjoys hunting, hiking and canine training and rescue. His wife of 25 years, Karen, is a department head of a public information office.

Vacchio chose his profession based on a desire to work in public safety and law enforcement. Being an investigator with the Office of the State Fire Marshal allows him to fulfill that dual aspiration.

([n.d.], West Virginia Fire Commission: State Of West Virginia Fire Investigation Division, Office of the State Fire Marshal, retrieved Feb. 22, 2023, from <https://firemarshal.wv.gov/Divisions/FireInvestigation/Pages/default.aspx>)

BILLS INTRODUCED TO GIVE PBA PERMANENT COMMISSION SEAT

By Steve Anthony
NCPBA staff representative

In 1971, the North Carolina General Assembly adopted the Criminal Justice Training and Standards Council Act, which created the Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission.

It led to the adoption of minimum entrance standards and mandatory basic training requirements for all sworn law enforcement officers, effective in 1973.

The Criminal Justice Standards Division administers the commission's required certification and training programs to ensure consistent competency and professionalism among law enforcement officials.

Those programs cover all sworn police officers, correctional officers, probation officers, parole officers, juvenile justice officers and juvenile court counselors.

The commission comprises 35 members who are appointed to serve a two- or three-year term.

Numerous law enforcement groups representing law enforcement officers are permanently represented on this commission, including N.C. Association of Chiefs of Police, N.C. Police Executives Association, the N.C. Law Enforcement Officers Association; N.C. Law Enforcement Training Officers Association, N.C. State Law Enforcement Officers Association, and N.C. Women's Law Enforcement Officers Association, with some receiving multiple appointments.

However, the North Carolina Police Benevolent Association has more members than all of the other associations combined, with over 16,000 members. The commission has also been severely under-represented with rank-and-file officers that would bring balance.

There are eight active chiefs and four retired chiefs on the commission. This accounts for 34 percent of the



Rep. Riddell speaks to reporters

commission's make-up.

The vice chair of the commission also serves as the executive vice president and general counsel of the N.C. Sheriffs Association. The vice chair is appointed by the N.C. Law Enforcement Officers Association, a practically non-existent group that has lost substantial membership through the years.

This leaves the commission's vice chair with input over every sworn law enforcement, correctional, probation officer and telecommunicator in the state of North Carolina because of his various positions.

Rank and file law enforcement officers, who are under more political pressure than ever before, must have a seat at the table. These are the officers who run into harm's way every day to keep our community safe.

While administrators and leadership have a unique perspective of the importance of training, so does the Police Benevolent Association, which represents these law enforcement officers.

"It is time that the voice of the everyday law enforcement officer is heard," NCPBA President David Rose said. "We are at the point where we must decide if we truly want solutions for the challenges law enforcement officers face.

"As the president of the largest association for law enforcement, others should be wanting to hear our concerns and suggestions of what we are seeing on the street every day.

"I have had the pleasure to serve as Speaker Tim Moore's appointee on the commission for the past several years," he continued. "My track record on the commission speaks for itself, and our association has proven to provide value to the training and standards commission."

NCPBA Executive Director John Midgett also weighed in.

"The diversity of law enforcement we represent brings a unique perspective to the commission that can help improve the quality of policing in our state," he said. "By not hearing the voices of 16,000 members with one seat on the commission would be a disservice to the



North Carolina Division President David Rose addresses the media



Sponsor Sen. Steve Jarvis speaks to the need for the legislation

public and to our profession.

“While the shortages of law enforcement officers continue to hurt our state, our association will continue to advocate for those who are working countless hours to keep our state safe and want to bring their voice to improve the training, education and standards in North Carolina,” continued Midgette.

With this in mind, the NCPBA worked with legislators to introduce House Bill 214 and Senate Bill 161. This legislation would give the PBA a permanent seat on the commission. The introduction of these bills saw unprecedented support as

57 representatives joined four primary sponsors on the bill. On the senate side, 16 senators joined three primary sponsors in support of the senate version.

Primary sponsors in the house were Reps. Dennis Riddell, R-Alamance; Carla Cunningham, D-Mecklenburg; John Bradford, R-Mecklenburg, and Steve Ross, R-Alamance, while Sens. Steve Jarvis, R-Davidson; Ralph Hise, R-Mitchell; and Bobby Hanig, R-Currituck, are the primary sponsors in the senate.

On Feb. 23, the primary sponsors held a

press conference at the General Assembly to present the importance of the bills to the media. Rep. Dennis Riddell and Sen. Steve Jarvis, along with Rose and Midgette, spoke about the importance of the legislation. Numerous members made the trek to Raleigh to show their support.

The PBA wants to thank all the legislators who offered their support of this legislation.

“We are very appreciative of the support that we have received, and we are looking forward to speaking on these bills as they move forward,” said Rose.

BIBB COUNTY, GA INVESTIGATOR INFLUENCED BY LEO FATHER



Investigator Alex Fletcher shows off Bibb sheriff's SWAT mobile unit to a group of enthralled school children.

**By Katharine Jefcoats
Editor**

Growing up and living in small-town Macon, Ga., Alex Fletcher cannot escape the shadow and reputation of his father, a renowned police officer.

Most residents of Macon from 1977 through 2012 were familiar with Detective Carl Fletcher.

"My father was a well-known gang/violent crimes investigator who, although retired from violent crimes 10 years ago, still has his name mentioned to this day," said Alex Fletcher. "When citizens hear my name, they think of my father and often compare me to him."

Carl Fletcher and his wife, a paralegal,

raised their two sons in Macon. Alex Fletcher remained in his hometown and has a brother who lives in Texas.

Fletcher graduated from Rutland High School in 2006, where he played baseball, and attended Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, Ga., from 2006 to 2008.

Rather than complete traditional college, Fletcher chose instead to pursue an education in law enforcement.

"I chose to get into law enforcement because I grew up hanging around the police department with my father and it was what I knew," he said. "As I grew up, I continued to interact with the individuals my father worked with and, after attending college, I realized that

law enforcement was the track I wanted to take."

Fletcher began mandate training at Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth and working as a corrections officer for Crawford County Sheriff's Office in November 2010.

Less than two years later, Fletcher joined the Macon Police Department – the agency where his father made his mark.

MPD was an entity separate from Bibb County Sheriff's Office until January 2014 when the agencies consolidated, along with the city and county governments.

Alex Fletcher worked as a patrol officer until 2017 when he was assigned to the Crime Suppression Unit. Two years

later, he was transferred to Special Investigations Unit – Narcotics. It is in that capacity that he was recognized as Macon Exchange Club's Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.

"They stated I received the award based off multiple narcotics cases/gun cases, arrests and seizures over the course of the last year," said Fletcher. "(They also recognized) my ability to work with other agencies and coordinate between both state and federal agencies.

"I have received multiple awards for Investigator of the Month and, while on patrol, I had received an award in 2017 as an honorable mention for the District 4 Patrol Division," he continued.

Fletcher counts his father among his mentors, which also include co-workers in the Bibb County Sheriff's Narcotics Unit. He also notes that a great-grandfather was a police officer in Indiana. During his career, Alex Fletcher opted to join PBA.

"I became a PBA member because I know the risks involved in this career and knowing that I have someone on my side to represent me in the case that an issue arises makes me more comfortable. PBA was also recommended by members of my agency when I was hired," he said.

He and his wife, who is a property manager at an apartment complex in Houston County, have a 10-year-old daughter.

His hobbies include fishing, motorcycles, video games, cooking and grilling, reading, movies, and being with his family. His favorite quote is the Serenity Prayer -- "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

In addition to his father, Fletcher said John Henry "Doc" Holiday is one of his favorite people. "Doc Holiday is one of my favorite people because of his loyalty to Wyatt Earp, his wit and the fact that he was known as one of the most deadly and feared gunmen in the wild west during a dangerous era," he said.



Carl Fletcher was a popular and notable police detective in Macon, Ga.



Alex Fletcher honored as Officer of the Year by Macon Exchange Club



Carl Fletcher as a young Macon police officer

AWARD-WINNING SRO BUILDS SAFETY PRACTICES, RELATIONSHIPS

By Cindy Baugher

Administrative Services associate

Planning tactical response to active threats, thinking through “what-if” scenarios to determine best safety practices, training staff members for emergency concerns and mentoring at-risk children are just a few of the important responsibilities that a school resource officer must handle.

Michael Nix, of the Pickens County, S.C., Sheriff’s Office, handles all of those duties with ease and expertise, which earned him a recent award for School Resource Officer of the Quarter.

Born in Pickens County, Nix calls himself fortunate to have been able to move around the country while growing up as an “Army brat,” but Pickens, he said, was “always home.”

He graduated from Pickens Senior High School in 1993 and earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Clemson University in 2000. He’s now been a Pickens resident for 25 years.

Nix has been married for 15 years. He and his “beautiful and amazing” wife, to use his words, have two daughters, 11 and 3.

When he’s not working as an SRO, he enjoys carpentry and metal fabrication, and calls himself a DIY kind of guy.

Nix graduated from South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy in Columbia and started with the Pickens County Sheriff’s Office in 2011. He also worked as an officer with Tri-County Technical College.

During his 12 years in law enforcement, he has served in detention, uniformed road patrol and in his role as a school resource officer. An additional responsibility Nix manages is training and mentoring newly-assigned deputies to the SRO unit.

Becoming a member of the PBA was important to Nix, he said, “due to the value of a strong support network that is becoming rarer throughout our country



Nix was recently named SRO of the Quarter at Liberty Primary School

for many in law enforcement.”

Nix said SRO unit leadership recognizes the performances of its officers through the award.

“The sub-unit of SROs with the sheriff’s office has been blessed with two great supervisors that have an outlook to change some old stigmas of SROs and highlight the value and importance of these positions,” he said. “Part of that strategy is to recognize performance of individual officers and consider feedback from the community we serve.”

As part of his safety initiatives within the school, Nix added additional wall intersecting signs. The goal was to improve visibility and navigation within the school should first responders have to come to the school in an emergency situation.

The signs he added are easily visible from a greater distance and would potentially decrease the time it would take to find specific locations during an urgent scene.

Another aspect that is vital to help an SRO to ensure safety is faculty and staff training. Nix said he saw that training morph in recent years from teaching in a whole group setting to smaller, more personal training groups.

He said this training has fostered relationship building between the staff and him, and increasing trust. This trust results in additional, pertinent questions being posed which, in turn, makes for a more prepared staff in the event of an emergency.

Nix credited the staff of his assigned school, Liberty Primary School, for being especially proactive in putting into action the idea that “if you see something, say something” when it comes to potentially threatening events.

A final component, and probably equally as important as the safety measures he oversees, is the role Nix takes in mentoring students at LPS who may be considered “at risk.”

“Whether children of poverty, potential crime, abuse, or neglect, we try to make efforts to support, guide and build relationships with those children who may not have an opportunity to find this outside the school,” he said. “I may eat lunch with a child in the lunchroom, I may go outside and toss a ball during recess. I read books on occasion.”

All of these are attempts to build relationships that will help students feel a connection with an adult in his or her school. As Nix said, “A part of the school’s safety process -- assessing at-risk children -- is a part of the equation.”

NC MEMBER MAKING BETTER WORLD WITH HER HEART AND ART

By Randy Byrd
Director of Foundation and Media Relations

Fans of “The Andy Griffith Show” know that Mount Airy, N.C., was the hometown of Andy Griffith and that the fictional town of Mayberry was based on the town.

What they may not know is someone else who grew up there is a prolific artist and police veteran of 20 years, Donna Pell.

Pell works for the Cary Police Department. Cary is a suburb of Raleigh with a population of 186,000, and is far removed from the mountains and rolling hills of Surry County where Pell grew up.

Pell remembers her childhood there and how it seemed that everyone knew each other.

“I remember anytime my dad was driving us somewhere, he was always sticking his hand up to wave to someone we knew,” she said.

These memories also include doing chores, building forts, playing softball and shooting basketball.

“Every summer you could find us running barefoot through the fields and gardens from daylight to dark,” said Pell.

Pell began drawing while in elementary school, and her first recollection of her artwork resulted from a ride in her grandparents’ van. She would often sit in the front passenger seat floorboard while they went places together.

“Maybe not the best way to travel,” she said.

One day her grandmother handed her some index cards and an ink pen to keep her occupied. She asked her to draw her something.

“I drew a farmer and a donkey,” said Pell. “Trying to be funny, I drew the farmer getting kicked by the donkey.”



Pell painting an emergency communications mural



Go, EUC Pirates



Go, UNC Tarheels



Pell doing a little facepainting



Pell's face in the hole board

She was excited by her work and gave it to her grandmother, who gasped. Pell thought she was in trouble, but her grandmother said she was surprised she could draw that well.

Her grandmother showed her mom, who was equally surprised.

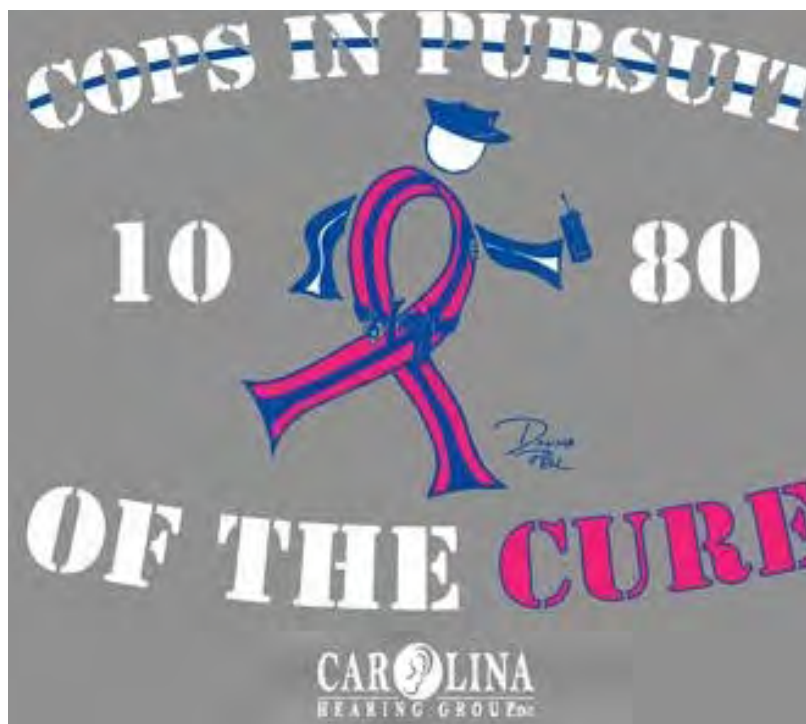
"I have been drawing ever since," she said.

Art soon became a big part of her life, and she continued to develop her talent, but Pell decided to become a police officer because of her love and passion to help people.

Her artwork became an outlet for her and something she wanted to share with others. Her work as an officer gave her the opportunity to do this.

She has had numerous opportunities through the years to include: face painting, designing T-shirts for special events, the badge design for the traffic motor units and a mural for the 911 center.

Pell also designed a Crisis Intervention Team pin, a Christmas card for the chief to send to all the staff and thin blue line flags to raise money for the Police



Cops in Pursuit of the Cure T-shirt design

Benevolent Foundation and to give as retirement gifts.

Additionally, she created keepsake pieces for family, friends and co-workers.

Tracy Gould is an emergency

communications supervisor with Cary and experienced Pell's work as an officer and an artist.

"Donna is a wonderful friend, talented artist and an exceptional police officer," said Gould. "Her infectious smile and sense of humor will brighten up any

room, and she always goes above and beyond to help those around her.

“When she’s not in uniform, she spends her time creating stunning artwork and spending quality time with her loved ones,” she continued. “I’ve personally seen her dedication to her craft, as she spent months perfecting a masterpiece in our 911 center.

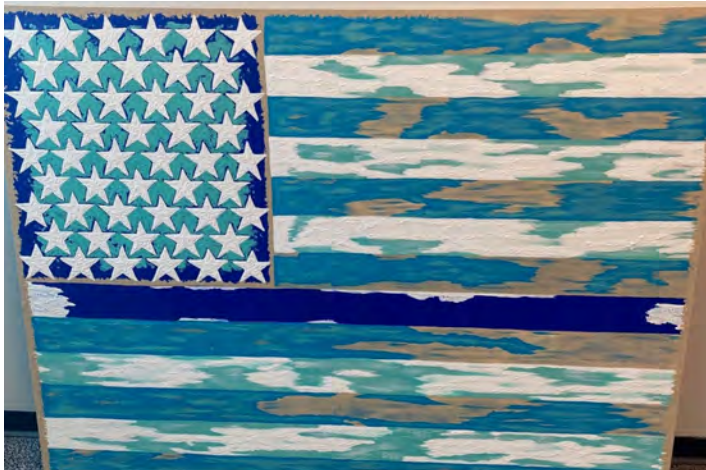
“I feel incredibly lucky to own one of her paintings and several hand-painted cards, each of which I will treasure forever,” continued Gould. “As a police officer, Donna sets an outstanding example for her

colleagues and remains committed to serving the community. Though she may be from a small town, she’s making a significant impact wherever she goes and whoever she interacts with.”

It is no coincidence that Pell’s favorite quote truly is her statement about how she lives her life and builds heartfelt relationships. Maya Angelou said, “People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” For Pell, the list is long of those that will never forget how her kindness and artwork made them feel.



Pell and Tracy Gould



Beach house themed Thin Blue Line piece



Pell and her spouse, Denise



Pell’s artwork was used as a Christmas greeting by the police chief



Another Pell design, the Wake County Crisis Intervention Pin

NC ATTORNEY EXPLAINS COMPLEXITIES OF GIGLIO LAW

**By Jeffrey Steven Warren
Ellis & Winters LLP**

In 1972, John Giglio appealed his conviction for forging money orders to the Supreme Court of the United States on the basis of newly-discovered “evidence.”

His theory was novel: the government failed to disclose a promise made to its key witness that the witness would not be prosecuted if he testified for the government against Mr. Giglio. Mr. Giglio asserted that the undisclosed promise of immunity was of such importance to the key witness’s credibility, and therefore to Mr. Giglio’s defense, that the government’s failure to disclose it violated Mr. Giglio’s constitutional right to due process of law.

The Supreme Court agreed. In *Giglio v. United States*, the Court held that prosecutors have a constitutional obligation to turn over evidence that can be used to impeach the credibility of a state’s witness “[w]hen the ‘reliability of [the] witness may well be determinative of guilt or innocence.’”

In light of *Giglio*, many prosecutors understandably decline to call witnesses who have impeachable testimony. A prosecutor’s decision not to call an officer to testify at trial due to the requirement of disclosure regarding an officer’s character is often referred to as the “*Giglio* impairment” of the officer.

But prosecutors have transformed the *Giglio* decision — intended to be a shield for criminal defendants — into a sword, making prosecutors the ultimate arbiters of who can or cannot serve as a law enforcement officer in a particular state.

In recent years, prosecutors in North Carolina and beyond have read into the *Giglio* decision a nonexistent obligation to publish sweepingly broad letters summarizing the reasoning behind their *Giglio* impairment decisions, known as “*Giglio* letters,” to officers’ employers.

Even though prosecutors only have an obligation to disclose impeachment



North Carolina attorney Warren

material under *Giglio* when the reliability of a witness “may well be determinative of guilt or innocence,” *Giglio* letters are almost always preemptive in nature – meaning they are sent before a prosecution exists – and inform an officer’s employer that the state will refuse to call the officer as a witness in any future criminal proceeding regardless of the officer’s role in the case.

These preemptive letters are especially legally problematic because it is impossible to know whether an officer’s testimony “may well be determinative of guilt or innocence” in all future criminal prosecutions.

Although law enforcement agencies have an interest in knowing whether their employees can be called as witnesses, *Giglio* letters are known as “death letters” because they are career killers. Being “*Gigliod*” is an official finding that an officer is too untrustworthy to testify.

When a district attorney decides not to use an officer as a witness for any future criminal trial, the officer is functionally unable to make arrests or be involved in handling evidence. Rendering them unable to perform basic duties, *Giglio* letters almost always result in the termination of officers or removal of their police powers.

As such, even though they lack the authority to directly control the hiring and firing of law enforcement officers, prosecutors have utilized the *Giglio* letter to become de facto personnel managers for law enforcement agencies across North Carolina.

Furthermore, district attorneys do not always act in good faith and have used *Giglio* letters as a pretext for retaliation. For instance, in the District of Columbia, the police department asked the prosecutor’s office to make *Giglio* determinations to facilitate the firing of officers who were otherwise protected from termination by the statute of limitations.

In Texas, police officers accused a district attorney of labeling one of their colleagues a *Giglio* cop in order to help the police chief fire the officer. In Arizona, a district attorney was accused of using a *Giglio* letter to retaliate against two officers to cover up the questionable actions of an investigator.

In North Carolina, after purportedly making misstatements about his law enforcement experience during a campaign rally, a candidate for sheriff received a *Giglio* letter from his local district attorney, who happened to be a financial supporter of his opponent.

North Carolina has recently amplified the already extreme threat presented by *Giglio* letters. On Sept. 2, 2021, North Carolina enacted N.C. Gen. Stat. § 17C-16 (the “*Giglio* Bill”) that directs North Carolina Criminal Justice Standards Division of the Department of Justice (“Standards”) to obtain the identity of every officer in the state who has been *Gigliod*.

Once Standards has this information, the *Giglio* Bill directs Standards to provide written notice of an officer’s *Giglio* status to the head of any future law enforcement agency to which an officer’s certification is transferred, as well as the district attorney in that agency’s prosecutorial district.

If an officer subject to a *Giglio* impairment has his or her certification transferred to a state agency, Standards is



directed to notify every elected district attorney in every prosecutorial district in North Carolina of the officer's Giglio status.

Put simply, the Giglio Bill guarantees that any Giglio impaired officer will face difficulty – to say the least – in securing future employment.

The Giglio Bill does not require that district attorneys provide officers with any notice or opportunity to be heard before Giglioing them, nor does the Giglio Bill require district attorneys to explain why he or she decided to Giglio an officer.

Instead, the Giglio Bill permits district attorneys to make Giglio determinations in complete secrecy without ever informing an officer that a Giglio impairment is being considered, or why a Giglio impairment is being considered.

Once an officer is Giglioed, the Giglio Bill does not provide any way for officers to challenge or contest a Giglio letter, even if the Giglio letter is clearly the product of false, inaccurate, or misleading information. To the contrary, a Giglio letter could contain outright defamatory statements concerning an officer, and there is nothing an officer can do.

Furthermore, once an officer is placed into North Carolina's Giglio database, the Giglio Bill provides no way for them to get out – even if Standards clears the officer of wrongdoing and finds that a Giglio letter lacks probable cause. In effect, the Giglio Bill permanently brands officers as dishonest for the remainder of their lives.

All North Carolinians – even law enforcement officers – have constitutional rights. Unlike the United

States Constitution, the North Carolina Constitution protects the following rights: (1) the right to earn a living, (2) the right to one's reputation and (3) the right to notice and opportunity to be heard.

The Giglio Bill, and the Giglio letters which place officers in the Giglio database, implicate each of these constitutional rights.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the North Carolina Constitution, district attorneys argue that they have complete discretion in writing Giglio letters, even if those letters are preemptive in nature, and that their decisions are not subject to any sort of judicial review.

In *In Re Washington County Sheriff's Office*, judges Murphy and Dillon indicated that preemptive Giglio determinations are "advisory" in nature and are subject to being vacated by a court. Judge Berger, however, dissented.

Judge Berger explained that district attorneys have a “constitutional duty and ethical obligation to release the contents of [] investigate file[s]” to criminal defendants, and that preemptive Giglio determinations are permissible.

Judge Berger’s, however, has been considered and rejected by courts in other jurisdictions. In 2004, the Iowa Supreme Court rejected a district attorney’s argument that he was entitled to immunity after writing a Giglio letter claiming that an officer lied about the circumstances of the officer’s wife’s death.

Because Giglio letters are “advis[ory]” in nature, the court determined that the publication of Giglio letters is “not a function to which [prosecutorial] immunity attaches.”

In 2020, the North Dakota Supreme Court echoed the reasoning of the Iowa Supreme Court, holding that a district attorney could be sued after Giglioing an officer on the basis that the officer received several poor performance evaluations.

The next year, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals again affirmed this reasoning, explaining that, because “no identifiable trial loomed,” a district attorney could be sued after Giglioing two officers who blew the whistle on department corruption.

After having arguments asserting prosecutorial immunity shot down in the highest courts of multiple states, district attorneys now argue that they have an ethical duty to disclose impeachment evidence to criminal defendants – and therefore, they argue, to write preemptive Giglio letters.

In *In Re Washington County Sheriff’s Office*, Judge Berger echoed this sentiment, citing Rule 3.8 of the North Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct, which provides that prosecutors are required to “make timely disclosure to the defense of all evidence or information ... that tends to negate the guilt of the accused or mitigates the offense” without regard to materiality.

Whether evidence “tends to negate the guilt of the accused” is a fact-intensive



inquiry, however, and it is impossible to know whether an officer’s conduct “tends to negate the guilt of the accused” in the absence an “accused” person. Furthermore, and most importantly, ethical obligations do not supersede an officer’s constitutional rights.

In 2017, the Philadelphia district attorney began compiling a Giglio database of officers who, in the district attorney’s judgment, were “tainted” and subject to Giglio impairments. With no avenue to challenge the district attorney’s determination, the officers filed a lawsuit arguing that their placement in this database served as a stain on their professional reputations and violated their rights to due process.

In response, the district attorney argued that he had ethical and constitutional obligations to identify dishonest officers and make disclosures to criminal defendants, and that he therefore could not be sued.

The Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court rejected these arguments. Labeling the database a “blacklist of sorts,” the court held that the officers had a constitutionally protected interest in their professional reputation, which required notice and an opportunity to be heard prior to their placement into

the database.

The court explained that “Giglio [does not] eliminate the right of innocent officers to be afforded a meaningful opportunity to argue why they should not be placed [in] the [database] or why they should be removed.”

The PBA is working with legislators to help officers obtain notice and an opportunity to be heard prior to receiving a Giglio letter, as well as creating a mechanism to get out of the Giglio database if they are placed in it.

Although the PBA welcomes the input of district attorneys in developing a revised Giglio Bill that protects the rights and reputations of officers, the PBA stands ready to enforce the provisions of the North Carolina Constitution and help its members clear their names of false allegations of Giglio impairment by whatever means necessary.

(Editor’s note: To date, the majority of the offensive Giglio activity that we are observing having an impact on PBA members is occurring in North Carolina. However, it appears that the trend is spreading as we are seeing the issue arise in Tennessee, Alabama and other states. We believe all PBA members should be aware of this potential threat.)

VA MEMBER CHANGED HOW FALLEN OFFICERS ARE MEMORIALIZED

By Randy Byrd
Director of Foundation and Media Relations

As a college freshman, Chris Cosgriff didn't envision setting in motion an idea that would forever change the face of how officers are memorialized when they die in the line of duty.

In high school, he was an Explorer for the Fairfax City Police Department and had an interest in law enforcement, but he also was inspired by the world of HTML and web design.

This inspiration led to James Madison University and Cosgriff's study of integrated science and technology and computer science.

While reading the Washington Post one day, he came across an article about a convicted murderer being released from prison for the killing of two officers 16 years earlier.

The officers were from Maryland and worked for the Prince George's County Police Department. The article profoundly affected him and he set out on a course to create the Officer Down Memorial Page.

"At the time, I was just learning what the world of technology was all about, and had no idea what the concept would lead to down the road," he said.

As he began his journey with ODMP, Cosgriff paid for everything himself. He later filed for non-profit status and was able to raise money for website hosting.

In 2010, federal grant money was approved through the U.S. Department of Justice. He was able to hire outside design firms to provide technical help as well as those to work on office tasks.

According to the ODMP website, in the early stages of development, the ODMP honored only law enforcement officers who had been killed or wounded in 1996 but expanded to include officers killed in the line of



Cosgriff, his wife and children celebrate a family birthday

duty dating back to 1990.

Then, with the help of the National Law Enforcement Officer's Memorial Fund Inc., the site gained access to information about thousands of heroes who had given their lives in the line of duty since the 1790s.

Since its founding, ODMP has been involved with numerous fundraising initiatives and partnerships to support officers and their families, and bring continued awareness to the sacrifice that officers make every day in serving their communities.

Cosgriff's original concern about the release of the murderer of the Prince George's County police officers led to the ODMP's No Parole for Cop Killers program.

This program identifies parole hearings and allows citizens to write letters to parole boards in a concerted effort to deny parole for those who have slain an officer. Thousands of letters have been written through the years, with success.

Today, the work of ODMP has led to its recognition as the largest online presence honoring those fallen officers and features a board of directors, with Cosgriff as the chairman and CEO.

Since the formation of ODMP, Cosgriff

graduated from college and worked in the IT field for many years. In 2013, he decided he knew what the right choice was.

"As I got older, I realized it was 'now or never' to make the switch to my true passion of being in law enforcement," he said.

His choice led him full circle to Fairfax County as an officer.

During his time with Fairfax County, Cosgriff worked on a Neighborhood Patrol Unit that conducted proactive criminal patrol to target crime hot spots and community complaints.

His technology expertise led him to the Technical Response Unit and supporting the technical needs of the SWAT team, Crisis Negotiation Team and Mobile Incident Command vehicles during critical incidents.

Cosgriff oversaw the department's recruiting efforts and expansion into digital recruiting, resulting in the department's largest recruit class in a decade.

He supervises the agency's Special Response Unit, which includes the explosives ordnance disposal, underwater search and rescue unit, marine patrol and technical response unit.

Cosgriff is originally from California. His dad was in the Navy, and his assignments took his family from California to Guam and, finally, Virginia. His mom was a math teacher in Fairfax County. She gave him his love of mathematics.

Cosgriff and his wife, Jessica, have three children -- Noelle, Finley and Cole. Jessica is entering her residency as a licensed marriage and family therapist.

In his spare time, Cosgriff enjoys fishing, collecting police patches, hiking and cycling.

(Source: The Officer Down Memorial Page Inc. (2023, March 14). About ODMP. Retrieved from <https://www.odmp.org/info/about-odmp>.)

MONTGOMERY OFFICER EARNS COMMENDATIONS FOR VALOR



Shirah (c) with his two best friends, fellow MPD officers Mitchell Norris (l) and Bradley Ash.

**By Don Fletcher
Alabama Trooper Magazine**

"So live your life so that the fear of death can never enter your heart."

Shawnee Nation Chief Tecumseh's words, by which Montgomery police Cpl. David Shirah lives and performs his duties, may have been in the back of the policeman's mind in December 2020, when he and several other MPD officers confronted a bank robber.

Shirah, a native of LaGrange, Ga., and a 2011 graduate of Pike County (Ga.) High School, earned three separate commendations — the Combat Cross Medal, the Life Saving Medal and the Commendation Medal with Valor — for his actions after an armed man robbed a Regions Bank branch of \$16,000.

Shirah spotted the suspect running and pulled into a gas station's parking lot. When the lawman pulled up, the officer said, the suspect "stopped running, produced a firearm and fired a round that hit the driver side headlight of my patrol vehicle."

The MPD corporal exited his vehicle and returned fire, striking the suspect four times. Once other officers arrived, Shirah started rendering medical aid to the wounded suspect, who would live to eventually receive a 30-year sentence in federal prison.

"I noticed that one of the rounds caused severe internal bleeding to his right thigh, so I applied a tourniquet to stop the bleeding," Shirah said.

In the wake of the officer-involved shooting, the seven-year law enforcement veteran immediately called his Police Benevolent Association representative, a move that he said helped smooth the process of assuring that the shooting was justified.

"From the time that I called my PBA representative, just minutes after my shooting, he was on (the) scene within 20 minutes," said Shirah. "Mr. (PBA attorney Mickey) McDermott went above and beyond in representing me and ensuring that I was kept up to date on the process and what to expect moving forward.

"To anyone who does not have PBA, this needs to be your first order of business," he continued. "Not being a PBA member is one of the most detrimental things to your career as a law enforcement officer."

Shirah joined the U.S. Marine Corps after high school and spent five years as a USMC infantryman. He considers the training he received there as the key to his success as a police officer.

"I believe being in the Marine Corps

has ultimately made me who I am today," he said. "You never know what your body and mind can do until you push yourself to those limits and beyond.

"I always train and think of different ways to make myself a better law enforcement officer, because there is always something for you to learn and get better at," continued Shirah.

Following his military service, he joined the Montgomery Police Department and began his career while earning an associate degree in military science, then a bachelor's degree in justice and public policy from Auburn University-Montgomery.

Most of his time with MPD has been as a patrol officer, although he did serve a stint with the department's Auto Theft Division, where he worked cloned VIN cases, as well as cases involving title washing and loan washing, and conducted "typical stolen vehicle investigations."

Shirah pointed out that working in law enforcement is more than just a job.

"This is not just a paycheck, this is your life, your partner's life, and your family's life," he said.



Shirah served five years as a US Marine infantryman.



10-42 Custom Wood is owned and operated by Brian DiYorio, a 10-year veteran of law enforcement in North Carolina.



The goal of his business is to provide quality craftsmanship at a reasonable price with a keepsake that will be treasured for years.

He thoroughly enjoys seeing customers happy with their pieces.

For more information, please visit 1042customwood.com. Use promo code "PBA23" to get 10% off your order.



DIGITAL DETOX



If you're vacationing to a remote location or simply steering clear of your inbox for a weekend, you might have thought about grabbing a magazine or three. Studies have shown that readers both retain information and recognize branding through printed material much more than through digital media. Plus, you never have to worry about forgetting a power cord.

Cummings Printing is a third-generation family-owned company specializing in printing high-quality, short-run publications. At each phase of the print process, we provide a human-touch that is unmatched by the competition. Let us help you create a publication your readers can escape with.

Cummings
Publication Printers Since 1914
cummingsprinting.com

4 Peters Brook Drive | P.O. Box 16495 | Hooksett, NH 03106-6495 | 800-647-0035

[f http://www.facebook.com/CummingsPrinting](http://www.facebook.com/CummingsPrinting) [t @CummingsPrint](https://twitter.com/CummingsPrint) [e info@cummingsprinting.com](mailto:info@cummingsprinting.com)

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.



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