

# 2023 BLUE REVIEW

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE PBA, ISSUE 17



**PBA OF GA PRESIDENT JOE  
NAIA SHOWS BIG SUPPORT  
OF PBF, p. 4**

**K9 HANDLER DEJARNETTE  
IS 10,000TH MEMBER OF  
VAPBA, p. 31**

**SSPBA SUCCESSFULLY  
DEFENDS GIGLIO-  
IMPAIRED CONDUCT, p. 46**



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

**CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS**

## IF IT HAPPENS TO YOU:

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

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





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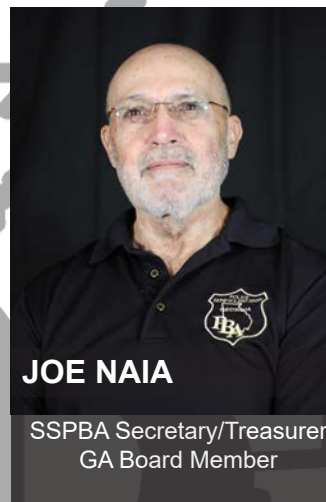
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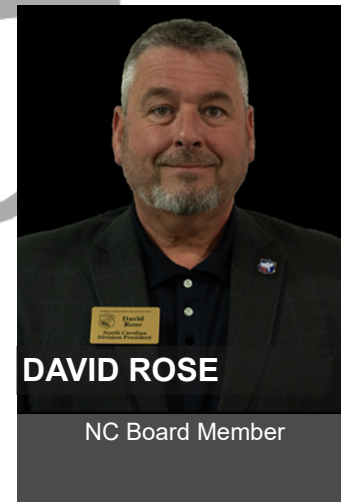
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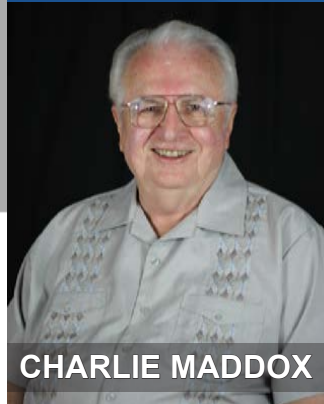
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# CONTENTS

## 2023 BLUE REVIEW

- 7** VAPBA MEMBER TAKES RUNNING HOBBY IN NEW DIRECTION
- 12** PBA MEMBERS RESCUE BABY FROM HOT CAR IN CLOVER, SC
- 14** TNPBA MEMBERS SAVE VICTIMS FROM FLOODED MOBILE HOMES
- 16** POLITICAL CLIMATE IMPACTS HANDLING OF SHOOTING INCIDENT
- 23** MEET JESSICA DALEY, ALPBA MEMBER OF THE YEAR
- 26** HANNAH STEPHENS WINS WVPBA, FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS



### **RENEE DIXON: SSPBA CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

Renee leads, guides, and directs daily operations of the SSPBA and this year will have 37 years of service. Her ability to lead by example and challenge our team to always remain focused on providing the men and women of law enforcement the level of service they deserve is contagious and is a vision shared by our amazing staff. This, one of her many core competencies, was developed and is still being implemented from her first-hand experience working directly for SSPBA CEO Jack Roberts.

"I am sincerely thankful for the opportunity to oversee the daily operations of the SSPBA and the implementation of benefits that impact the lives of our valuable membership of 70,000 law enforcement officers and their families. It is our pleasure to be able to answer the calls for service from those who bravely serve their communities. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (800)-233-3506."





**44**

**30** CULPEPER CHAPTER HELPS VAPBA REACH 10K MEMBER MILESTONE

**35** TIME IS ESSENTIAL AFTER NOTICE OF LAWSUIT IS SERVED



**51**



**54**

**44** MSPBA MEMBERS GO 'OVER THE EDGE' FOR SICK CHILDREN

**51** ARKANSAS OFFICER ELLISON RESCUES BOY FROM ICY POND



**57**



**64**

**54** NCPBA: PASSAGE OF SB 9 ENDS UNFAIR DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES

**57** EDUCATION LEADS ARPBA MEMBER TO POLICING, FBI ACADEMY

**64** AUGUSTA, GA CAR SHOW IS POPULAR FUNDRAISER FOR PBF

**73** OFFICER OF THE YEAR CARED FOR FALLEN OFFICER'S FAMILY



**73**

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# PBA OF GA PRESIDENT JOE NAIA SHOWS BIG SUPPORT OF PBF

**By Cindy Baugher**  
**Communications Project Coordinator**

The Southern States Police Benevolent Association is known as “The Voice of Law Enforcement Officers.”

When one dedicated member was able to give back in honor of that support, he did so in one of the most generous ways possible.

When asked about why they chose to join, members often comment that becoming a member is a “no brainer” due to the outstanding legal coverage the PBA provides.

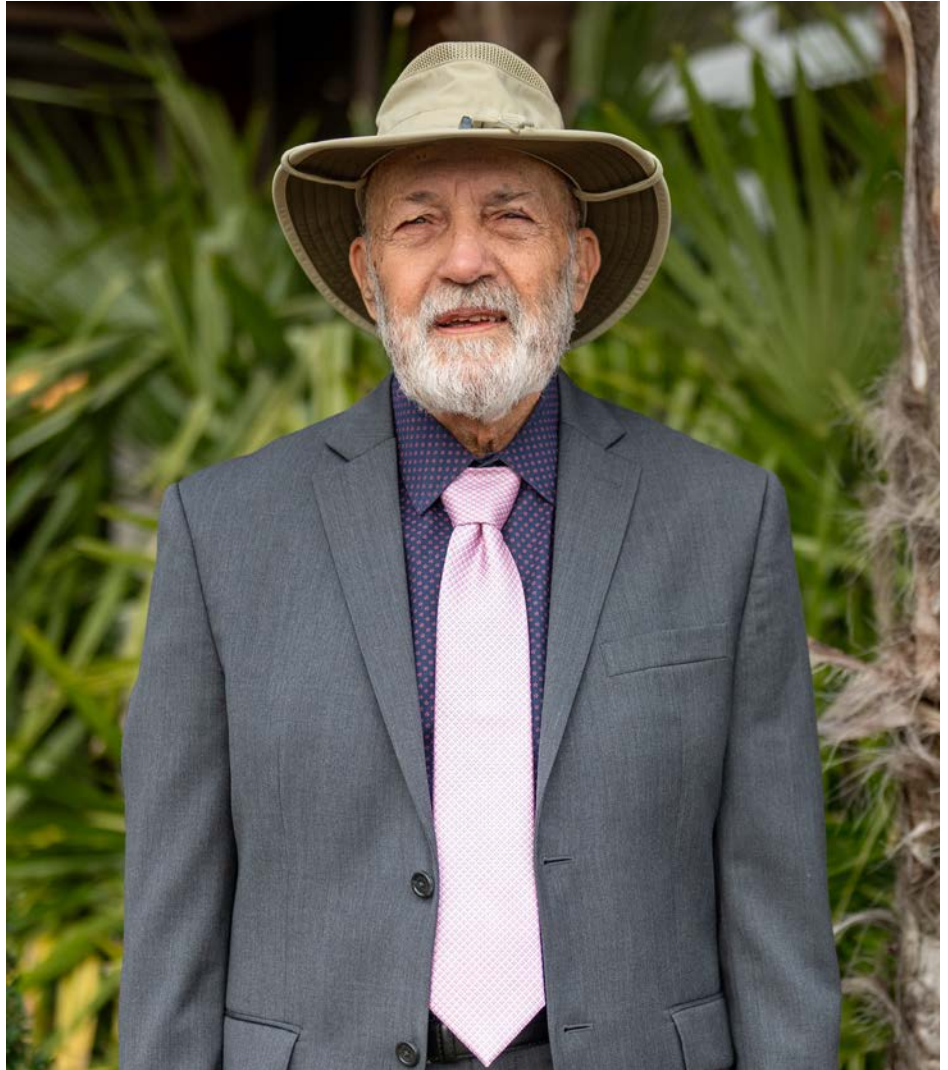
It’s likely that when members tout this coverage, they are thinking of incidents such as officer-involved shootings, or situations where perpetrators accuse officers of mishandling an arrest. But just as importantly, the legal coverage the PBA provides also includes coverage for employment disputes.

Longtime PBA member and SSPBA secretary/treasurer, and PBA of Georgia Division President Joe Naia has firsthand experience with just how invaluable the legal coverage provided by the PBA truly is. The year 2023 marked the 30th anniversary of a significant case from Jesup (Wayne County), Ga.

In 1992, Naia was working with the Wayne County Sheriff’s Office as a deputy, specifically as a chief detective, when David Herrin ran for sheriff of Wayne County. Herrin won over the incumbent, Sheriff Warren, and took office in 1993.

After Herrin was elected, the Wayne County attorney and county administrator told Herrin that the sheriff’s office fell under the Wayne County civil service system and “that employees could only be terminated for cause.”

Herrin had indicated to the board that he “would not retain all of Sheriff Warren’s employees” when he took office.



**PBA of Georgia President Joe Naia**



**Sheriff Herrin (I) and Joe Naia**



Also, while campaigning, he had made promises in the press to change some things in the sheriff's office, including the use of lie detector tests, and drug and alcohol screenings on old and new employees.

Several employees of the Wayne County Sheriff's Office worried about being fired by the new sheriff and contributed to a legal fund so they would be able to enforce their rights under the merit system if they were terminated. They enlisted the help of attorney Jim Chamberlin of Brunswick, Ga., by putting him on retainer.

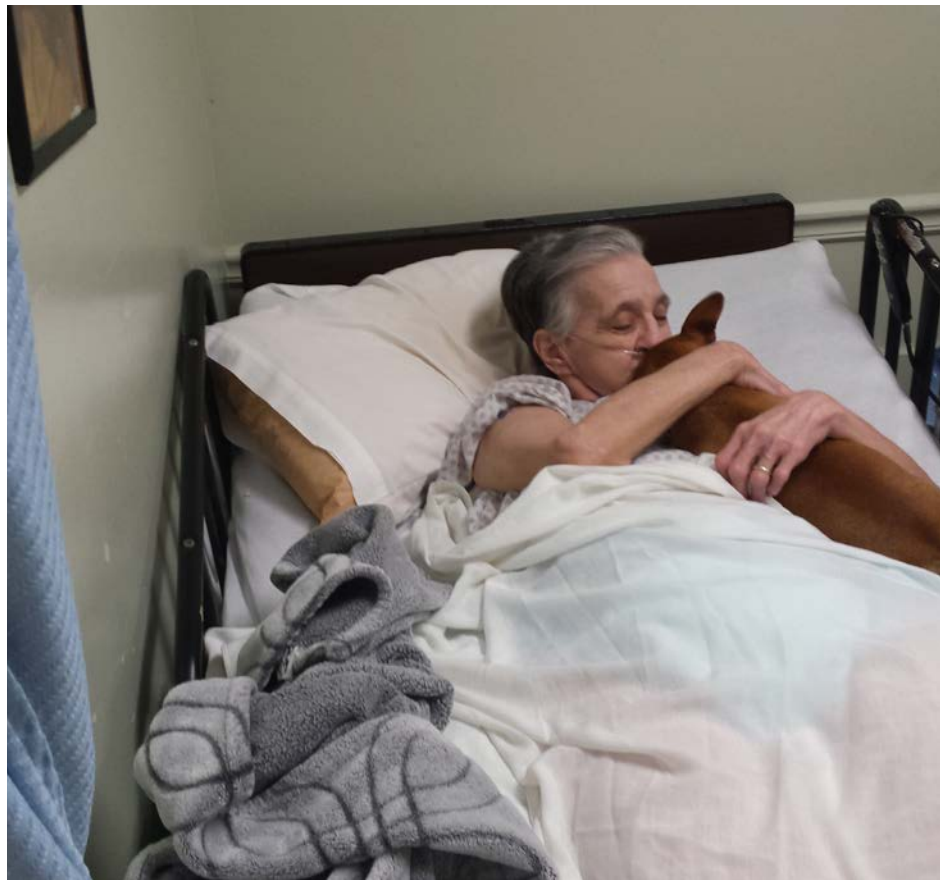
Deputy Joe Naia was one of those employees. Having recently worked in New Jersey as an officer, Naia did not believe that the new sheriff had the legal right to fire the deputies. So, he and another deputy also contacted the Police Benevolent Association for legal help. PBA was able to provide attorneys to help handle the impending case.

Sure enough, when Herrin took office, he fired all 17 deputies who had been affiliated with the previous sheriff. The employees who had retained Chamberlin then became plaintiffs. Soon after, the PBA picked up the case and Chamberlin returned the retainer to Naia and the others, since he was now being funded through the coverage of the PBA.

Though the men and women were given no reason for their termination, Sheriff Warren later remarked that he was "replacing those who he did not believe did a good job under Sheriff Warren."

Naia noted that in the interim, the other fired deputies were given jobs within Wayne County. Naia worked temporarily in the county's road department. He remembered the superintendent of the road department telling him, "Please don't tell anyone how much you make," because the employees at the road department were minimum wage employees.

Other terminated deputies worked assorted county jobs, including some in either the District Attorney's Office or the Solicitor's Office, while Wayne County continued to pay them. Still



**Linda and her dog inside the nursing home**

other plaintiffs found alternative employment elsewhere.

In response to the sheriff's actions, a lawsuit was filed seeking to enforce the officers' rights to civil service protection. The trial court agreed with the sheriff that officers had no protection and could be fired without cause. On appeal, the Georgia Court of Appeals held that officers could only be terminated for cause as they had a property interest in their continued employment.

Therefore, Sheriff Herrin's discharge of the employees was illegal, void and null. See *Wayne County v. Herrin*, 437 S.E.2d 793, 801 (Ga. Ct. App. 1993) for the actual wording of the decision.

Don English has served in the PBA legal department since 1990 and recalls this case and its impact.

"The case of *Wayne County v. Herrin* remains an important opinion to this day," said English. "Decided by the Georgia Court of Appeals in 1993, it has been cited over 30 times since then by

both state and federal courts. Its holding protects deputies if they happen to work for a sheriff who cares enough about his employees to place them under a county's civil service plan.

"No subsequent sheriff coming into office can fire those deputies without cause," English continued. "This case protects them from political patronage firings, also known as the 'spoils system,' which unfortunately, is still alive and well throughout the South. Joe Naia's work in getting this case off the ground, and seeing it through to the end, was critical."

Naia said getting back to work was "awkward" but that he was able to start and enjoy a positive relationship with Herrin.

"When we went back to work, it was awkward, because you never know when they're just going to come up with something to fire you for," said Naia. "That was what was in our head, anyway. As a little time passed, I really hated the feeling of walking on eggshells around the new administration and not too long



**Naia shows support of PBF by making a donation, accepted by Wayne Tubbs, SSPBA senior financial director.**

after we were all back on the job, I was at work one day and there was an article in the local paper announcing Boss' Day and reminding you that you should honor your boss.

"So, I went into Sheriff David Herrin's office and knocked on the door and asked to speak to him," Naia continued. "He said, 'Sure, you want the door open or closed?' And I said, 'Any way you want it, it's okay with me.' It was about 11 a.m. and I asked him what he was doing for lunch that day, and he said, 'Why are you asking?' And I said, 'Well, today is Boss' Day and I honor your position and I honor you, and I'd like to take you out to lunch.'

"He looked at me with silence for about 10 seconds and then he walked towards me, and I thought to myself, 'Is this guy about to hit me or what?' Naia said. "Well, he extended his hand to me, and he said, 'Someone told me you were a real man.' And we were the best of friends from then on, went to lunch together many, many more times. I even got him to join the PBA, too. As a matter of fact, I even had lunch with him and his wife and family on Thanksgiving last year."

Naia described how all of this happened 30 years ago, and said that the PBA "just kept paying the money -- for the legal expenses -- and paying the money." When the organization was still very

young and small, the PBA stood behind Naia as one of the lead plaintiffs.

"All in all, I will always be indebted and grateful to the PBA," said Naia. "I've told (Chief Operating Officer) Renee Dixon that they will always have my support, and I have been proud to be one of the longest serving division presidents and also served as a longtime secretary/treasurer."

Naia is a kind and generous person. He is the sort that when he sees something that needs doing, he does it. Such was the case many years ago when he met a couple, Art and Linda, who were homeless. This weighed heavily on Joe's heart, so he chose to help them out by giving them a place to live at a campground he had.

He stayed close to the couple as they moved up in years and they eventually needed to go into a nursing home. The couple married upon entering the nursing home, and Joe served as the best man, even buying the bride's wedding band for them on his way to the ceremony.

After some time, Art passed away due to ill health, and Linda wanted to get back to Jesup to a nursing home there. Naia stepped in to help finance her transportation back to Jesup. Shortly after, she asked him to help her arrange

for a will to be created.

Naia had an attorney friend who was happy to help Linda with this task. The attorney friend of Naia's told him later, "She left you everything," but Naia did not think much about it at the time. Sadly, Linda passed away a little while afterward.

Some time went by, and a gentleman from Texas called Naia. Even though he typically never answers the phone if he does not recognize the number, something told him to answer. The gentleman told Naia that he was an attorney representing Linda's estate and that Naia was the heir to Linda's will. He told Naia he was soon flying out to see him.

As it turns out, Linda's mom had married a man who was wealthy because of oil field investments and he loved Linda like a daughter. So, her mother eventually inherited his money, which had then been left to Linda and, in turn, to Naia.

Naia was delighted to announce that due to this inheritance, he will give the Police Benevolent Foundation \$100,000. His intent is to show them that "This PBA member will never forget them."

He said he will always be thankful for PBA CEO Jack Roberts' generosity.

"I had two children that I was going to be feeding without a job," he said. "I was blessed for the help of the PBA back then and so now I'm going to pass it on. I want people to know how much PBA did for me at a time when it must have been hard for them to write those checks.

"Jack never said, 'We have to put a cap on this' or anything of the sort," Naia continued. "I've had some good fortune, and I inherited some good money that I never, ever expected."

Naia is quick to sing the praises of the coverages of the PBA, and it is obvious that he backs up his words with his actions, both with his dedicated service over the years, and with his financial donation -- a donation that came on the 30th anniversary of the PBA's legal coverage that solidified his loyalty.



# VAPBA MEMBER TAKES RUNNING HOBBY IN NEW DIRECTION

**By Katharine Jefcoats  
Editor**

Martinsville, Va., police Officer Alfredo Huerta is unstoppable.

His life story is literally that of an immigrant who came to the United States as a child and struggled to reach goals but who persevered as an adult to reach the pinnacle of his adjusted dreams. Along the way, he discovered a talent and passion for running.

Huerta is the youngest of six children raised by a single mother who sought the best for them. Huerta was 8 when the family entered the U.S. as illegal immigrants and his first dream was dashed.

“In high school, I participated in JROTC, which left me with the urge to join the military, seeking a more structured career,” he said. “Unfortunately, I came to the U.S. illegally when I was 8 years old and was never able to gain legal status. This left me unable to join the military and crushed my dreams.”

He was sworn in as a U.S. citizen in Roanoke, Va., in September 2018.

Huerta graduated from Bassett High School in 2009, where he discovered running.

“I began running in high school as I felt comfortable in the sport,” said Huerta. “But it wasn’t until after I graduated that I truly developed a passion for it. Initially, it was running away from my problems literally. I was so frustrated with my situation of being an undocumented immigrant that running just cleared my head.”

Huerta continued running, and his thoughts soon turned to what could be considered a prestigious run in the U.S.

“While running this event (in Virginia), I was being cheered on by fellow runners, volunteers and spectators,” he said. “I felt equal. I had never felt like this, and it was a feeling I have treasured since.



**Huerta and two of his three cats, all rescues**

This feeling has made my running hobby more of a lifestyle.

“I had heard of the Boston Marathon and after two years of running, I decided to set my eyes on qualifying for Boston,” continued Huerta.

He needed a minimum 3-hour, 10-minute marathon time, and in 2012, he said he was determined and actively looking for events that were Boston qualifiers.

“But I kept falling short of this goal,” Huerta said. “Then to make matters worse, the qualifying time dropped to 3 hours, 5 minutes for my age group. But I stayed at it and continued training anyway.”

Between training and running, Huerta found love.

“I have a wife who I celebrated 13 years of marriage with this past August,” he said. “We do not have children, but we have three cats who keep us

entertained throughout the day and night, unfortunately. I have always had a soft spot for animals and took these cats in as two were strays, and one is from a cat rescue center.

In 2014, after a productive training cycle with his wife as she was training for her first marathon, they competed in the Rock and Roll Savannah Marathon in Georgia. He finally hit his Boston Qualifier time, finishing in 3:02:13.

“The rest is history, as I have qualified for the Boston Marathon every year since, and I have not stopped setting goals for myself since,” Huerta said.

He has run 32 marathons since 2010 and countless 5K, 10K and half marathons.

“Currently, my best time is a 2-hour, 52-minute marathon,” he said. “I ran this at the 2020 Atlanta Marathon on March 1 after having spectated the Olympic trials the day before. Some other events I participate in are ultra-marathons and I have participated in six. One was a

24-hour race that I won by covering the most distance, 111 miles, in fall 2022.”

Huerta also participates in triathlons -- swim, bike and running.

“I have done a few sprints, international and Olympic distance (triathlons),” he said. “But some of the longer distance ones are much tougher as they require more training. The Half Iron distance triathlon is composed of a 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike ride, and finishes off with a 13.1-mile run. I have completed six of those.

“Then the Full Iron distance triathlon would be 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride, and finished with a 26.2-mile marathon. I have completed three of these events,” Huerta continued.

Huerta entered college and earned his associate degree from Patrick Henry Community College in 2015 and is finishing up his bachelor’s degree at Averett University in criminal justice and aerospace management.

He stumbled into law enforcement by taking a look at the profession and what officers bring to their communities.

“During all this time, I used running as an escape from my frustration and was able to meet a lot of great people who I now hold dear in my life,” said Huerta. “Some of those people were police officers who treated me like a friend. I then began to see police officers in a different light and thought about how good they were to me. This planted a seed in my head and left me thinking that this could have been a possibility.”

He opted to study criminal justice in college and this sparked a major interest in the field, he said. Although he was able to settle on a career path, the next steps were not smooth.

“I applied but failed the entry exam my first time in 2019 as I ran out of time and guessed on the remaining questions,” said Huerta. “I felt defeated as I scored just under the required 70 score. Later, the patrol captain contacted me and told me to come test again when they had more openings. I was hesitant because I



**Born to run**



**Huerta and his wife of 13 years**

felt that I was unqualified.

“But I tried again and passed the test and all other requirements in 2020,” he continued. “I was excited, but I never told anyone because I was afraid that I would fail out of the academy.”

Huerta was a non-traditional student because of his age but his years of running gave him an advantage over the younger recruits.

“Going through the academy, I was the second oldest recruit, but the most fit,” he said. “I was elected as the class president and helped lead our PT sessions as I was fitter than most recruits and instructors. I didn’t realize how

much running would help me in being prepared for this new career.”

Huerta said he ran anywhere from three to six miles before daily PT workouts in the mornings and often did another Cross Fit workout in the evenings.

“This was mainly because I was maintaining my fitness as I still had marathon races that I was training for,” he said. “During my time in the academy, I got to know all the recruits and saw how driven they were about becoming police officers. Having new instructors every day allowed me to meet law enforcement officers from all of my surrounding areas. I was able to observe and learn from all of these officers who were slowly becoming



my colleagues.”

Huerta graduated from the Piedmont Regional Criminal Justice Training Academy April 16, 2021, and celebrated by running the Blue Ridge Marathon the next day, placing third overall with a time of 3 hours, 4 minutes.

“I then transitioned to my FTO period and triathlon training” he said. “I was excited to learn, apply my knowledge and to train physically on my off days. My last day on FTO was June 4, and I celebrated with a Half Iron distance triathlon on June 5, 2021. This was Ironman 70.3 Virginia’s Blue Ridge, and after completing it, I received an email confirming I had qualified for the Ironman 70.3 World Championship.”

The Martinsville Police Department sponsored Huerta’s basic mandate academy training in 2020. He worked patrol for two years when the opportunity presented itself to put in for an SRO position, where he has been since March 2023.

“I have truly enjoyed my time mentoring students and mending police relationships with them,” he said.

During his time in the academy, Huerta won the Physical Fitness Award, taking second place in the Emergency Vehicle Operations Course and the President’s Award. As a police officer, he was presented with the Crime Stoppers Award for 2022.

He also joined VAPBA, primarily because of the benefits.

“I was told about the benefits about PBA from other officers, especially with policing in these difficult times,” said Huerta. “Having someone in your corner that is going to help you in time of need really allows me to have a little peace of mind.

“Doing what is right will always be my No. 1 priority, and with department policies constantly changing and adapting to today’s world, this can have you second-guessing yourself in crucial times when your life is in danger,” he continued. “I can at least know that as

long as I do what is right, I will always have the help I need through PBA.”

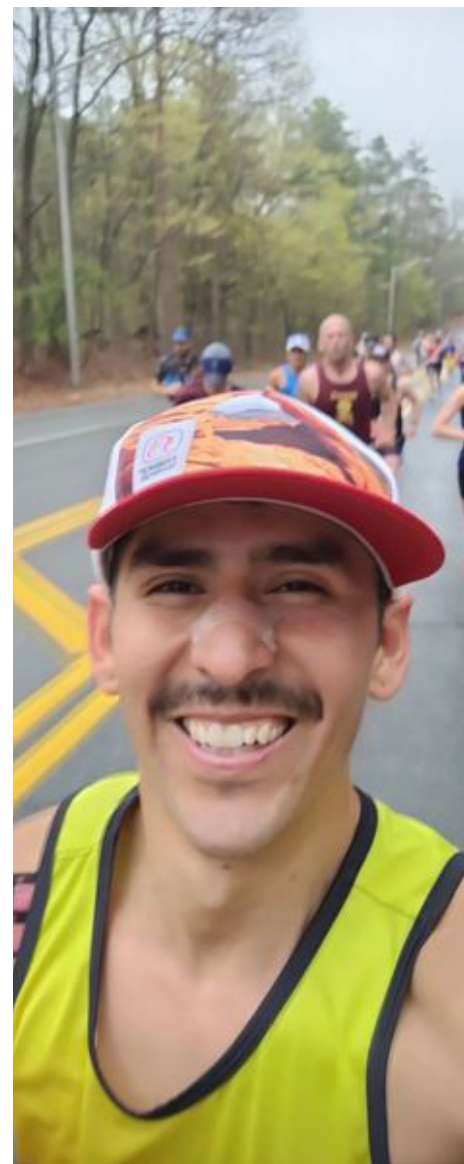
Being the youngest of six taught Huerta to always look at the bright side of life, and that if he wants something, he is going to have to work for it.

“Anything can be attainable, but that doesn’t mean it’s going to bring you joy,” he said. “Focusing on the small things in life has helped me to be happier and enjoy my journey more than I ever thought I could.”

His fluency in Spanish comes in handy while he is policing.

“One of the things that I have found to be most rewarding is when I get a phone call from other officers needing help with translating,” said Huerta. “I am able to help fellow officers with their case while I assist my community to better serve them fully.”

“My goal is to continue treating people the way I wish I was treated when I encountered LEO, and to continue building great relationships with people, regardless of the outcome of my encounter,” he continued. “Just because I have to enforce the laws doesn’t mean I have to cast judgment on people. I can still perform my job to the fullest all while still providing people with respect.”



**Huerta competes in Boston**



**Huerta with his Boston Marathon medal**

# SSPBA SETS 11TH CIRCUIT PRECEDENT ON MILITARY LEAVE BENEFITS

**By Joni Fletcher Cawthon**  
**SSPBA Director of Legal Services**

In June 2023, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed a lower court ruling which held that the city of Hoover, Ala., had violated the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, which requires employers to give employees on military leave the same rights and benefits given to similarly situated employees on non-military leave.

The four named plaintiffs were Hoover police officers and PBA members who were members of the Alabama National Guard or the U.S. Army Reserve. PBA attorney Flynn Mazingo of Montgomery handled the case.

USERRA protects the employment rights of “working servicemembers” while the servicemembers are away from their civilian jobs on military leave. The statute provides that a person who is a member of a uniformed service “shall not be denied...any benefit of employment by an employer on the basis of that membership...performance of service...or obligation.”

Kenneth Fountain contacted PBA in early 2019 regarding his belief that he should have accrued certain employment benefits while he was deployed on active duty in the War on Terror.

Hoover provides two forms of leave for its employees: paid administrative leave — in which the employee receives all employment benefits, such as accrued sick leave, holiday pay and vacation time — and unpaid leave in which the employee receives no benefits.

It was Hoover’s policy to treat employees on active military duty as on unpaid leave.

PBA assigned Mazingo to research the issue. Mazingo concluded that there was legal precedent in favor of Fountain’s contention that he should have accrued all employment benefits while he



**PBA attorney Flynn Mazingo**

was deployed on active duty with the military.

PBA authorized Mazingo to proceed with resolving the issue.

Mazingo sent a demand letter to the City of Hoover in which he maintained that Officer Fountain and other officers employed by Hoover should have continued to accrue benefits while on active duty that Hoover provided employees on paid administrative leave.

Mazingo articulated that this disparate treatment deprived Fountain and the others of their employment rights protected by USERRA. When Mazingo did not receive a response from Hoover, PBA authorized him to proceed by filing a complaint on behalf of the officers in federal court in Birmingham.

The case was filed in October 2019 on behalf of PBA members Kenneth Fountain, Thaddaeus Myrick, Nicholas Braden and Jessee Popee.

After a detailed discovery process, both sides filed motions for summary judgment in late 2020. Following a lengthy wait, good news was received in

March 2022 when the U.S. District Court granted the officers’ motion for summary judgment and denied Hoover’s motion.

The court held that Hoover had violated USERRA and that Hoover must provide the officers with the most favorable treatment provided to other Hoover employees who were on administrative leave.

Essentially, the court held that military leave should be treated the same as paid administrative leave. The court determined that the officers’ military leave was comparable to Hoover’s administrative leave in that under both forms of leave the officers had little control over the timing and duration of their leave and that USERRA and Hoover’s administrative leave served the same purpose — to prevent unnecessary hardship on the employee while on leave.

The court concluded, however, that military leave was not totally similar in duration to paid administrative leave, but there were enough similarities that the officers should prevail.

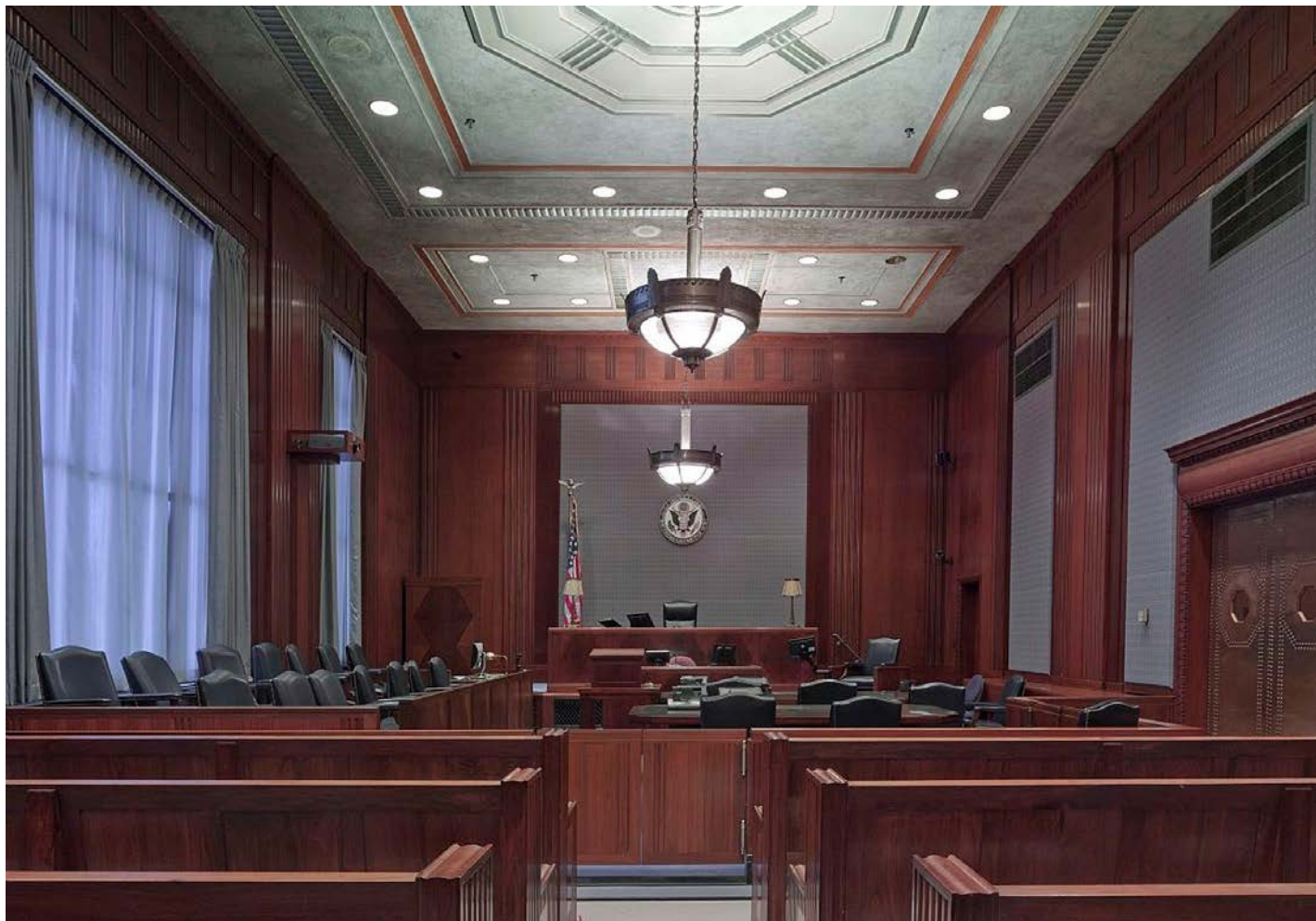
The court held the following: “Considered together, the regulatory factors indicate that the City’s administrative leave and its military leave are comparable in purpose and control and minimally comparable in duration, with average military leave for training lasting three times longer than an average administrative leave.

Consequently, when an officer in the Hoover Police Department ‘performs service in the uniformed services,’ the City must provide to the officer the ‘most favorable treatment accorded to’ Hoover employees who use administrative leave.”

As a result of the court’s order, the named plaintiffs were entitled to recover all leave benefits they would have accrued from Hoover but were denied because of their military service, as well as attorney fees and costs.

The City appealed the decision, and





recovery for the plaintiffs was put on hold.

The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals held oral argument on the case in May 2023. The attorney for Hoover argued that the lower court was wrong in equating Hoover's paid administrative leave, which is provided ordinarily for absences lasting short durations, with military leave that typically lasts several months or longer.

Mozingo argued in favor of giving USERRA a broad application, as required by the U.S. Supreme Court's rulings, and he pointed out that USERRA's objective is to place the servicemember in the same employment position he or she would have been in had he or she not been called up for active service.

Mozingo also argued that Hoover had placed employees who were being investigated on paid administrative leave, and the investigative leave was the same

duration as the officers' military leave. Mozingo stated that if the Hoover police officers could not get relief on the facts in this case, then "USERRA is meaningless."

On June 8, 2023, the Eleventh Circuit affirmed the district court's judgment in favor of the PBA members and held that Hoover violated USERRA by not providing the officers with the same employment benefits while they were on military leave that it afforded employees on paid administrative leave.

While affirming the lower court's decision, the Eleventh Circuit disagreed with the lower court and held that that military leave and Hoover's paid administrative leave were comparable in duration.

Each member plaintiff was awarded damages for the leave they had been denied, plus post-judgment interest. In addition, attorney fees were awarded and reimbursed to SSPBA.

Mozingo thanked the PBA for the support it provided the officers during their lawsuit, which enabled the officers to achieve a first of its kind ruling involving USERRA.

According to Mozingo, the officers' lawsuit was the first case in the 30-plus year history of USERRA where the officers had obtained a favorable ruling from the federal district court that military leave was comparable to another type of leave offered by the employer, and the favorable ruling was affirmed on appeal.

The ruling for the Hoover officers was especially important because many police departments hire employees who are members of the Guard or Reserves, and the ruling will help ensure such employees receive the same benefits while on active military duty that their fellow employees receive while on other forms of leave.

# PBA MEMBERS RESCUE BABY FROM HOT CAR IN CLOVER, S.C.

**By Cindy Baugher**  
**Communications Project Coordinator**

Three officers of the Clover Police Department in South Carolina responded to a call for help on May 9, 2023, and ended up rescuing a baby who was trapped in a hot car.

PBA members Detective Casey Davidson and Officer Adrian Luminare, and a fellow officer were summoned to the residence where a child had been accidentally locked in a car.

"I attempted multiple times to enter the vehicle with my lockout kit," said Davidson. "Due to being unsuccessful in quickly gaining entry, and with the heat reaching high temperatures both inside and outside of the vehicle, it was apparent that a window would need to be broken to gain entry."

Since the child was located on the driver's side of the vehicle in the back, the officers decided to break the front passenger window to avoid injury to the child. Luminare used his window breaker, and the front window was removed from the vehicle. The third officer quickly entered the vehicle and was able to unlock it so that the mother could retrieve her child.

Helping citizens in frightening circumstances like this is all in a day's work for Davidson and Luminare in the town of Clover, S.C. Davidson calls Clover "that small town where everybody knows everybody." He was born and raised there and feels that the town has helped him to this day, and he appreciates being able to serve where he grew up. He has worked in law enforcement for four years and is assigned to the Criminal Investigations Division. In his time prior, he was a patrol officer and worked his way up to patrol sergeant.

Davidson is the father of four children, age 2 to 13, and describes how busy he is with their hobbies and activities. Cheerleading, football, rugby and other sports keep the family on the go. He



**Officer Adrian Luminare and Detective Casey Davidson**

also enjoys going to the gym in his spare time "to enjoy the benefits both on and off the job that are provided from staying active."

Very much the family man, Davidson calls his wife, Mikaela, the greatest influence in his law enforcement career. He calls her the person that he can talk to when he has a rough day at work, and she assures him that everything will be all right.

"Without my wife, I wouldn't be the person I am today," he said.

Helping those in need is Davidson's favorite part about being in law enforcement.

"I've learned during my time in law enforcement that it's important to truly listen to the individuals you are interacting with so that you can understand what they are going through," said Davidson. "Although we can't solve everyone's problems, we can always be a shoulder to lean on or a listening ear."

Luminare said his favorite part about being a police officer is having the ability to help people and hold people accountable. Unlike Davidson, Luminare was born in Bucharest, Romania, and came to the United States Feb. 14, 1991.

He said growing up in Romania was hard most of the time due to the corrupt

government and lack of opportunities. Luminare is one of five sons born to his father, a tailor, and his stay-at-home mom. His family settled in Sacramento, Calif., after coming to the U.S. He graduated from Elk Grove High School and, after a brief stint in college, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps, serving from September 2008 until 2018. He was deployed to Afghanistan in 2009 and again in 2012. He managed to pick up every rank meritoriously up to sergeant in three years' time.

Luminare has worked in law enforcement since July 2021, serving the residents of Clover in his role with the police department there. When giving advice to anyone entering the law enforcement profession, he said, "Make sure you're ready to be selfless, but also ready to be tough and have thick skin. Also, have your finances in order because it will be tough to make a good living as a cop."

Luminare has already been recognized with a DUI award as well as a lifesaving award for baby rescue. He said he joined PBA because, "It's worth it. (There are) amazing benefits and good services."

His wife, Susan, whom he calls the greatest influence on his career, is a doctor. He said they both "just want to be decent citizens and help out our community." Thankfully, Luminare and Davidson were right where they needed to be to help.



In 2023, 135 law enforcement officers made the ultimate sacrifice in service to communities throughout the United States. The SSPBA and PBF want to pay respects to the five members who were part of this number. We were proud to have you as members, and we were deeply saddened to lose you. May God continue to comfort those that you left behind. May He bring them peace and strength to continue on their journeys.



**Detective Jacob Arthur Beu**  
Rutherford County Sheriff's Office - TN  
EOW - May 7, 2023



**Deputy Sheriff Tyee Michael Browne**  
Crisp County Sheriff's Office - GA  
EOW - July 5, 2023



**Deputy Sheriff Tucker Blakely**  
Knox County Sheriff's Office - TN  
EOW - October 2, 2023



**Governmental Affairs Liaison**  
**Michael Elaine Griffin**  
Department of Public Safety - MS  
EOW - September 4, 2023



**Correctional Officer I**  
**Robert Danforth Clark**  
Department of Corrections - GA  
EOW - October 1, 2023

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

# TNPBA MEMBERS SAVE VICTIMS FROM FLOODED MOBILE HOMES

**By Cindy Baugher**  
**Communications Project Coordinator**

Lifesaving efforts amid a catastrophic flood recently earned TNPBA member Jordan Rickman a Heroism Award.

In the wee hours of the morning on Aug. 4, 2023, heavy rainfall drenched Northwest Tennessee. By the time daylight broke, many roads in the area had started to flood. At 6:30 a.m., the Union City Police Department received a call informing them that a mobile home park was flooding.

With rain still pouring down, officers responded quickly and found the property inaccessible by vehicle, putting over 100 homes in peril. It was then that Sgt. Brandon Adams called for off-duty officers to respond.

In the meantime, Adams connected with a boat dealership, Interstate 69 Marine and Motorsports, to ask if they could send boats to assist in the rescue efforts.

The owners of the dealership quickly arrived with boats and brought along other volunteers as the group began the rescues. By the time it was all over, officers had helped about 90 people escape the flooding.

At the same time the boat rescues were being made, other officers were just east of the park, where First Street through Fourth Street were also under water. The flood waters were swiftly flowing into homes in that area.

Fortunately, there was a volunteer on site who had a small boat, so officers waded in knee-deep to chest-deep water to go into homes and safely escort residents out of the water. More than 30 people, many of whom were handicapped and/or elderly, were rescued by this group of officers.

Once the emergency had eased up, it was discovered that Rickman had maneuvered through chin-deep water to rescue a family of four, only one of whom was able to swim.



**Rickman with Chief Yates**



**Rescuing residents from a flooded mobile home park**

Rickman swam to the house where the four were located and put one small child on his shoulders. The father then held another child, with the mother holding onto Rickman and the father in turn holding on to her.

Thankfully, Rickman was able to talk

them through the rescue process and keep all four of the family members calm while they safely escaped.

When police Chief William Yates learned the details of this recovery, he wanted to give special recognition to Rickman.



“Many officers went above and beyond that day, but Officer Rickman deserved special recognition,” said Yates, in recognizing him with the Heroism Award.

Departments that assisted in the rescues were Union City Police, Obion County Sheriff's Department, Tennessee Highway Patrol, Obion County Rescue Squad, Union City Fire Department and Troy Police Department.

**(Photos are courtesy of Chris Menees, Union City Messenger, and Charles Choate, KYTN radio.)**



**Several agencies coordinated the rescue of dozens of flood victims**



**Brady Moore with kids**



**Kayla Key and Cpl. Scott Duncan**



**Patrolman Jordan Rickman**



**Kayla Key**



**Sgt. Josh Rogers**



# POLITICAL CLIMATE IMPACTS HANDLING OF SHOOTING INCIDENT

**By Joni Fletcher Cawthon and  
PBA attorney Keith Barber**

On Aug. 7, 2020, Georgia Trooper Jacob Thompson went out to dinner with his wife and 3-year-old son before beginning his late shift. He had met up with his supervisor earlier at their southeast Georgia State Patrol post, and the two had discussed focusing on DUI enforcement. Trooper Thompson then began his shift, which started out as a quiet night with only a few traffic stops. Little did he know, in just a short time his life would be changed forever.

Around dusk, as Trooper Thompson was patrolling a main highway running through rural Screven County, he observed a vehicle with a taillight out which was being driven very slowly — a well-known cue of impairment. Thompson got behind the vehicle, radioed in a stop and turned on his lights. Rather than pulling over, the vehicle sped up. Thompson activated his siren, but the vehicle did not stop, despite passing multiple locations that would have been safe stopping options. Thompson's suspicions that the driver was under the influence grew. The driver then turned onto a dirt road and accelerated. Thompson activated the spotlight on his patrol unit and could see the driver casually light a cigarette. The driver then continued to drive down the dirt road at a high rate of speed.

As an experienced trooper of seven years, and with nine years with the Georgia Department of Public Safety, Thompson knew that the behavior of this driver was alarming. He also knew that the longer a pursuit goes, the more dangerous it becomes. When the driver started getting closer to a main intersection with a good bit of traffic, Thompson decided to perform a pit maneuver on the vehicle. When he pitted the vehicle, it ended up in a ditch. However, the driver was still not finished. Thompson exited his patrol vehicle and moved toward the back of his vehicle. He could hear the driver's vehicle revving loudly, and the driver was moving his steering wheel back and forth. Thompson realized that the driver



**Attorney Keith Barber and former Georgia Trooper Jacob Thompson on the dirt road at the entrance of Simmons Branch Road, where the driver pulled onto and then continued past Simmons Branch Baptist Church, eluding Thompson.**

was trying to run over him with his vehicle.

Seeing what the offender was trying to do put Thompson in fear for his life and well-being. Believing he was in grave danger, Thompson started giving commands to the driver and then discharged his firearm. He fired only one shot.

Thompson wasn't sure where, or even if, he had struck the driver, but the engine stopped revving and the driver's hands quit moving. Thompson continued to give commands as he approached the vehicle. When he got close enough, he saw that the driver had been struck in the head. At that time, he started rendering aid to the driver. Thompson then checked the driver's pulse, which was fading away.

During the pursuit, Thompson had noticed that the GPS mapping in his car had frozen, indicating that there was

little cell signal in the area. After the incident, he knew he needed immediate assistance, but he had to go up to the closest intersection to try to determine exactly where he was. Initially, there was confusion as various responders tried to get to him because his GPS location visible at the post indicated that he was somewhere he wasn't, again due to poor cell service. Thompson realized that he was on his own, at least for a while — there was only one deputy working that night, and he was out on a call on the other side of the county. Also, Thompson's supervisor had gone home early that night.

Thompson contacted attorney Duff Ayers, whom he knew personally. Ayers asked Thompson if he was a PBA member, and Thompson confirmed that he was. Ayers told Thompson that he needed attorney Keith Barber representing him.

When Keith Barber received the call from Duff Ayers, Barber was on a golf trip in



South Carolina. He also received a call from PBA on-call staff and confirmed that he was headed to help Trooper Thompson. As Barber tells the story now, “It took a while, but I got there. I met with attorney Duff Ayers and Trooper Thompson at the sheriff’s department. After Trooper Thompson, attorney Ayers and I had spoken about the matter at length, we declined to give a statement to GBI at the time.”

Summer 2020 was a time of some of the greatest turmoil for law enforcement that this country has ever seen. Anti-law enforcement sentiment was front and center in the news every day. Such an environment helps to explain some of the unusual developments which took place regarding this incident.

Seven days after Thompson’s incident, the GBI contacted Keith Barber and advised that they had warrants for Jacob Thompson on charges of felony murder and aggravated assault. “I was stunned,” Barber said. “I had never seen an officer arrested before the grand jury met, but things were going crazy in the country at that time.” The GBI agent insisted that Barber turn Thompson in at the jail by 5 p.m. that day. Barber assured him that he would turn him in as expected. Barber said, “Handling the events of that afternoon were some of the hardest things I have ever had to do in my life.” He called the Thompson family together and told them about the warrants and that Thompson was going to have to turn himself in that afternoon. “I made a promise to Thompson when I left with him to go to the jail that I would bring him back home when he was cleared of these charges,” Barber said.

Also, on that same day, the Georgia State Patrol delivered a termination letter signed by the commander of the state patrol to Thompson’s home.

When Barber took Thompson to the Screven County Jail, neither had any idea that Thompson would be there for 108 days. A bond hearing was held on Aug. 24, and Thompson’s bond was denied. Over the next three months, two more bond hearings were held, with bond being denied each time. The case was being thoroughly investigated by

Thompson’s defense team. This team consisted of Duff Ayers, a local attorney; Sam Dennis in Valdosta, a noted trial attorney; attorney Robert Persse, who primarily handled research and was affectionately known as the brains of the operation and PBA attorney Grady Dukes. Later in the case, two notable federal practice attorneys, David Stewart and Don Samuels, joined the team to handle the federal issues in the case.

The denial of the bonds actually turned out to be a positive in the defense of the case because at each hearing, witnesses were cross-examined extensively on new evidence that was being found. This new evidence contradicted many of the assertions being made by the state in the case. Some of the key reasons for the denial of the bond(s) were that the state contended that the driver’s vehicle was inoperative after he went into the ditch and that Trooper Thompson had fired his weapon only one second after he took his foot off of his brake pedal. These two facts were shown to be false, which helped the case considerably.

“I have been practicing law for over 30 years,” Barber said. “I knew early on that this was one of the most serious cases I had ever been involved in, given the fact that a death was involved and also given the tenor of the times, which weighed heavily on everyone on the defense team and on Thompson’s family. The state was literally engaged in an effort to put this young man in prison for doing his job protecting the citizens of Georgia.”

Barber recognized that he not only needed the assistance of other attorneys on the case but that expert witnesses were going to come into play as well. He enlisted the help of four specialized experts. One was a retired state trooper from South Carolina who was an expert in anything to do with vehicle operations; another was a retired GBI agent who led the team in investigation matters; another was a first-class use-of-force expert with prior law enforcement experience from Texas and another was a cop from Washington state turned world-renowned expert in computers and radio systems.

The political climate at the time gave

rise to concerns about civil disturbances taking place in connection with the case. In addition, public sentiment regarding the case was sharply divided. An individual started a GoFundMe page for Jacob Thompson which accumulated \$60,000 in donations in only five hours. A complaint was submitted to GoFundMe, and the account was swiftly shut down, and the donations were refunded.

Even with the frustration of bond repeatedly being denied, there was also great value in the associated court proceedings because at every proceeding, all of the witnesses were brought in, and the defense team worked the case. “In hindsight,” Barber said, “those bond hearings helped us with our preparation because we learned a great deal about the prosecution’s plans and assertions for the case.”

After three bond hearings, the judge finally signed a bond order in the amount of \$100,000 on Nov. 30.. This bond was quickly made, and Thompson was released.

Just before Christmas, Thompson received notice of a proposed indictment and was notified that grand jury presentment of the case would be on Monday, Jan. 11, 2021. Under Georgia law, Thompson — as a law enforcement officer — was entitled to appear before the grand jury and to testify. Preparation by Thompson, Barber and the defense team began in earnest. Then, at 4:59 p.m. on the Friday before the grand jury was to meet, District Attorney Daphne Totten sent an email notice to Barber that indicated that Thompson’s case would not be presented on Jan.11.

This incident became known as and referred to as “the 4:59 matter” among insiders from then on.

The defense team — concerned that the DA may not have been comfortable with the grand jury that was sitting at that time — filed an emergency motion on Sunday, Jan. 10, to prevent the state from “grand jury shopping.” The judge denied the motion but strongly encouraged the state to proceed with presentation of the case as soon as possible. The defense team appealed that issue all the way to the

Georgia Supreme Court.

In another unusual development as the case sat on hold, defense attorneys Barber and Ayers were served with subpoenas commanding them to appear and to provide information regarding all individuals and entities who had made any monetary contribution to Thompson during the legal proceedings, including the payment of legal fees. PBA and the defense team hired attorney Matt Hube to handle the motion to quash the subpoenas. The judge summarily granted the motion.

The grand jury presentment of Thompson's case was reset for June 28, 2021, and Thompson and the defense team spent countless hours in preparation for that date. Great attention was paid to the condition of the driver's vehicle.

Having Thompson being able to testify as to tell the truth regarding what happened that fateful night was invaluable to his defense.

After a long day of grand jury testimony, Thompson was called in. Barber was present as Thompson explained to the jurors his concerns about the actions of the driver and the length of the pursuit. He was also able to explain his state of mind during the pit maneuver and when he stepped outside of the vehicle.

He was able to help the jurors understand why he feared for his life and well-being and why he made the decision to shoot.

Thompson was also able to ask the jurors if certain facts had been explained to them during the day's testimony. When the jurors stated that those facts had not been explained, Thompson was able to fill them in. Thompson testified for over an hour.

After Thompson's testimony, the state brought some of their witnesses back in, apparently, in an effort to bolster their case. "It was a very stressful time," Thompson said. "It was especially stressful when they were bringing witnesses back in. We were just left to wonder what was going on."

The grand jurors were then dismissed, and some were in their cars, when deputies rushed out and hailed them back in and told them to return to the grand jury room. Grand jurors were then asked to consider lesser included offenses to the aggravated assault and murder charge. They decided they were not going to do this and stuck with their original decision to no-bill or dismiss the indictment.

According to Barber and Thompson, the scene was chaotic as jurors were leaving, coming back and then leaving again. Meanwhile, no one had told Thompson and his family what was going on. The DA and her staff packed up and left while Thompson and his team were sitting and waiting.

"We went to the clerk to ask what had happened," Barber said. "That's when we found that the case had been no-billed." The grand jury had exonerated Thompson on all charges.

Barber joined Thompson and his family that night in celebrating the day's outcome. "We were all just trying to figure it out," Thompson said. "The whole day had been so unorthodox."

Keith Barber was also grateful that he could fulfill a promise he had made to Thompson many months before. He was able to personally drive Thompson back to his home after the family celebration.

While the grand jury had made its determination, there still were rumblings that the case would be presented again. In the meantime, the state settled a lawsuit with the driver's family in 2022 for \$4.8 million. Neither Barber nor any of the team were ever contacted by the state of Georgia before these funds were paid out. In addition, federal investigators looked into the case. Finally, in 2023, Thompson signed an agreement with the federal government stating that no charges would be pursued and that Thompson would surrender his law enforcement certification.

When asked if it would bother him to have to give up his ability to ever be a law enforcement officer again in exchange for the agreement he responded "Why

would I want to go back?" The very exposure that law enforcement officers have during this day and time is difficult for people to fathom or appreciate. Trooper Jake Thompson's life had been tossed about and turned upside down by the very system that he supported — just because he did his job. That's certainly not something any person wants to experience more than once.

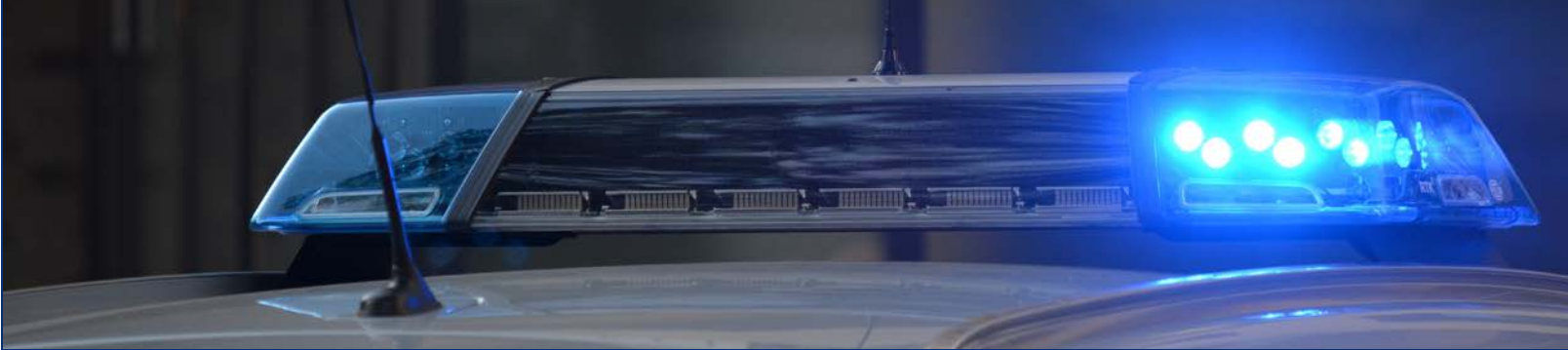
Following that turn of events, DA Totten wrote a letter clarifying that she would no longer be pursuing charges against Thompson.

"There has been no new evidence developed in this case to date, and I am not aware of any additional evidence that exists that would materially alter what was presented to the Grand Jury in Screven County on June 29, 2021," Totten said in her letter. "Based on this, it would be my intention to close our file and not present this case to another Grand Jury."

When asked to share some of his thoughts regarding his and his family's long ordeal, Jacob Thompson said the following:

"With increased scrutiny on law enforcement, it's a matter of time before the modern-day lawman finds himself in a position of needing PBA. I'm an example of how you can find yourself in a situation that requires two main things: faith in God and the PBA. When an officer's agency hangs him out to dry, your faith will be the road signs that lead you down the road in the right direction, and the PBA will be the vehicle that gets you to the end of that road. I pray for the men and women who don the uniform with intentions of service but find themselves a victim of politics. I'm free of unjust incarceration today because of my faith in Jesus Christ and the unwavering support that the PBA has given me during this entire ordeal. The attorneys, all of the experts and many more supporting people have done nothing less than an outstanding job on my case. All of these many people were provided to me by the PBA without a moment's hesitation. My family and I will never forget them and what the PBA and each and every one of them have done for us."





## BEHIND THE BADGE SEMINAR: PTSD AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### The Facts:

- More officers die each year by their own hand as opposed to being killed by an assailant.
- Relationship issues are the No. 1 reason for officer suicide.
- Each day an officer makes the choice to take his/her own life.
- The effects of law enforcement suicides are long lasting to the officer's family and the department.
- So far in 2024, there is a 224% greater chance of suicide than a line of duty death by gunfire.
- Most officers have little or no training on combatting our number one killer: ourselves!

## OUR NEXT SEMINAR LOCATIONS...

### NORTH CAROLINA

The PBF and NCPBA have partnered with the NCPBA Mountain Chapter, LEAPS Training LLC, Southwestern Community College and the NC Dare Officers Association to bring this seminar to Cherokee, N.C.

**Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort**  
777 Casino Drive  
Cherokee, NC 28719

**Monday, Jun. 10, 2024**  
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Register Today!



### GEORGIA

The PBF and PBA of GA have partnered with the PBA of GA Augusta's River Region Chapter and LEAPS Training LLC to bring this seminar to Columbus Convention Center in Augusta, GA.

**Savannah Rapids Pavilion**  
3300 Evans-to-Locks Road  
Martinez, GA 30907

**Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2024**  
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Register Today!



### WEST VIRGINIA

The PBF and West Virginia PBA have partnered with LEAPS Training LLC and Marshall University to bring this seminar to Huntington, W.V.

**Marshall University**  
1608 5th Ave.  
Huntington, WV 25755

**Monday, Dec. 16, 2024**  
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Register Today!



Visit [www.PBFI.org](http://www.PBFI.org) to learn more

# FROM COMBAT VET TO LEO, PBAGA LEADER EXCELS AT SERVICE

**By Katharine Jefcoats  
Editor**

Savannah police Sgt. Mike Rowan has lived his life in service to others.

Rowan, 39, faced combat twice in Iraq as a combat engineer with the Georgia Army National Guard. He was awarded a Purple Heart for his efforts, in addition to the Combat Action Badge and three Army commendations.

He was honorably discharged in 2009 and got out as an E-5 sergeant.

However, he really wanted to be a military pilot, which indirectly led him to law enforcement.

“I never would have imagined that I would be a police officer or criminal investigator,” he said. “I originally wanted to be a pilot. In the military, you need to be an officer to fly, so I needed a bachelor’s degree. I was told the two easiest degrees were criminal justice and physical education. I chose criminal justice and got really interested in the subject.”



**Savannah police Sgt. Mike Rowan**

Rowan, who was born in Florida and spent most of his childhood in South Carolina, graduated from Ware County High School in Waycross, Ga. He earned

his bachelor’s degree at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro.

Rowan was able to intern with Statesboro



## More than 130 police suicides occurred in 2023.

We help protect those behind the badge.

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\*BlueHelp.org





**Rowan (second from right) with PBAGA staff representative Patrick Cullinan (third from left) and other board members after local city political screenings.**

Police Department and Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

“I had a lot of fun,” he said. “I liked the combination of adrenaline rush and helping people.”

When he began looking for an agency to join, Rowan found the Savannah Police Department was hiring. He did not hesitate to apply, drawn to the beauty and charm of the state’s oldest city, nicknamed the Hostess City of the South.

“It worked out because I can’t imagine being anywhere else,” he said. “I also love the camaraderie that you get within the police department. It reminds me of the military where you are in the trenches, and you have each other’s backs.”

Rowan started in patrol before being assigned to Crime Suppression Unit and then property crimes.

“I then went to the Aggravated Assault/Homicide Unit,” he said. “At the end of 2016, I was selected and went to the FBI’s Violent Crimes Task Force where I

worked with the FBI for five years. I was promoted to sergeant in 2021 where I went back to patrol. I then moved back to Criminal Investigations as the sergeant over the Special Victims Unit.”

According to the SPD website, the Special Victims Unit is responsible for the investigation of sexual assaults, abuse involving children, elder neglect and abuse, lewd behavior in the presence of minors, juvenile runaways and incidents of missing persons.

The detectives focus on establishing all the facts through the collection of evidence and supporting statements from victims and witnesses.

SVU detectives work closely with several organizations within Chatham County, including the FBI Task Force, Rape Crisis Center and Chatham County District Attorney’s Office.

“I am currently in charge of the Special Victims Unit as a CID sergeant,” said Rowan. “I manage cases, help with investigations and supervise a great team of detectives.”

Once he joined law enforcement, Rowan also became a member of PBA’s Coastal Counties Chapter, rising to president in August 2021.

The chapter boasts almost 800 members.

“I joined the PBA because of the fear of being sued while being a police officer,” he said. “The benefits of the PBA, other than protection from lawsuits, are protection against local governments and politicians, the protection from bad leadership. PBA also gives officers a voice and the ability to bring up issues within a department.”

Rowan’s greatest achievement for his department so far was getting the city to agree to allow payroll deductions for PBA membership dues.

“I feel that our communication with the City of Savannah has gotten us a lot of things to include payroll deduction, increases in pay every year and higher pay,” he said. “I also know the PBA gave my chapter a voice in the problems we are currently having with the Chatham County District Attorney.”

In addition to building relationships with local governing bodies, being a PBA member offers the most affordable benefits for officers, said Rowan.

“I have seen it time and time again where the PBA is there for officers who are wrongfully fired or sued,” he said.

The chapter’s first president showed the way for Rowan to develop leadership qualities and learn the language of politics.

“I saw the benefits of the fundraisers and interacting with local politics,” he said. “I feel with everything we do it gives us a voice, because this is a tough time to be a police officer.”

In fact, Rowan has been influenced by several mentors.

“I have worked for a lot of great leaders,” he said. “Star Cpl. Roger Agnew, Capt. Alex Tobar and Detective Cpl. Autumn Giles.”

Given that Rowan’s only plan was to be a military pilot and he landed in law enforcement sort of by default, he jokes he doesn’t really have a backup plan.

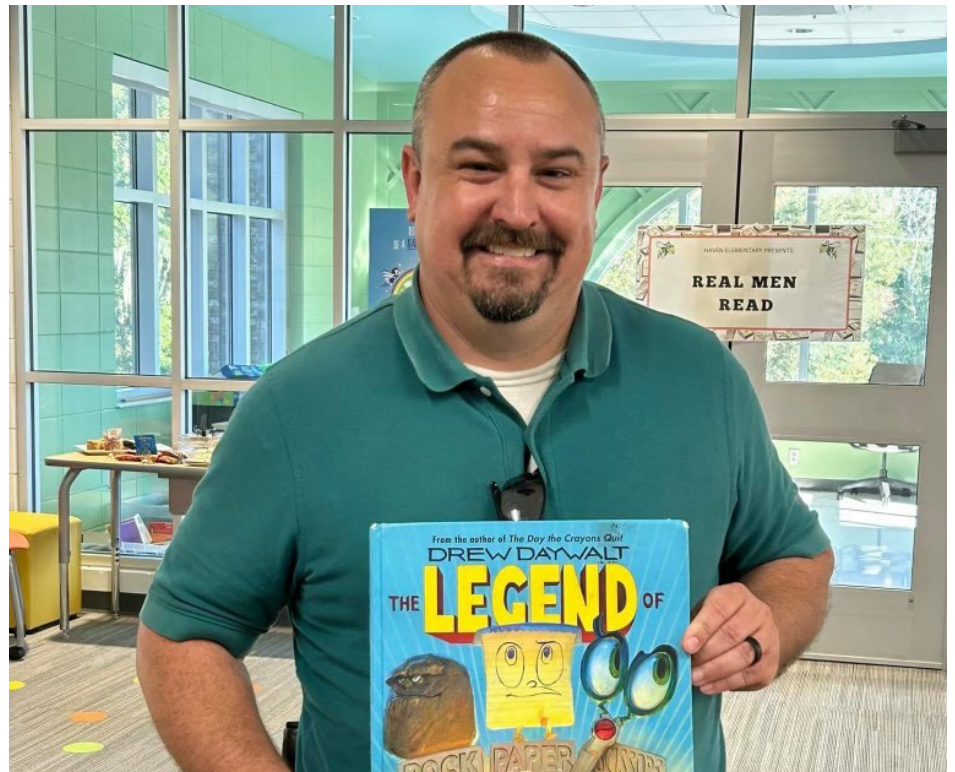
“If I left law enforcement now, I have no idea what I would do,” he said. “Maybe I could be a salesman.”

He has a “beautiful wife” of 14 years and a son and daughter, and an Indian Scout Sixty motorcycle that keep him busy.

“I also volunteer with my daughter’s Girl Scout troop and my son’s Cub Scout pack,” said Rowan. “I love watching college football.”

There seem to be no regrets in his following the LEO path over becoming a pilot. Rowan said he enjoys the challenges of being a police officer and the novelty of each day being different from the last.

“The best part of being in law enforcement is the stories that you can tell by what you see and experience at work,” he said. “It can also be a lot of fun at times. No two days are the same. It is not your normal 9 to 5 job.”



**Rowan takes a turn reading to kids**



**Rowan and board members meeting with the mayor. L-r, Marcus Henderson, Rowan, Savannah Mayor Van Johnson and Justin Gause**

Of course, every job has a downside and law enforcement is not immune to criticism and negativity.

“The worst part is the news and some of the politicians,” said Rowan. “If you could see the human beings that come to work every day, you would realize we don’t want to be on the news. We don’t want to come to work and pull the trigger. Police officers also see a lot of

horrible things, more than your average person.”

For Rowan, his career goal is onward and upward.

“I hope to continue in criminal investigations as a leader,” he said. “I hope to make lieutenant and captain before I retire.”



## MEET JESSICA DALEY, ALPBA MEMBER OF THE YEAR

**By Cindy Baugher**  
**Communications Project Coordinator**

The Alabama Division of the PBA recently named Lee County Chapter President Jessica Daley as the 2023 PBA Member of the Year.

Jessica was nominated for this award by Jon Riley, senior vice president of the Alabama PBA. In his nomination letter, Riley shared many positive details about Daley's career:

"To know and observe Jessica is to understand she has a natural talent for networking and forging relationships with local law enforcement officers, as well as officers from around the state and throughout the country. Jessica constantly puts others' needs ahead of her own. When Jessica identifies a need for citizens and fellow law enforcement officers, she also sees a solution and does not hesitate to respond and assist."

Riley goes on to describe the many instances when Daley has volunteered to help with relief efforts for natural disasters in the region:

"Jessica volunteered to work a Hurricane Ivan response detail in late 2004 in Baldwin and Escambia counties. Jessica responded to Tuscaloosa during the 2011 tornado outbreak in Alabama, working the streets to provide much-needed relief for Tuscaloosa police officers and Tuscaloosa County sheriff's deputies.

"In 2018, Jessica responded to Panama City, Fla., to assist law enforcement and the community after Hurricane Michael, an unprecedented Category 5 hurricane, struck the Florida Gulf Coast, causing catastrophic damage to the area. In 2021, Jessica responded to Louisiana, where Hurricane Ida, a powerful Category 4 hurricane, caused structural damage and power outages throughout the state. Jessica gathered items donated by herself and other law enforcement officers for the families of Louisiana state troopers. While the troopers were responding to the aftermath of Hurricane Ida,



**Daley accepts Member of the Year Award at the ALPBA board meeting**



**The Daleys at a Braves game for Auburn Night**

Jessica delivered much-needed supplies to Louisiana state troopers and their families, who expressed gratitude for the timeliness of her response and the delivery of much-needed supplies, including generators, as the families were in considerable need."

When asked her favorite part about being

in law enforcement, Jessica's two-word answer is simple and concise -- "helping others." It is apparent in reading Riley's nomination letter that she puts actions behind her words.

Jessica graduated from Orange Park High School in Florida in 1999 where she played volleyball and basketball. She also

was a high jumper and discus thrower for the track team.

She went on to Santa Fe Community College for her associate degree and graduated with her bachelor's degree in business administration from Flagler College in 2003.

"Playing basketball paid for my degree," Jessica said, as she was on a basketball scholarship for all four years.

After graduation, she started with the Lee County Sheriff's Office in May 2003 and went to rookie school at Jefferson County Sheriff's Academy. She graduated in October 2003 and has been with LCSO ever since.

At the beginning of her career, she was encouraged to join the PBA by supervisors in her agency, and she is in her second term as Lee County Chapter president. In this role, Riley notes that Jessica has "a proven record of responding to requests for service by chapter members and ensuring members' needs are met promptly."

She is a lieutenant and serves as the training coordinator. She was also an investigator in 2015 and 2016.

Notably, Jessica is the first female senior master instructor for Axon-Taser Co., a multi-national company providing worldwide public safety technology and software.

In a similar vein, Jessica has the role of the Alabama state director of Rape Aggression Defense training for women. As one would imagine, Jessica has also been recognized with other awards during her career, such as Employee of the Quarter and the RAD Aggressor Award.

Jessica has clearly found a good fit in her career with law enforcement. She offered advice to those who may be considering working in the field.

"It's not easy, but if you keep trying you can make a difference," she said. "The greatest reward is not making the best or most arrests, it's who you helped, how you helped them and why you helped



**The team of East Alabama women's self-defense instructors**



**Daley and her brother, Chris, an officer in Virginia Beach**





**Daley, in her RAD aggressor suit, with Aubie at Camp War Eagle where they interacted with AU students**

them. Be willing to grow and never stop learning. When you get in the family, train the next you to be better than you.”

In her downtime, Jessica enjoys spending time with family, taking trips and tailgating for Auburn football. She and her wife, Leighanne Daley, have three children, Sloan, 7, and twin daughters Millie and Lexie, 2.

She calls her family the greatest influence in her career. They are spread out across the southeastern states and include two older sisters, two younger stepsisters, a younger brother, plus her mother, father, stepmother, and six nieces and five nephews.

Her younger brother also works in law enforcement. He graduated from the Virginia Beach Police Academy and serves with the Virginia Beach Police Department.



**Daley and her wife with a friend, Blake, tailgating for AU football**

Jessica Daley’s favorite quote is in line with all her notable achievements, including her selection for the Alabama PBA Member of the Year. From the

late legendary University of Tennessee women’s basketball coach Pat Summitt, “Change equals self-improvement. Push yourself to places you haven’t been.”

# HANNAH STEPHENS WINS WVPBA, FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

**By Cindy Baugher**  
**Communications Project Coordinator**

Hannah Stephens, jokingly referred to as “Dr. Patrolman” by her friends, family, and professors, recently accepted scholarships from the PBF.

The nickname reflects her long-term objective of becoming both a police officer and earning a Ph.D. degree. She is already well on her way to both goals.

In December 2023, Hannah completed her bachelor’s degree in criminal justice and graduated from West Virginia University. She has been hired on as Calhoun County, W.V.’s first sworn female deputy sheriff and was sworn in on Nov. 30, 2023. She’s attending Fairmont State University Police Academy.

As for her long-term plans, she is thinking of crime scene technician, the K9 unit, SWAT or FBI as possibilities. With her dad as a police officer and her role model, she’s known since the age of 12 that she wanted to work in law enforcement and protect people, too.

Hannah was home schooled from kindergarten through her senior year and graduated from Elim Academy of Homeschool in 2021. While still a high school student, she dual enrolled at West Virginia University at Parkersburg.

She calls this community college “perfect for me because of its close proximity to my house, affordable tuition and student-oriented atmosphere.” She also points out that, “all the staff were beyond welcoming, and I absolutely loved each of my professors.”

While growing up, Hannah didn’t participate in a lot of sports, but in high school she discovered martial arts and immediately fell in love with it. She spent six years with the sport and earned a second-degree black belt and won multiple tournaments along the way.

Hannah also took up skateboarding,



**Hannah Stephens, with her parents, Chuck and Jessica, accepts scholarship check from WVPBA Natural Resources Chapter President Steve Haines.**

although she hasn’t had much time for it recently. Briefly volunteering at a animal rescue and helping with a suitcase drive for foster children this past spring were volunteer opportunities that Hannah enjoyed as well.

The “middle of nowhere” is how Hannah describes her hometown of Creston, W.Va. She and her family have a great appreciation for their area in the mountains where there is “lots of room for gardens, pets, big yards and quiet walks.”

Her father, Chuck Stephens, is a Department of Natural Resources officer

in charge of hunting and boating safety training in his district, and has been in law enforcement for almost 20 years.

“Even with my dad’s busy schedule, he still manages to not let it affect quality time with his family,” she said. “My mom, Jessica, is my biggest cheerleader and does so much to make sure our lives are running smoothly. My little brother, Jonathan, is a stubborn free spirit with a mechanical mind. The dude can fix anything.

“And then there is my baby, a 3-year-old pit bull puppy named Amadeo,” she continued. “His favorite things in



the world are food, walks and hunting raccoons.”

Aside from snuggling with her dog, Hannah also enjoys reading, playing guitar, and listening to music.

When asked about her favorite leader, Hannah said that “We don’t often think about serving others as a form of leadership” but added, “It may be the most important type of leadership. In fact, it is the principle that policing is rooted in: to serve and protect. By serving others, we become an example that others respect and follow.”

“I don’t have a favorite leader, but I have a favorite type of leader and desirable leadership qualities that I identify in others,” she said.

With her dad’s life-long example of service through leadership as a police officer, Hannah realized that policing requires hard work and dedication.

She also acknowledged that a career in law enforcement is not a traditional career path for women. The children’s animated film, “Mulan,” was a source of inspiration for Hannah while growing up.

Mulan’s story of sacrificing herself to save her father and fight for her country, while facing prejudice from the male soldiers she fought alongside, resonated with Hannah.

“Female police officers face similar prejudice today, even though we’ve come such a long way, which is why I love the moral of Mulan’s story so much,” she said.

She also found similar enlightenment regarding her career plans from the book, “Policewomen Who Made History: Breaking Through the Ranks” by Robert Snow. Hannah said this book “did a fantastic job of describing the history of female law enforcement officers and the challenges they had to overcome and are still overcoming. I highly recommend this book.”

Hannah’s academic efforts were rewarded with a PBF scholarship



**Nov. 30, 2023, before Hannah was sworn in. (L-r) are Deputy Charles Stephens, Sheriff Graham Knight and Hannah**



**Hannah at her graduation at WVU-Parkersburg**

for the West Virginia Division as well as a Foundation scholarship. Division scholarships are awarded to deserving applicants whose parent or stepparent is a PBA member. The Foundation scholarship is earmarked for students who are pursuing a degree in criminology or criminal justice.

“I am so grateful for these two scholarships,” she said. “I also received the WV Promise Scholarship and the Higher Education Grant, so all three helped me make it through my last semester without paying anything out

of pocket. The scholarships gave me the opportunity to save for my future and not have to worry about finances the last semester.”

As for her future, she hopes that it includes completing a criminal justice master’s program, either at American Public University or Grand Canyon University.

Her eventual goal is to be the first in her immediate family to earn a Ph.D. and secure that unique title of “Dr. Patrolman.”

# SSPBA ASSISTS OFFICERS LEFT TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES

**By Jeffrey Steven Warren**  
**Ellis & Winters LLP**

Correctional officers are frequently required to utilize reasonable force to maintain order and discipline in North Carolina's correctional facilities.

Because of this job requirement, correctional officers, perhaps more than any other State employee, routinely face civil litigation by aggrieved inmates.

Between 2000 and 2019, inmates commenced approximately 1.2 million lawsuits against state officers in United States District Courts.<sup>1</sup>

In 2019 alone, inmates commenced more than 50,000 lawsuits.<sup>2</sup> As a proportion of overall caseload, inmate lawsuits constitute approximately 25% of all lawsuits filed in United States District Courts.<sup>3</sup>

Signaling a shift in longstanding policy, however, the State of North Carolina, with increasing frequency, is declining to represent correctional officers in lawsuits arising from the course and scope of their employment.

North Carolina's Defense of State Employee's Act provides that the State "may provide for the defense of any civil or criminal action or proceeding brought against him in his official or individual capacity, or both." N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-300.3.

Pursuant to this statutory provision, the North Carolina Department of Justice regularly represents correctional staff employed by the North Carolina Department of Public Safety who are sued for conduct arising from the course and scope of their employment.

If defended under the DSEA, the State "shall" satisfy any judgment ultimately entered against a State employee. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-300.6(a). Considering the expense of civil litigation and potential judgments, the DSEA is vitally important to the State's correctional staff.



**Attorney Jeffrey Steven Warren**

Inmates know that commencing litigation is often times the easiest way to exact revenge against the individuals responsible for maintaining order in North Carolina's prisons.

Legal judgments against correctional officers are highly coveted by inmates. Historically, therefore, the North Carolina Department of Justice declined to represent correctional officers only in cases involving substantiated instances of extreme (and substantiated) officer misconduct.

In recent years, however, the North Carolina Department of Justice has increasingly declined to represent correctional officers in routine litigation, even where those officers are found to have acted in accordance with State policy.<sup>4</sup>

Frequently, the only explanation provided by the NCDOJ for its decision is that the representation is not "in the best interests of the State." N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-300.4(a)(4).

Unfortunately, officers have no mechanism to challenge or appeal the NCDOJ's decision not to represent them. In *Lennon v. State*, 249 N.C. App. 233, 791 S.E.2d 461, 462 (2016), the NCDOJ

denied representation to a correctional officer who purportedly caused "serious injury" to an inmate. The correctional officer challenged that decision, and sought to recover more than \$25,000 in legal fees.

On appeal from the Office of Administrative Hearings, the Court of Appeals determined that the State is not "obligated to provide Plaintiff with legal representation, or to reimburse his litigation expenses." *Id.*

The Court of Appeals reasoned that the term "may" indicated that defense under the DSEA was permissive rather than mandatory, and that actions for indemnity pursuant to § 143-300.4(a)(4) are barred by sovereign immunity.

In 2023, the SSPBA repeatedly stepped into the void left by the NCDOJ to assist correctional officers conduct their defense.

In one case, a correctional officer was forced to utilize force against an inmate—a high ranking gang member—in an effort to prevent a unit-wide riot. In an effort to exact revenge against the officer, the inmate filed a lawsuit alleging permanent eye damage.

Despite the officer's lawful actions being captured on camera, the NCDOJ declined to assist the officer. The SSPBA therefore assigned the officer an attorney, who obtained sworn witness statements, testimony from the supervisor responsible for maintaining prison safety, and an opinion from an expert ophthalmologist that the inmate had no injuries.

With this evidence, the officer was able to formulate a forceful legal defense.

In another case, the NCDOJ withdrew halfway through representing a correctional officer during a civil action. The only reason provided by the NCDOJ in its Motion to Withdraw was that, although the officer was affirmatively cleared of wrongdoing by the NCDOJ in connection with a use of force, the



defense of the officer was no longer “in the best interests of the State.”

Without the SSPBA, the officer would have been forced to locate, retain, and pay private counsel to assist him in connection with the inmate’s frivolous lawsuit. Instead, the SSPBA assigned the officer counsel, who is now undertaking the officer’s defense.

Correctional officers should be aware of two things. First, now more than ever, officers face increased exposure to liability for the actions they take in the course and scope of their employment.

Although the SSPBA is diligently working to address this policy shift with leaders at the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, officers should continue to maintain their SSPBA membership in the event the NCDNJ declines to offer them representation. If the officer is a PBA member, he or she should contact PBA immediately.

Second, officers should understand that once an attorney with the NCDNJ enters an appearance on their behalf, that attorney-client relationship cannot be terminated except with approval of the court—and only for “compelling reasons.” *Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bd. of Educ.*, 9 F. Supp. 2d 572, 584 (W.D.N.C. 1998) (citations omitted); see also, N.C. Rules of Prof’l Conduct r. 1.16.

To this end, if the NCDNJ attempts to withdraw from representing an officer during a pending case, the officer should object and let his or her objections be known to the court.

The SSPBA understands the risk correctional officers face every day in maintaining the safety in North Carolina’s correctional facilities.

While the SSPBA continues to work behind the scenes to address the NCDNJ’s policy shift, it stands ready to

help correctional officers responding to claims filed against them.

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## Retired Members

If you would like to go into our retired chapter, please send in a copy of your retirement paperwork showing the effective date. Please fax (866-337-7722) or email ([membership\\_info@sspba.org](mailto:membership_info@sspba.org)) the necessary paperwork.

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- Legal Services for covered incidents that occurred during your active membership with no lapses
- \$10,000 accidental non-occupational death policy
- Yearly Publications
- Decals

# CULPEPER CHAPTER HELPS VAPBA REACH 10K MEMBER MILESTONE

**By Sean McGowan**  
**SSPBA Executive Director**

During 2012 in the town of Culpeper, Va., the PBA Culpeper Chapter was in formation.

Members were hearing about PBA benefits and signing up from both the local police and sheriff departments. This led to rapid membership growth within the chapter. Among the founding members spreading the word about PBA were Culpeper police officers Jason Deal and Tim Chilton.

Since 2012, Culpeper membership has remained strong, and the chapter has had a succession of elected leaders who have dedicated themselves to representing the members by becoming involved in local and state candidate screening and endorsement processes.

This political involvement brings with it a level of risk to the labor organization members that must be professionally managed while taking into consideration and evaluating the political winds blowing at the time.

Political involvement requires the chapter, through an inclusive and fair screening process, to pick sides in elections. The process is extremely productive but also contains the above-mentioned level of risk.

No other political race in Virginia can produce a level of backlash and retaliation greater than an election for sheriff. Every member of a sheriff's department in Virginia works at will and can be fired with no cause or explanation by the elected sheriff. The saying "ultimate power leads to ultimate corruption" comes to mind.

The logic behind an elected law enforcement leader is sound: the citizens should have a right to replace an elected official by majority vote. The flaw in the system is that a four-year term is too long of a time to wait for change that ultimately holds public safety in the balance.



**Jason Deal and Tim Chilton**

The oversight that would come with procedural guarantee for deputy sheriffs and collective bargaining for all law enforcement officers would have a positive impact and provide accountability for a system now flawed by antiquated processes and historical nepotism. PBA's work on both topics continues.

The good news is that our members are having an impact in law enforcement leadership across Virginia. Longtime PBA members are being appointed to leadership positions as chiefs of police and winning elections for sheriff. This is a natural process given our membership history and the sheer number of members now proudly carrying a PBA card.

In Culpeper, our members felt the wrath of a candidate who was not endorsed by PBA and ultimately won the election. The sheriff called all the deputies together and asked by show of hands who was a PBA member. The sheriff then asked, "Who will be a PBA member tomorrow?"

This blatant violation of the law and the rights of the deputies is an example of the backlash and abuse possible by elected officials willing to mis-apply their power and authority.

Thankfully, the above-mentioned sheriff lost his election in 2023, replaced by

one of the Culpeper Chapter's founding members from 2012. Tim Chilton was screened, endorsed and elected as sheriff of Culpeper with the full support of the Culpeper Chapter.

As part of his incoming administration, Jason Deal (also a chapter charter member) will take on the position of commander of field operations. Tim and Jason have both displayed the utmost level of professionalism in their careers, and we are proud of their accomplishments.

The Culpeper Chapter and Sheriff Chilton also hold the distinction of hosting a membership event with our recruiter, Aaron Boston, who signed up the 10,000th member of the VAPBA.

We would like to welcome all our new members from Culpeper. Their joining, along with others throughout the state, has helped us reach a new milestone of 10,000 in Virginia.

Virginia PBA's 10,000 members can greatly impact elections in the commonwealth. Chapter political activity is key to legislative and political change. The PBA is proud to support our members in improving the law enforcement profession and positively impacting the working lives of our dedicated members and all who have chosen law enforcement as their career.



# K9 HANDLER DEJARNETTE IS 10,000 MEMBER OF VAPBA

**By Cindy Baugher**  
**Communications Project Coordinator**

Christopher DeJarnette, a patrol deputy and K9 handler with the Culpeper County Sheriff's office, helped VAPBA reach the 10,000 member mark when he recently signed up again as a member of the Culpeper Chapter.

"I was previously a member of the PBA and even served as a board member for the Culpeper Chapter in 2018 and 2019," he said. "When switching agencies (from Culpeper Police Department to Culpeper Sheriff's Office), it was a point of contention to be a member. But with the (leadership change from the) recent election, the PBA was again strongly encouraged and, from my previous experience, I had no hesitation with signing back up."

DeJarnette was born in Culpeper County and grew up within its 388 square miles of both rural and urban environments, along with large farms and lots of history.

He graduated from Culpeper County High School in 2013 and met his wife Lesley in middle school. They now have two children, daughter Afton, who is 2, and son Rhodes, who is 8 months. His parents and two siblings are all local, and he also has lots of extended family in the area, so his roots run deep in Culpeper County.

After time in college and a change of major, DeJarnette returned home and took part in a ride along with the Culpeper Sheriff's Office. He put himself through the Rappahannock Regional Criminal Justice Academy in Fredericksburg, Va., in 2015 for rookie school.

He started his career as a park attendant with the Culpeper Police Department and, after graduating, began work with the Culpeper Police Department, starting in the patrol division. He switched agencies to the Culpeper Sheriff's Office in 2021. He's now been in law enforcement for a total of nine years.



**DeJarnette walking his K9, Drake**

As a K9 handler he works with a 3-year-old German shepherd/Belgian Malinois mix named Drake, who is a narcotics/patrol K9, and the two work the night shift. He also serves as a field training officer and general instructor.

Training as a riot operator, crisis intervention officer and PIT certification are just a few highlights of his law enforcement resume. He's also been recognized with numerous lifesaving awards, as Officer of the Year through the Culpeper Ruritan Club, and presented an award from the NHTSA for issuing traffic citations involving texting

while driving.

Clearly, DeJarnette has found his calling as an officer with Culpeper Sheriff's Office.

"My favorite aspect of my job is the spontaneous nature of the job," he said. "Some nights can be very mundane and uneventful, while other nights can be going from call to call. You never know what you are going to be coming into on a shift, and it keeps the job exciting."

Memories built from spending time with the various personnel on the shifts



**DeJarnette with retired Culpeper police Chief Chris Jenkins**



**DeJarnette waits to receive a lifesaving award**

he's had the pleasure of working with is another important element that he mentions. The long hours together --sometimes seeing them more than family -- creates a bond. There are also leaders and mentors who've made an impact.

DeJarnette described the influence that two PBA members have had on him.

"During my career I have had the privilege of working with many great people," he said. "Starting my career at Culpeper PD, I had a supervisor, Lt. Ashley Banks, who shaped me into the deputy I am today. He took the time to mold me in ways that not only taught me how to be an example to the public but also developed my investigative skills and report writing abilities. He took the time to teach me what he knew and when to come down on me when I needed a push in the right direction.

"The other person is First Sgt. Jonathan

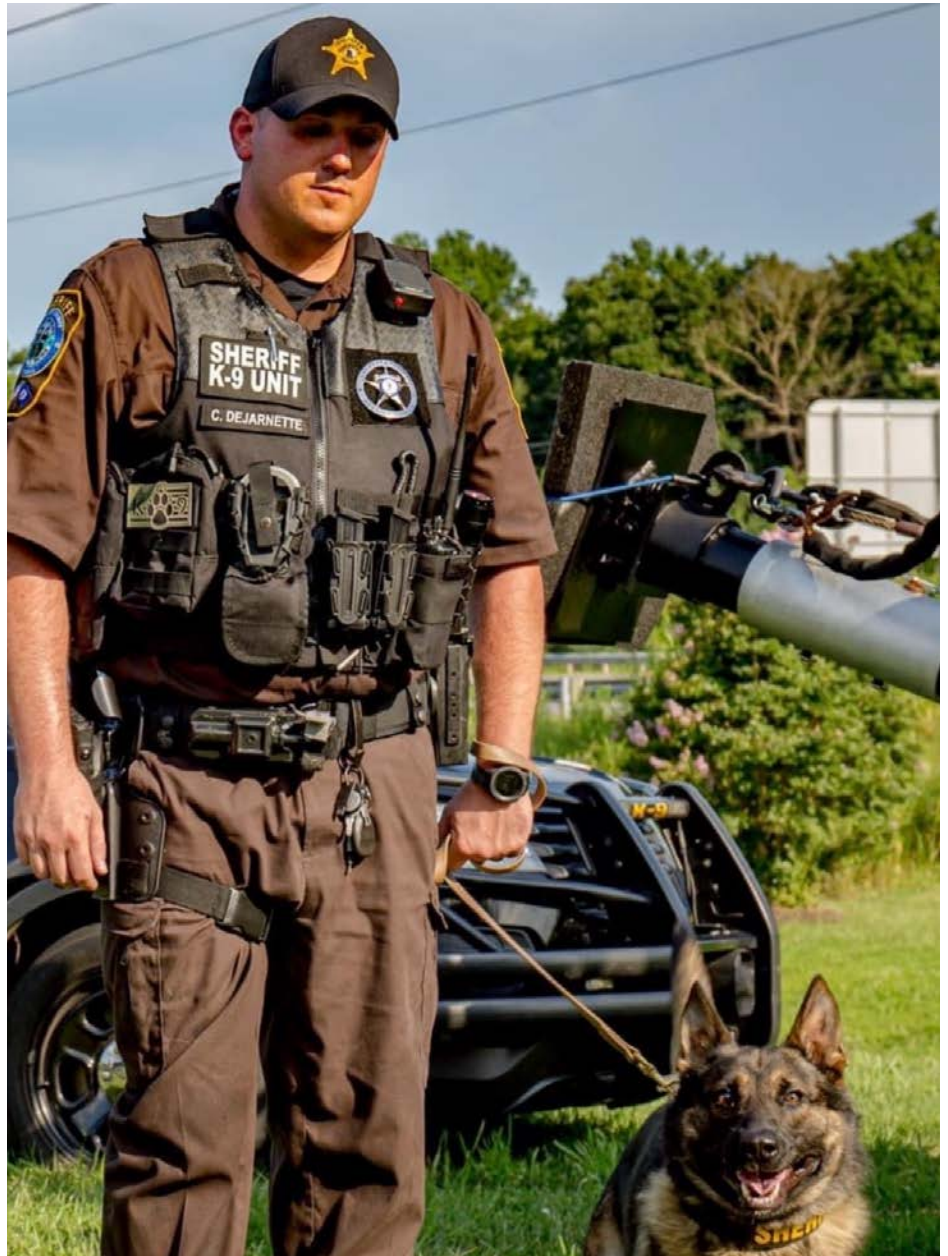


Kerns,” he continued. “When I first started, he was then Deputy Kerns, who was a K9 handler with the CCSO. I came into law enforcement wanting to be a K9 handler and he was a bright example. First Sgt. Kerns showed great composure in the performance of his duties and gave confidence to all those around him when he arrived on scene.

“He shows a good working knowledge and also exemplifies how you should interact with the public while in the performance of our duties,” he concluded. “First Sgt. Kerns is still in the K9 unit and was one of my instructors while I went through K9 school. We work together weekly in training and he is always willing to give advice, but also make it a competitive environment to push the unit to improve us all.”

In his spare time, DeJarnette enjoys spending time with his family, as well as just being outdoors, whether it’s hunting or fishing. He knows the demands of his job and that it can take a toll on everyone in the field. He advised those who may be contemplating becoming an officer.

“It is a career that sometimes defines how people feel about you and the way you will be judged,” he said. “You will see the people you serve (on sometimes the worst days of their lives) and you can still be the thing that brings them through it. This job is 60% boredom with 5% excitement and 35% paperwork, but to see the outcome and the ways that you can help people will make it all worth it and keep driving you to do more.”



**DeJarnette with his K9**



**DeJarnette receives Officer of the Year award from Ruritan Club**



# SSPBA ATTORNEYS DISCUSS CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE

**By Joni Fletcher Cawthon**  
**Legal Services Director**

On Friday, April 21, 2023, SSPBA welcomed 45 PBA attorneys to East Point, Ga., for a legal training seminar regarding critical incident response for PBA members. The attorneys traveled from eight states to attend the event titled "Officer Needs Assistance: Basics of Handling PBA Emergency Calls."

PBA staff attorneys presented topics addressing the essentials of responding to a critical incident involving a member as well as the increasing occurrence of officers being criminally charged in relation to their uses of force. Staff was able to enlighten the attorneys in attendance as to how the need for the legal services provided by PBA has never been greater.

PBA attorney W. Keith Barber, who practices law in Statesboro, Ga., spoke to the group about the unique aspects of representing law enforcement officers. These officers likely have been involved in many criminal investigations but find themselves in foreign territory when they are the ones being investigated. Barber, a former law enforcement officer himself, encouraged the attorneys in attendance to take this mindset of the officer into account when assisting officers with stressful situations where their actions come under scrutiny.

Staff attorneys also discussed the related matters that typically arise for officers after they have been involved in a critical incident: IA investigations, lawsuits and certification issues. In addition, the growing problem of prosecutors using Giglio actions as a weapon against officers was addressed.

These actions brand an officer as untruthful and often result in the officer losing his or her job because he or she can no longer be used as a testifying witness. These Giglio determinations almost always have no mechanism for due process review.

Just as important as the topics discussed



**Dozens of PBA attorneys from eight states gather for legal training**



**Don English, SSPBA Georgia counsel, speaks to group**

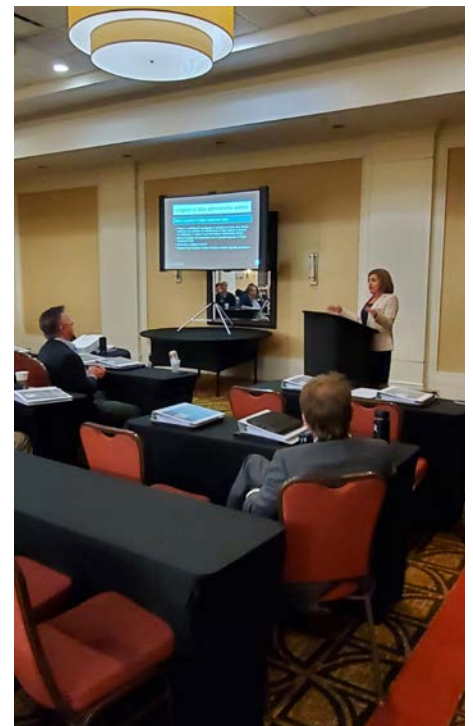
was the opportunity that the seminar provided for PBA staff to interact with and show their appreciation for the attorneys throughout the Southeast who are representing PBA members every day.

The attorneys were also able to interact with each other and to share insights and input regarding cases they are handling.

Shortly after the seminar, PBA attorney W. Gerald Tidwell of Chattanooga, Tenn., shared the following: "Thank you and your staff for such an informative and well organized meeting. It was fun, too. I really enjoyed meeting with you and the staff. I hope this is done in the future as I believe it is very helpful to the lawyers to get this chance to discuss the challenges the current world presents to us in representing law enforcement officers."



**Attorneys take notes during seminar**



**PBA Legal Services Director Joni Fletcher Cawthon**



# TIME IS ESSENTIAL AFTER NOTICE OF LAWSUIT IS SERVED

**By Steve Wasley**  
**SSPBA Staff Attorney**

Being served with a lawsuit — whether the lawsuit is against you personally and/or in your official capacity or against your department — is a stressful thing. If you have been served with a lawsuit, you must be diligent and act quickly to protect your legal rights.

Remain calm and do not panic, but also do not “bury your head in the sand.”

Remember you have deadlines to act. The specific deadlines to answer a summons and complaint can vary between different jurisdictions.

Although it might be tempting to ignore a summons and complaint, ignoring a lawsuit does not make it go away. If you do nothing, the plaintiff can, and probably will, ask the court for a default judgment, which can lead to serious consequences.

While law enforcement officers are familiar with the judicial system and work within it every day, seeing their name as a defendant in on a summons or complaint can be unsettling. Remember these basics.



The summons must be delivered along with the complaint, and it directs each defendant named in the complaint to file an answer to the complaint. Never assume that you have not been served with the summons or complaint.

Government employees in particular must be aware that sometimes their department or agency will accept or sign for a lawsuit on their behalf without their knowledge.

Federal courts often send out a summons and complaint by certified mail. Too often the PBA legal department hears from members that “I found this lawsuit in my work mailbox,” or “This lawsuit was e-mailed to me” or “This lawsuit was sitting on my desk,” and “I am only a few days away from my required time to answer.”

Be sure to read and review the summons and complaint to determine what the lawsuit is about and the date of the required response.

Upon learning of a lawsuit naming you as a defendant, you must immediately inform your chain of command and/or your agency’s legal department and provide them with a copy of the summons and complaint.

Whom you inform will often depend on your individual department’s internal policies. Keep in mind there is always the city attorney, county attorney, and state attorney, to reach out to, as soon as possible, if you are not getting a satisfactory response from your department.

Always keep a copy of the summons and complaint for yourself. If the lawsuit concerns your former department and you no longer work there, you will want to call your former department, as soon as possible — do not wait.

In all cases, it is extremely important to make sure your department is providing you with an attorney to handle your direct defense. Never assume that your department is automatically going to



**Attorney Steve Wasley**

provide you with a direct defense — you want confirmation.

Also, be sure to notify PBA as soon as you are served with a lawsuit. The role of PBA under the legal defense benefit typically is to provide an attorney to monitor the lawsuit on your behalf.

That attorney communicates with the attorney handling direct defense and verifies that an answer is being provided on your behalf. That PBA attorney also is asked to be available to you to answer any questions that you may have pertaining to the lawsuit and your defense.

While it is standard procedure for agencies to provide direct defense and insurance coverage for their employees in regard to actions the employees take in the performance of their jobs, PBA members are sometimes left “out in the cold” by their employers.

In such situations, PBA steps in to ensure that the member’s rights are defended. PBA then takes efforts to bring the agency and its insurance coverage back into action on the member’s behalf.

Facts and circumstances vary in each case. Be proactive, even if you are not sure whether you have been served with a lawsuit or not. Take the steps necessary to protect your legal rights and reach out to PBA for assistance as soon as possible.

# ARK STATE TROOPER, FAMILY BUILD HOUSE OF ACADEMICS

**By Marlon Briggs**  
**ARPBA South Central Chapter**  
**President**

The psychological aspects of an individual's identity are often obtained from their occupation or title at their place of work.

These multicultural environments involve individuals with identifiable work-related goals and tasks that are challenging yet rewarding for accomplished individuals. To many individuals, having a strong work identity is a great importance of confidence in their lives.

For those outside of these jobs, certain organizations look like great careers with outstanding leadership.

However, once a person becomes part of any organization, they quickly learn the challenge of rationality. Some of these organizational leaders use unique techniques and methodologies as motivational factors based on extreme power and manipulation.

My law enforcement career has allowed me to provide effective leadership and breathe life into the expectations and aspirations of many of my peers and citizens in the communities that I have served.

Preparing different law enforcement officers for success in their careers in criminal justice has been a gratifying experience for me. It has allowed me to help them develop confidence in their law enforcement abilities and allowed me to accommodate them with my training.

I have met tons of outstanding people and have some of the sharpest coworkers on the planet. I have made friendships that will last an entire lifetime all across this great country.

However, as I created opportunities for others to learn from my experience and knowledge of law enforcement, my intellectual standards and critical



**Briggs graduates from Columbia Southern University decades after leaving higher education.**

thinking skills became dormant. I became comfortable and content with receiving instructions, reading certain material and methods of training that became the regular standard of practice. These practices become justified when our concepts of thinking become invisible to us.

In 2016, both of my daughters graduated from high school and were headed off to college. One was headed to Mississippi State University and was majoring in psychology and a minor in gender studies.

The other was headed to the University of Arkansas and majoring in political science.

Their departure and new adventures in life caused me to reflect on myself and examine my thinking and career. When I went off to college many years ago, I went with a focus on sports. I then decided on a college that would allow me

to play football and baseball.

However, with my mind being primarily on sports, I did not finish and obtain my degree. But that burning desire to obtain my college degree never left. Moving both girls into their dorms brought back many memories of campus life and how I never did obtain my degree.

Growing up in the 90s, my generation was taught that getting your college degree opens the door to a "good job" that has great pay with benefits.

And now, since I had a "good job" that did not require a degree at all, I had become content and adapted to the environment. I embraced the philosophy of learning law enforcement strategies as an assisting agency, and training and community partnerships to create safer communities in the communities that we served.

But there was something still missing. I





### Briggs returned to CSU and earned a master's degree

needed an awareness and understanding of law enforcement operational practices that challenged my intellectual mindset with a unique kind of purposeful thinking.

I also needed a unique culture of teaching and motivating that intellectually and emotionally challenges a higher order of thinking and learning.

An education provides a clearer view of a person's judgments, thoughts and opinions and allows them to express them freely. It helps develop the mindset in society to learn the principles and concepts of critical thinking while providing the knowledge, intellectual skills and character to successfully function.

At this moment, I decided to enroll back in college at Columbia Southern University, after over two decades of

not being in a true classroom setting of higher education, after a personal challenge from a friend.

This time around, college was very challenging. In addition to understanding how to properly identify principles and concepts relevant to issues, an awareness was taught on how to approach problems and issues with a broad point of view, especially on controversial issues.

CSU's unique culture of educating and motivating students intellectually and emotionally challenges a higher order of thinking and learning. Their guidance and description which are used by professors explore clarity, logic and strong standards for thinking with explicit and clear signals.

The educational practices inside CSU designed a significance in thinking that

challenged the intellectual standards of all their students. These fundamentals of ethical reasoning represent a powerful mode of thinking that contributed to the development of long-term clarification and skilled thinking.

In October 2019, I graduated cum laude with a 3.7 GPA with a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice administration. After all these years, I finally finished my degree.

However, I wasn't alone. In the first week of December, my daughter graduated with her degree from Mississippi State University.

The following week, my other daughter graduated with her degree from the University of Arkansas. So, 2019 went out with a bang.

But there is more to this story. As the pandemic took the world by storm in 2020, as we were sitting at home, we all decided to once again further our academic journey.

My daughter who graduated from MSU enrolled in Capella University for her master's degree. My daughter who graduated from the U of A enrolled at Oklahoma City Law School and I enrolled back at CSU for my master's degree.

This time, even my wife got involved. Originally, she graduated from the University of Arkansas with a degree in rehabilitation counseling. She then decided to return for her second master's degree and become a school counselor. So, she enrolled at Arkansas State University. All while this was taking place, my son was also heading into his senior year of high school.

Throughout my home, there was complete silence. Between working and school, each person was extremely busy focusing on all their assignments.

By the fall of 2021, my son graduated high school and was enrolled at the University of Arkansas and on the football staff. In February 2022, my daughter graduated from Capella and now is a therapist in Mississippi.





**Briggs with daughters, Kira and Essence, all of whom earned degrees in 2019.**



**Briggs with daughter Essence at her 2019 graduation.**



**Briggs with daughter Kira at her 2019 graduation.**



**At left, Marlon's Southwest Classic victory over Texas AM in 2021. He plans to be a college football coach. At right, Briggs with Tremekia at her master's degree graduation from ASU.**



**Kira graduates from law school**

In May 2023, my wife graduated from Arkansas State University and now is a school counselor for a local school district. In June 2023, my other daughter graduated from OKC School of Law and now is a lawyer in Texas.

I graduated also in June 2023 with a 3.92 GPA. Finally, my son will graduate from the University of Arkansas in May with a degree in recreation and sports management. He will then head off to grad school to pursue his dream of

becoming a college football coach.

A person is never too old to further their education. Education fosters the motivation and empowerment to have ethical reasoning for thinking through issues and problems with sound standards of clarity.

It also helps empower the characteristics and skills of leadership needed to effectively guide many organizations in today's turbulent environment. It could

help you start a new career path, advance in your career or even bring personal satisfaction of accomplishment.

Training is extremely important to the work-related characteristics of a career. It provides the drive, perseverance and desire to excel. Combined with the right career, the joys of working become extravagant as a person chronicles their daily journey of life. My family and I have each found this incredible joy.



# RECRUITERS WORKSHOP HELD, TOP RECRUITER NAMED FOR 2023

**By Cindy Baugher**  
**Communications Project Coordinator**

On Nov. 8, 2023, the PBA recruiters and SSPBA support staff gathered to attend the annual workshop led by Chief Operating Officer René Dixon.

Recruiters are assigned an important function in the operations of the PBA. They each put a great deal of effort and dedication into sharing the many

advantages that a membership brings.

This annual event provides an opportunity for discussions and to recognize the recruiter who has recruited the most members.

For 2023, the recipient was Nick Meadows. Throughout his 15-year career with the PBA, he said interacting with law enforcement officers was his favorite part of the career.

“I am very passionate about what the PBA provides for these officers, so much so that I don’t even feel like I am working,” he said. “I am happy to help spread the good news.”

If you are interested in having a PBA recruiter visit your department to discuss the benefits a PBA membership provides, call our office at 1-800-233-3506.



**Recruiter Nick Meadows, with Kris Jarvis and René Dixon, is recognized for recruiting the most members during 2023. Jarvis is director of operations for the SSPBA and a past winner of top recruiter.**



**René Dixon and Kris Jarvis address SSPBA recruiters during annual workshop**







# RACE4THEFALLEN

**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](mailto:rbyrd@sspba.org).

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

[RACEFORTHEFALLEN.COM](http://RACEFORTHEFALLEN.COM)

# FAIRFAX, VA: PAST, PRESENT AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**By Sean McGowan**  
**SSPBA Executive Director**

In 2011, I received a phone call from an officer working for the Fairfax County Police Department asking about the PBA.

A meeting was promptly held in Clifton, Va., at the Main Street Pub, which is where I met Joe Woloszyn for the first time.

Dissatisfied with the leadership of other labor organizations in Fairfax County, Joe was looking for an alternative. Joe and I discussed benefits and services offered to PBA members.

After using that opportunity to compare and contrast PBA benefits to the other police labor groups in Fairfax County, the conversation quickly turned to the formation of a steering committee and a chapter.

Joe immediately took the lead and began to work towards forming what would eventually become the largest VAPBA Chapter in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Fairfax County Chapter grew rapidly after its humble beginnings of only 18 members.

Fairfax County Chapter history with the PBA now spans over 15 years and has included multiple generations of membership. Chapter membership is now over 1,000 and still growing.

Over the last 15 years, the Fairfax County Chapter has hosted or assisted in numerous local and state level political screenings.

This has led to the development of positive and fruitful relationships between the PBA and many of the politicians that are making decisions on a local, state, or legislative level regarding law enforcement officers.

After over a decade and a half of political activity in Virginia, a VAPBA endorsement is now highly sought after



**Sean McGowan**

by politicians during election season in Virginia.

Using the SSPBA screening and endorsement process, the Fairfax County Chapter has now developed a professional and productive relationship with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and numerous state and federal legislators.

The input of the SSPBA on police-related matters is given weight by the board due to this relationship. The advocacy of the SSPBA to this board has led to significant compensation increases for Fairfax County officers during the last budget cycle.

The key to the success and growth of the Fairfax County Chapter has always been leadership. The chapter presidents, starting with Joe Woloszyn, and their chapter board of directors have kept up the momentum.

The past chapter presidents that followed Joe, Andrew Wright and Ali Soheilian, committed to the goals of the organization and chapter and proved themselves to be outstanding leaders.

Past Chapter President Andrew Wright

remains involved in both the chapter board, as well as the VAPBA Board of Directors, as the Political Action Committee chair.

Joe Woloszyn still serves on the chapter board and has extended his involvement in the organization to include the SSPBA Board of Directors and as president of the VAPBA Board of Directors.

Chapter President Steve Monahan hit the ground running in 2022 after progressing from senior vice president under Ali Soheilian, to president.

He showed the same initiative and commitment as the past presidents and immediately was tasked with leadership responsibility for collective bargaining, which was newly-implemented in Virginia.

Over the last year, he and his board have kept the membership involved and growing in addition to tackling collective bargaining head-on. The SSPBA meets with criminal justice academy recruits, lateral officers, and new hires regularly to educate them about the SSPBA and encourage them to join.

The SSPBA has even established such a positive reputation in FCPD that officers actively seek out the chapter board members to inquire about membership.

The chapter board members are spread through each police station and specialty in the department and actively represent the PBA positively and encourage membership with professionalism.

In 2021, the Virginia Legislature passed a law allowing local police departments to engage in collective bargaining (40.1-57.2).

Our Alexandria Chapter was the first in the state to gain a ratified collective bargaining contract under the leadership of Chapter President Damon Minnix.

In Fairfax County, Steve Monahan and his board worked tirelessly with attorneys at Simms Showers LLP for well over a





**On Dec. 5, 2023, McGowan had the honor to attend the historic vote to fund the ratified contract by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Fairfax County now joins Alexandria in celebrating the best collective bargaining agreements in the Commonwealth of Virginia.**

year to hammer out a comprehensive contract that will greatly benefit their membership.

This included an election, long negotiation sessions with the County, and even proceeding to arbitration on an internal investigations policy matter to protect the rights of their bargaining unit members. The experience gained by the Alexandria Chapter was invaluable to the Fairfax County chapter during the entire collective bargaining process.

The PBA chapters in both Alexandria and Fairfax County faced opposition

to represent police officers in collective bargaining.

Both chapters succeeded by steadfastly taking the high road despite the attacks from other labor groups. Both chapters easily refuted false statements and accusations by other organizations by simply applying facts and truth in a professional manner.

False statements and propaganda were quickly disregarded by the members of their bargaining units who appreciated the professional and concise approach demonstrated by the PBA.

The SSPBA has now established that it is a force to be reckoned with after being elected in both jurisdictions as the sole police representative group for collective bargaining.

On Dec. 5, 2023, I had the honor to attend the historic vote to fund the ratified contract by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Fairfax County now joins Alexandria in celebrating the best collective bargaining agreements in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

# MSPBA MEMBERS GO 'OVER THE EDGE' FOR SICK CHILDREN

**By Katharine Jefcoats  
Editor**

Ever wanted to go over the edge for a good cause?

DeSoto County (Miss.) sheriff's Lt. Mike Cowan can hook you up – and ensure you are safe.

The veteran LEO has a part-time job rigging buildings for rappel, having started as a volunteer in 2010 for Over The Edge Global. The company, at [overtheedgeglobal.com](http://overtheedgeglobal.com), hosts urban rappelling events to help nonprofit organizations raise money.

"I started volunteering with them in 2010 when they came to Memphis to help the Special Olympics Greater Memphis put on a fundraiser by rappelling off of the White Station Tower, a 225' rappel," he said. "The person in charge of the Special Olympics Greater Memphis, Lisa Taylor, is an old friend of mine and came looking for volunteers and a number of us answered the call."

Cowan ended up volunteering at a number of events before the company asked him to get the training to become a rope access technician. After getting his license, he took a job as a rope tech in 2014.

DeSoto County sheriff's Sgt. Jeremy Haywood also got hooked on the activity. During 2023's seventh annual Over The Edge with Friends, held in Jackson, Miss., Haywood rappelled 305 feet down the 22-story Region Plaza. The event raised money for Children's of Mississippi, the only children's hospital in the state.

Haywood, who is a PBA member, said he became involved in 2022 solely through Cowan's own participation.

"Being perfectly honest, the only reason I was able to participate with this event was because of the amazing opportunity by (Cowan)," he said. "He is the true hero of this opportunity."



**Haywood (l) and Cowan at an urban rappelling event**

Cowan said he was impressed by Haywood's skills.

"One of the cool parts of the job with OTE is that they rely extensively on volunteers to help put on the rappelling events, and that's where Jeremy comes in," he said. "I asked him in 2022 to volunteer at an event we were hosting in Jackson, Miss., and he agreed. It was the first time he had rappelled off of a building, and the highest he had ever rappelled off of anything. However, he was hooked and couldn't wait to come back in 2023."

Cowan said volunteers donate a full day and a half to the charity -- it is often hot and involves long hours. Most OTE events are two days, with day one being rigging day and day two being event day. On rigging day, the volunteers are typically asked to show up at 1 p.m. and they get trained on safety, gear, using the equipment and loading the equipment. After the hands-on training, they are asked to stay and help with the media and any of the charity's VIPs who are rappelling in the afternoon.

"Event day usually starts bright and early and runs 12 or 13 hours from set up to break down," said Cowan. "In return for all this work, volunteers get the satisfaction of helping the non-profit, a free rappel down whatever building is hosting the event, and drinks and

an appetizer after all the gear has been packed up."

Cowan started his career in the hardwood lumber industry.

"Although the international travel was great, the job was unfulfilling and I have never looked back," he said. "I'm an avid outdoorsman and enjoy backcountry backpacking, rock climbing and caving."

However, he said he always wanted to be in law enforcement, going back to his childhood. He is from a military family, which moved them around a lot. Cowan also served, in the U.S. Army and Tennessee Army National Guard, and is a Gulf War veteran.

He didn't always like what he experienced as the new kid.

"I came to have a serious dislike for bullies," said Cowan. "That carried over into adulthood and what drove me to become a law enforcement officer. I can't stand to see people taken advantage of or bullied. I realize most cops, nurses, firefighters and EMTs are Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts at heart."

Cowan is the lieutenant over the training division, having started with the DCSD in 2009, and he has worked in patrol, motors, special investigations, criminal investigations, SWAT and now training.





**Cowan (l) and his wife rappelling for a good cause**



**It's not Spiderman, it's Haywood.**

Cowan is also a PBA member.

"I joined the PBA to have solid legal protection so I would have the security of knowing I could make an earnest and good-faith effort at doing my job without the worry of how to protect myself from sue-happy criminals," said Cowan.

While on duty as a motor officer, Cowan was run over and suffered six broken bones. Yet he calls it his most positive experience in law enforcement.

"I was flown to the trauma center in Memphis," he said. "It was a bad day. However, the way the entire law enforcement community came to aid me and my family immediately, and in the months following, is one of the most amazing and positive experiences of my life. This truly is a brotherhood, and my brothers and sisters turned up in spades."



**Haywood high in the sky over Memphis**



# SSPBA SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDS GIGLIO-IMPAIRING CONDUCT

**By Jeffrey Steven Warren  
Ellis & Winters LLP**

Since September 2021, SSPBA has witnessed a sharp rise in the number of law enforcement officers in North Carolina reported to their occupational licensing authorities — specifically, the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission and North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission — after receiving “Giglio letters” from their local district attorneys accusing them of dishonesty.

Almost always resulting in a charge of “lacking good moral character,” officers with Giglio letters are forced to defend themselves before their respective commissions in an effort to salvage their law enforcement certification.

Fortunately, over the past year, the SSPBA has had great success helping its members maintain their certifications even after they receive Giglio letters.

For context, district attorneys must disclose evidence to criminal defendants that could be used to impeach witnesses whose credibility “may well be determinative” of a defendant’s guilt or innocence.

Although this is a fact-specific inquiry, some district attorneys decide to write “Giglio letters” to law enforcement officers and/or their employers accusing officers of such egregious misconduct that the officers can no longer serve as witnesses in any future criminal prosecution.

Usually, law enforcement officers have no opportunity to defend themselves before receiving a Giglio letter, and Giglio letters are often the result of mistaken or incomplete information. Unfortunately, law enforcement officers have no way to appeal a Giglio letter.

Rendered unable to take any action that may lead them to the witness stand, officers with Giglio letters are usually terminated.

Compounding this harm, in September 2021, North Carolina enacted N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 17E-16 and 17C-16 (the “Giglio Statutes”) directing the North Carolina Department of Justice to obtain the identity of every officer with a Giglio letter, maintain a database of those individuals (the “Giglio Database”), and, for the remainder of the officer’s life, inform all prospective law enforcement agencies to which the officer applies that the officer is without credibility to testify.

Because the authors of Giglio letters, and their recipients, are directed to notify the officers’ respective commissions when a Giglio letter is sent or received, the commissions almost always launch an investigation into whether the subject of a Giglio letter lacks good moral character.

If the commissions find that the officer does, in fact, lack good moral character, he or she could lose his or her certification.

In 2023, the SSPBA successfully defended almost every member accused of Giglio-impairing conduct — such as dishonesty, mishandling of potential evidence, bias, and, occasionally, potentially criminal activity — before the commissions.

This success demonstrates there are meaningful strategies for maintaining law enforcement certifications even in light of a Giglio letter.

In one case handled by the SSPBA, a federal judge accused an SSPBA member of egregious, and potentially criminal, misconduct after a weeks-long jury trial. The member appealed the decision, but the local district attorney, without so much as notifying the member, wrote a Giglio letter explaining that the member could never again be called as a witness because the member’s character could not be rehabilitated.

Fortunately, the member’s agency believed the member’s story, but the commission launched an investigation to determine whether the member’s certification should be suspended. A



**Jeffrey Steven Warren**

hearing was scheduled to allow the member to defend himself.

Working with an attorney assigned by the SSPBA, the member collected more than 120 letters from colleagues, friends, neighbors and agency heads in support of his “good moral character.”

On the day of the hearing, more than 60 officers and deputies appeared in support of the member, including the member’s agency head, entire chain of command and colleagues from the member’s current and former law enforcement agencies.

The member’s attorney coordinated a presentation consisting of statements by the member, his closest colleagues, and an explanation as to how, in light of the substantial support shown in support of the member, the district attorneys’ determination that the member’s character “could not be rehabilitated” was obviously erroneous.

After considering its decision, the commission notified the SSPBA that it was siding with the member, and the



member was allowed to maintain his certification.

In another case, a member was accused of dishonesty after giving what his agency considered to be an “inconsistent response” during an internal affairs interview.

The agency then disclosed the results of its investigation to the local district attorney, who promptly wrote a Giglio letter, without giving the member a chance to explain himself.

The member was then terminated, and the commission launched an investigation to determine whether the member’s certification should be suspended in light of the district attorney’s letter.

The SSPBA quickly assigned this member an attorney, who obtained the full internal affairs file from the member’s agency. Reviewing the audio recordings of the member’s interviews, the attorney discovered that the allegation that the member had given an “inconsistent response” was incorrect: the member had been asked one question during an earlier interview, and was asked an entirely different question during a subsequent follow-up interview.

The attorney accordingly provided the complete audio recording to the commission and prepared an argument demonstrating that the district attorney’s Giglio letter was based on incomplete information. After this presentation, the commission unanimously found no

probable cause to support the allegation that the member had been dishonest.

In one more illustrative example, a member received a Giglio letter from a district attorney accusing him of dishonesty even though the district attorney never informed the member what the member was accused of being dishonest about.

The member was promptly terminated by his agency and, because of the Giglio letter, the commission began an investigation to determine whether the member’s certification should be revoked.

The SSPBA assigned this member an attorney, who obtained the member’s personnel and internal affairs file. The attorney immediately discovered that nobody at the member’s agency had accused the member of dishonesty, and that the internal affairs investigation did not conclude that the member had committed any act of deception.

Instead, it appeared that the member was being blamed for an act of dishonesty committed by his supervisor.

The member and his attorney prepared a presentation for the commission, which, after deliberating for only five minutes, determined that the Giglio letter was meritless, and allowed the member to maintain his certification.

The SSPBA is proud of its success this year before the commissions in addressing Giglio letters, and the SSPBA stands ready to assist its members when

district attorneys attempt to interfere with their certifications.

The SSPBA instructs all its members to notify the SSPBA any time he or she receives a Giglio letter so the SSPBA can help them maintain their certifications.

## Sources

*Giglio v. United States*, 405 U.S. 150, 154 (1972).

*See In re Washington County Sheriff’s Office*, 271 N.C. App. 204, 843 S.E.2d 720 (2020); *Wetherington v. N.C. Dep’t of Crime Control & Pub. Safety*, 231 N.C. App. 503, 512, 752 S.E.2d 511, 516 (2013), *aff’d as modified sub nom. Wetherington v. N. Carolina Dep’t of Pub. Safety*, 368 N.C. 583, 780 S.E.2d 543 (2015); *United States v. Lujan*, 530 F. Supp. 2d 1224, 1255 (D.N.M. 2008).

*See, e.g., Roe v. Lynch*, 997 F.3d 80, 86 (1st Cir. 2021) (Lipez, J., concurring) (“[A Giglio determination]—which effectively renders an officer unable to testify not only in a particular case, but also in future cases—will likely, at a minimum, result in loss of the officer’s duties as an investigator and, as here, may lead to the termination of employment.”); *Fraternal Ord. of Police Lodge No. 5 by McNesby v. City of Philadelphia*, 267 A.3d 531, 548 (pa. Commw. Ct. 2021) (explaining that a Giglio determinations “fast-track[s] [officers] for termination and [make it difficult] for [officers] to find future work.”)

*Officers are entitled to documents generated in connection with any internal affairs investigation. Wind v. City of Gastonia*, 226 N.C. App. 180, 190, 738 S.E.2d 780, 787, *aff’d*, 367 N.C. 184, 751 S.E.2d 611 (2013); *Bray v. Swisher*, 253 N.C. App. 407, 798 S.E.2d 816 (2017).



**Disaster Relief**

**PBF**

**In 2023, PBF helped two officers in MS who suffered from tornado damages.**

For more information about the foundation please visit | [pbf.org](http://pbf.org)

# VA WILDLIFE RESOURCES OFFICER TAKES PBA LEADERSHIP ROLE

**By Katharine Jefcoats**  
**Editor**

New Kent, Va., native Amanda Nevel descended from a long line of first responders and military service members, but she is the family's first law enforcement officer.

She is duly proud of her lineage.

"We have nurses, firefighters, dispatchers and military but I am the first police officer," said Nevel. "I have several who have served in the U.S. Marine Corps, including my grandfather in WWII, my father, my uncle in Desert Storm, and me. I also have several cousins who served in the U.S. Army landing on D-Day."

In the Marines, Nevel was an E-4 corporal. She served as a military police officer at HMX-1 in Quantico, Va.

Her interests in policing and the outdoors paved the way to her career with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

"I have wanted to be a police officer since I was a kid," said Nevel. "I enjoy being outside. I grew up camping with my family, fishing on ponds and rivers, riding the boat, and hunting with my dad. It seemed the best of both worlds, a love of wildlife and being a police officer."

Over her more than seven years of service so far, she earned accolades and honors, to include Conservation Police Officer for the state in 2022 -- being the second female in agency history to win it -- but the first female veteran; Outstanding Service Award in 2022 from the International Game Warden Association; Conservation Police Officer for Region 1 in 2021 and Office of Professionalism Degree Conserve Connect Protect Certificate for Outreach Initiatives.

When Nevel joined the DWR, she was a conservation police officer in the Northern Neck of Virginia.



**CPO Nevel (at the time) with over 40 otters confiscated in a fur violation case.**

"I enjoy the change in the seasons," she said. "It means a change in the type of law enforcement we conduct. It's refreshing. After a month of fishing and boating, we move to deer hunting, to waterfowl, to turkey and repeat. It helps to keep the job from being the same old thing day after day. You can check hunters one moment for licenses and conduct a search and rescue for a missing hunter the next moment. At the end of the day, we are out there to keep the public safe and protect wildlife for future generations."

It wasn't long before Nevel was recognized for her passion and professionalism, and she was promoted in 2023 to the basic academy training sergeant. She is in charge of training all the new recruits.

"I was promoted with an academy in process so it was a quick learn-on-the-job process," she said. "We made it happen and the 12th Basic Conservation Police Academy graduated on July 20,

2023."

As a part of law enforcement, Nevel also became a member of PBA. She said she joined for the same reason a lot of LEOs do -- for legal protection.

"Unfortunately, the police officer's job has not gotten easier over the years and it is much needed," she said. "While that was the main reason I joined, what I found was much more. I found an organization filled with people who were eager to help officers in need, whether that was testifying for a bill at the General Assembly, hosting classes on mental health and PTSD to increase awareness and support for mental health in the law enforcement community or answering your calls for questions at all hours of the day -- to name a few. They have been a great organization to work with and be a part of so far. I look forward to learning more."

Nevel was elected president of the





**Department of Wildlife Resources officers at Police Week in Washington, D.C., 2022. From left to right: Honor Guard member Master Officer Dallas Neel, Capt. Angela Comer, First Sgt. Amanda Nevel, Honor Guard member Jackson Dierberg, Master Officer Jason Harris and Honor Guard member James A. Hale.**

VAPBA Natural Resources Chapter in 2022. The chapter serves the conservation agencies for the state of Virginia -- the Department of Wildlife Resources, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the U.S. Forestry.

“This is only my second year as president of the chapter, but I think we have hit the ground running,” said Nevel. “We conducted a lobby day this year at the Virginia State General Assembly pushing for support of Bold Blue Line money for the pay and compression issues with our officers, as well as retirement issues. We have been conducting meetings with senators and delegates trying to raise support and awareness of our officers and the important work we do for conservation in the Commonwealth. We have hosted a Behind the Badge mental health seminar in Virginia to raise

awareness for mental health and PTSD.”

In addition to her own personal experiences, Nevel has had career support in the forms of education and mentors, calling herself a “nerd.”

“I enjoy learning new things,” she said.

Nevel earned an advanced diploma from New Kent High School, associate degree in general studies, bachelor’s degree in social psychology, master’s degree in conservation law enforcement leadership, and master’s degree in sustainable business administration management.

Nevel said she has been blessed with good supervisors within the agency -- officers of various ranks who went out of their way to mentor, coach and help new officers.

“(There were) officers that invited you

over during the holidays because you were working and away from your own family,” she said. “Officers who took me hunting for different niches that I had never experienced to make me a better officer.”

Nevel said she loves her job because of the challenges, diversity of duties and the ability it gives her to become a part of her community.

“I love it because it’s different than normal patrol officers,” she said. “I get to enjoy the outdoors and be a police officer at the same time. I enjoy the changes in the season and job to keep the job from getting stale. I enjoy outreach and education, helping a kid catch their first fish or kill their first deer, or teaching them to be safe in the outdoors.

“I enjoy getting to know my community and building those relationships that you



only get in a small town,” continued Nevel. “I enjoy getting to make a difference and have an impact.”

Not surprisingly, Nevel’s hobbies and favorite pastimes include the same activities she enjoys in her professional life.

“I love spending time with my family, friends and my dog, Tucker,” she said. “I enjoy backpacking the Appalachian Trail and have completed over 350 miles so far in Virginia. I enjoy hunting, fishing, the outdoors and traveling. I have been to Colorado for a pheasant hunt and have also participated in a women’s antelope hunt in Wyoming. I enjoy all kinds of fishing from offshore for grouper in Florida to bass fishing in local private ponds.”



**Department of Wildlife Resources Col. Cobb presents Nevel with the Conservation Police Officer of the Year Award for 2022.**



**Antelope hunting in Wyoming**



**Nevel hunts pheasant in Colorado**



# ARKANSAS OFFICER ELLISON RESCUES BOY FROM ICY POND

**By Cindy Baugher**  
**Communications Project Coordinator**

Though only in his fifth year working in law enforcement, Jonesboro, Ark., police Officer Troy Ellison has already been recognized twice for his lifesaving efforts.

As of Jan. 20, 2024, Ellison has another recovery to his credit. A young boy had fallen through the ice on a pond in an apartment complex in Jonesboro. Ellison's body cam captured the stressful moments as he attempted to save the boy.

Ellison can still recall each detail of that rescue.

"Arriving first on scene, I had to determine which pond the child was at," he said. "There are numerous ones on the property. After exiting my vehicle, I saw a resident of the apartment complex point to the pond, saying, 'He's over there.'"

"I ran towards the pond where I could hear a child crying out," continued Ellison. "As I was approaching the fence, I observed a child in distress about 15 feet from the shore. I threw my duty belt to the side as I was running, and I began to crawl out onto the ice. About 10 feet out, the ice started to crack, and I laid down to spread my weight out."

"I was able to reach out far enough to grab his hand. At this point where I grabbed him, I wanted to comfort him and let him know that I had him and that he could leave everything up to me. I was able to pull him out enough where Lt. Shon Morris was able to grab him and take him to the first responders for treatment."

Once he was back to safety, the boy was anxious to see his mom, and he was then taken to the hospital to be thoroughly examined.

Though others were near the pond and watching as Ellison saved the boy, he was the one who took the initiative to act.

He speculated, "I can't speak to the mindset of people just watching him in



**Officer Troy Ellison**

peril. I believe fear is most likely why."

By choosing to act rather than stand by, Ellison was able to save the boy from further distress.

Ellison's path to his law enforcement career was not typical. He joined the Marine Corps when he was 17 and volunteered to join a combat unit being deployed to the Gulf War in 1990 through 1991. He deployed in the Gulf for Desert Storm and Desert Shield. The bond that was built with his fellow Marines is what he calls the best part about his time in the military.

After serving in the Marines, college was next for Ellison. Following college, he had a long stint working in technology.

"I had been working in the IT field for 20 plus years and I was working from home for many of the years," he said. "I would wake up and start working, and I always knew what my day was going to be like. I did not feel any job satisfaction and I knew that I was never going to be able to make a difference in that line of work."

"I decided in 2019 to make a change. I've never regretted it," continued Ellison.

The comradery that he has with the men and women of the Jonesboro Police

Department, like that he found in the Marines, is another positive that he enjoys about being in law enforcement. He said he never found that same feeling when working in the civilian world.

Ellison completed rookie school at Black River Technical College in Pocahontas, Ark., in 2021. He is a patrolman with JPD but has also worked at the Pulaski County Jail and the Craighead County Detention Center. He joined the motorcycle division within JPD, combining the love of motorcycles that he's had from an early age with his daily work life.

Ellison is no stranger to being in the spotlight for the effort and capability he puts into his policing. He was recognized in December 2023 with the Chief's Meritorious Award and received an award in October 2022 for saving two young men who had overdosed. He administered Narcan to both subjects and gave CPR until FD and EMS showed up to relieve him. Both subjects made a full recovery.

Service to others seems to be a family trait for Ellison. Members of his family have served in every major military war, as far back as a great grandfather times five, who was killed in the Revolutionary War while fighting to preserve freedom.

Ellison knows that by serving his community now, he's found the right career. He offered this advice to those who may be looking to get into the field, "I would say to not wait like I did." He laughingly adds, "It gets tough to keep up with these guys in their 20s. If you have the call, then do it sooner rather than later. You won't regret your decision."

Membership in PBA is an important component of his career. He cited the legal services when he said of the PBA, "I hope I never need them, but it's a comfort knowing that if I ever do, they are there." That sentiment seems quite like the feeling that Jonesboro citizens must have knowing that Ellison is patrolling their hometown, ready and able to save a child from an icy pond at a moment's notice.

# LA OFFICER NAMED A CRIMESTOPPERS OF THE YEAR

**By Cindy Baugher**  
**Communications Project Coordinator**

Slidell Police Department's Anthony "Tony" Karsolich was recently named a Crimestoppers Officer of the Year for 2023 by Crimestoppers of Greater New Orleans. This title comes on the heels of him being honored as the Slidell Police Department's 2023 Officer of the Year.

At almost 10 years in law enforcement, with two of those being with the Slidell PD, Karsolich has made quite an impression on his colleagues. He was nominated for his agency's award by his fellow officers. All nominations were then reviewed by an awards board that considered the direct rank nominations as well as each officer's accomplishments throughout the year.

Once Karsolich won this award, each agency in the Greater New Orleans area nominated its own Officer of the Year for the Crimestoppers' recognition. At that point, it was up to the public to vote on the winner through social media and he was selected as the North Shore's top cop.

Karsolich's departmental nomination for the award certainly painted a convincing picture of him as a deserving winner: "Officer Karsolich's vast law enforcement experience, determination and ambition have developed him into a role model amongst his peers. Aside from being one of the most proactive officers in the patrol division, Officer Karsolich consistently mentors younger officers. This leadership has led to younger officers developing quicker and more confidence in their skills.

"Additionally, Officer Karsolich never hesitates to assist fellow senior officers with investigations and arrests. Officer Karsolich's exceptional dedication, outstanding work ethic, unwavering commitment to justice, community involvement, and investigative expertise make him a worthy recipient. His exceptional performance and tireless efforts shine a positive light on law enforcement and serve as an inspiration to his colleagues and the community in which he serves.



**Slidell police Officer Tony Karsolich and his wife, Briana**

Officer Karsolich exemplifies the highest standards of policing, and his contributions deserve to be recognized."

Born in Metairie, La., Karsolich grew up in Slidell, near New Orleans. He always had an interest in law enforcement, admiring Chuck Norris on television. His participation in some ride-alongs with officers in his community only boosted that interest. After high school graduation in 2014, he was hired by the Saint Tammany Sheriff's Office as a corrections officer. After spending a year there, he was able to attend the police academy, which he completed in 2015 and then returned to work at the jail. At the age of 21, he was given the opportunity to transfer to criminal patrol. He later moved to Slidell PD in 2022.

He has served in several capacities in his career, including Corrections Tactical Unit and Special Operations Division.

For a short time while in SOD, he was a member on a proactive task force, which specifically targeted guns and narcotics.

Karsolich chose law enforcement "because it's something different every day, whether bad or good, and I genuinely feel like I'm able to help my community in ways I could not if I had another career. I plan on staying until I reach my 30-year mark with possible more years to follow. I've built such tight relationships with my co-workers. My best friend is a cop and his family has become mine as well. My daughter refers to the majority of my partners as her uncles."

Of policing, Karsolich said, "I fell in love with the adrenaline dump. The way things could be calm and then the next second you're rendering aid to someone, or responding to an armed robbery or just being a hero to a little kid just by simply being a cop."



# RETIREMENT BENEFITS, RECOUPMENT: PROTECT YOURSELF

**By Dale Preiser**  
**SSPBA Senior Staff Attorney**

Recently, a North Carolina member called in with a retirement issue. He had reached retirement age and asked for a calculation of what his pension would be if he retired.

The calculation came back from the state and, based on that calculation, he decided he could live on his retirement benefit.

After a fruitful career of public service, he retired and began receiving his pension.

His security was interrupted a short time later when he received a letter. His retirement account had been audited, and it was determined the state had miscalculated his pension.

His pension payout going forward was reduced, and there was a demand for repayment of money. In addition, his state income tax refund was garnished.

The PBA legal department receives such calls occasionally, and, unfortunately, there appears to be little recourse. Pension plans are allowed to make corrections under a process of “recoupment.”

Pension plans occasionally miscalculate retirement benefits. When they realize a mistake was made, they may reduce the retiree’s future monthly payments and seek to recover or recoup the overpaid amounts.

While the specifics of individual retirement calculations are outside the coverage provided by SSPBA legal benefits, we did want to alert you to the possible hazards when you decide to retire based on information provided to you by your retirement system.



**Dale Preiser**

On Dec. 29, 2022, the SECURE Act 2.0 was signed into federal law to address issues of pension plan miscalculations and recoupment. Provisions related to this matter provide that repayment may be discretionary to the fiduciary and not demanded under IRS rules.

In addition, the act mandates procedures and provisions on recoupment and provides limits on the recovery of overpayments; limits on the number of years used to determine an overpayment amount; prevents interest accrual on the overpayment; prevents recovery of an overpayment from an innocent surviving spouse and requires notification of appeal rights.

There may be one more option that could lead to a legal challenge to stop

recoupment, and that is a legal concept of “estoppel.” An issue of estoppel may be created and could give rise to a legal challenge against recoupment through the state law process. So, how does it work and what can you do?

In *Quillian v. Employees’ Retirement System of Georgia*, 259 Ga. 253 Sup Ct. Ga (1989), retired Judge John Quillian applied for retirement. He received a response approving retirement and stating the monthly benefit amount.

After receiving the letter, he resigned stating, in part, “This resignation is tendered in reliance upon the fact that the [retirement board] has approved my application for service retirement based upon 34 years of employment with the state, pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 47-2-120(d).”

Six months later he received a letter declaring an error occurred and that the monthly benefit amount would be significantly reduced.

There are many legal nuances to the court’s decision, but, ultimately, the court ruled the plan was estopped or prohibited from reducing his monthly benefit amount as he relied upon the promise and —based on that promise — he resigned.

So, what did Judge Quillian do that you can do to possibly create a successful estoppel argument? Be proactive and submit a letter of resignation which clearly states, in part, that your decision to resign is based upon the calculated years of service and retirement benefits.

Case law on estoppel is not a “one size shoe fits all” matter. But, being aware of this issue and taking some action may provide some protection.



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# NCPBA: PASSAGE OF SB 9 ENDS UNFAIR DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES

**By John Midgette**  
**NCPBA Executive Director**

Political efforts by North Carolina Division's Winston-Salem Triad Chapter to reform the unfair and sometimes unlawful practices of the City of Winston-Salem police disciplinary policies and practices, finally came to fruition on Aug. 16, 2023, when Senate Bill 9 passed into law.

Since the early 1990s, PBA discovered that WSPD had one of the most egregious and arbitrary discipline systems in the state and nation. So poor was the system that it failed to provide some of the basic recommendations by the International Association of Chiefs of Police dating back to the mid-1980s.

While PBA had established membership in WSPD in 1991, efforts to address unfair disciplinary practices did not begin until the election of a local chapter board of directors and the first ever PBA candidate screenings of Winston-Salem's mayor and city council took place. While progress occurred, systemic problems with disciplinary procedures remained unchanged.

All that changed on Sept. 11, 2000, with the election of Officer Brett Moyer as chapter president. Under Moyer's leadership and with eight new board members, the Winston-Salem Chapter filed a series of successful grievances over the next three years. The chapter resolved concerns including longevity pay, federal overtime, medical benefits, public records requests and improper hiring procedures.

While these successes followed successful PBA candidate screenings of the Winston-Salem City Council, Moyer became the target of city management, especially as the chapter focused on unfair disciplinary practices.

On Nov. 26, 2003, Moyer was fired. The charges were not only false, but ridiculous. Moyer's termination best exemplified the unfair, arbitrary and arguably unlawful practices of the



*"We have witnessed instances where due process has been threatened by politics or emotion. The civil service board strengthens due process for our first responders. I have had a front row seat to what our officers do and so it is a natural fit for me to work with the PBA."*

*Rep. Jeff Zenger*



*"I was proud to help with getting this legislation over the finish line. In today's policing environment officers are constantly on guard against those that want to take away their livelihood, by second guessing their actions or falsely accusing them with bogus complaints."*

*The passage of this bill into law will guarantee that hundreds of officers will have due process protections as they risk their lives for the citizens they serve."*

*Sen. Joyce Krawiec*

corrupt culture the chapter was trying to address.

Moyer's final appeal before the city manager was conducted on Feb. 12, 2004. Despite outstanding representation by two PBA assigned attorneys, expert witness testimony and PBA staff assistance that not only exonerated Moyer but revealed false and/or misleading practices in the investigation (substantiated by sworn testimony from the IA investigator), the city manager ignored these facts and upheld the termination. Moyer said it got so bad that officers were afraid to come and testify in his defense, concerned that they might be the next one fired for speaking out and telling the truth.

"My biggest fear was that the city would take action against my law enforcement certification," he said.

His termination occurred the day after giving a speech at a city council meeting where the council voted to do away with longevity pay for new officers while freezing longevity for current officers.

During preparations for a lawsuit against the city, a settlement was reached on June 23, 2004. The termination was rescinded, and Moyer's certification was carried by another agency, but his law enforcement career in Winston-Salem was over. For his efforts to just do the right thing, the citizens of Winston-Salem lost an excellent police officer.

As for Moyer, he advised he had no regrets, saying at the time that he knew what might happen and he would do it all again. Doing the right thing and taking a stand, however, is not always met with comfort.

"Back when all this was happening, I was very concerned about my future in law enforcement and my ability to provide for my family," said Moyer.

At the time, his wife was recovering from a battle with cancer and they had two small children. His wife was a stay-at-home mom, and their finances were tight to begin with. Winston-Salem even fought





*"Our system of justice is built on the principle of innocent until proven guilty. Unfortunately, that principle has been unfairly thrown by the wayside when it comes to our men and women in uniform. I'm proud to have helped pass legislation that commits to fair and impartial due process for any disciplinary allegations against law enforcement."*  
Senate Leader Phil Berger

against his claim for unemployment, but the city lost, giving his family some income. As the grievance process dragged on, they were barely making ends meet.

"Fortunately, a group of officers passed the hat around and came by the house with cash to help us get by," he said.

Since leaving law enforcement, Moyer has built a successful career as a financial advisor. For nearly 20 years now, he has been with Ameriprise Financial. He is the treasurer on the High Point Police Foundation and an assistant baseball coach for the varsity baseball team at Atkins High School in Winston-Salem. He continues to serve PBA members and their families with fundraisers and contributions to PBA's charitable arm, the Police Benevolent Foundation.

Moyer's leaving left a hole in the morale of his fellow officers and, while the chapter and membership continued, little leadership stepped forward to continue what he had started.

That all changed in the spring of 2015



**Brett Moyer as a police officer**



**President Brett Moyer as a member of the Winston-Salem board**

with the election of David Rose as the chapter president. Under his leadership, chapter screenings resumed, resulting in the most successful PBA endorsement of Winston-Salem City Council in history. With almost full council support and newly acquired communications with the city manager's office, chapter successes included a citywide, 60-mile radius take home car policy, a new pay scale system and a 24% across the board pay raise over the past two years.

In 2020, following successful screenings of state legislators and securing support from the majority of the Winston-Salem City Council and the mayor, PBA pushed for long sought legislation for a civil service board providing an independent, final and binding hearing process for officers after city management determination.

The significance of this cannot be overstated. Beginning in the late 1940s, the city management form of government was adopted in North



**Former Rep. Jon Hardister**

Carolina for all cities with a citizen population of 25,000 or more.

Started to prevent political corruption in government, municipalities such as Winston-Salem turned what appeared as a laudable cause into a system of unfettered autocratic corruption by city management.

Instead of preventing inappropriate political interference from elected officials towards city management, the system provided absolute power to city managers to control the actions of police officers that has led to the unfair and even unlawful destruction of numerous law enforcement careers.

This system has been vigorously defended by government organizations such as the North Carolina League of Municipalities, established more than 100 years ago. During more recent times, anti-law enforcement animus, violence against police officers, and efforts by city officials to defund the police have led some cities to use this system of city management autocracy to manipulate legitimate and lawful police actions and end careers of numerous police officers for political reasons and otherwise, void of any required findings of fact or conclusions of law.

Such was the case for Winston-Salem police officers like Brett Moyer until Aug. 16, 2023, with the passage of SB 9.

Following months of discussions with

Winston-Salem city leaders and state legislators endorsed by PBA, HB 470, Winston-Salem/Greensboro Civil Service Board, was introduced in the 2023 North Carolina General Assembly on March 23, 2023. Greensboro members were added to the bill following the reactivation of the Piedmont Triad Chapter and the leadership of Chapter President and Greensboro police Officer Thomas Sescoc.

However, with HB 470 scheduled before the House Local Government Committee on April 25, 2023, several local officials began withdrawing their promised support. The Winston-Salem mayor and several council members advised legislators to oppose the bill. Others simply stayed silent.

The Greensboro city manager, despite support from the mayor, called the bill a racist bill. Sen. Paul Lowe agreed. Several local officials led by Winston-Salem City Attorney Angela Carmen made personal presentations before the Local Government Committee that not only contradicted the city's previous position of support to PBA, but included statements that were either false or had nothing to do with the bill.

Fortunately, the opposition did not impress the committee as HB 470 received a near unanimous, bipartisan favorable report, with some committee members voicing support for similar legislation in their districts.

This same day, HB 470 received a favorable report from the House Rules Committee. The bill passed the full House on April 26, 2023, was engrossed, and sent to the Senate.

On an interesting note, opposition to the bill came from an odd source. HB 470 was opposed by a police union in Greensboro that has been representing its members for several decades. The Greensboro Police Officers Association, while not showing up at the committee hearing apparently authorized police management to report their opposition to the committee.

Their bizarre opposition to procedural due process for their members was



**Brett Moyer and his family**

confirmed by our local chapter leadership who after follow-up with GPOA were told 1) they were not invited to the table, which is untrue and 2) they believe due process for police officers would give city council too much power, which is inconceivable.

While such myopic behavior did not stop House passage of the bill, it did bolster other local opposition to stall the bill in the Senate. Led by Senate Democrats representing Forsyth and Guilford counties, claims that the bill was "racist" buried the bill in the Senate Rules Committee.

Fortunately, PBA endorsed House and Senate members who did not succumb to the prevarications of the bill's detractors and worked diligently to bring HB 470 back to the table. Amended into SB 9, Local Omnibus Changes, the language of HB 470 passed in both House and Senate chambers simultaneously on Aug. 16, 2023.

Because of the bill's special circumstances as a budget item, SB 9 was not subject to gubernatorial veto, thus ending further opposition or debate, and on Aug. 17, 2023, was ratified becoming state law, SL 2023-112.

Winston-Salem and Greensboro police officers are now joined by North Carolina's state law enforcement officers and local officers in six other

municipal agencies who are entitled to fair impartial and binding due process for disciplinary allegations arising from their duties as law enforcement officers.

This would not have happened without the efforts of the chapters led by Winston-Salem Chapter President David Rose, and later Jamie Keltner, and newly elected Piedmont Triad Chapter President Thomas Sescoc. PBA also appreciates the support of Greensboro Mayor Nancy Vaughan and the Professional Firefighters of Greensboro.

PBA is especially grateful to those legislators who never wavered from their support, promise and commitment to our members and the professional men and women of law enforcement. Their tireless dedication, despite fierce opposition from many of their local government colleagues, is what ultimately pushed this over the finish line.

They include Rep. Jeff Zenger and Majority Whip Jon Hardister, and Sens. Joyce Krawiec and President Pro Tempore Phil Berger. The first person to contact PBA when the bill became law was Moyer, who advised how pleased he was for fellow officers. Brett advised that he never thought he would see this (due process) happen in his lifetime. Without the dedication, leadership, and sacrifice of officers like him, it probably never would have.



# EDUCATION LEADS ARPBA MEMBER TO POLICING, FBI ACADEMY

**By Randy Byrd**  
**Director of Foundation and**  
**Media Relations**

Early educational circumstances become a foundation for PBA member and FBI Academy graduate Andrew Burningham attending and graduating from the prestigious FBI National Academy would not surprise those who knew him in White Hills, Ariz., or where he went to high school in Dolan Springs.

White Hills is a small, unincorporated community in the northwest portion of the state. Fifty miles from Las Vegas, many consider it a ghost town.

“The community had no schools when I moved there at 13 to live with my mother and stepfather,” he said.

An education for Burningham meant attending school that was about 55 miles away. Seventeen of those miles were to a bus stop where he and another student would catch the bus to continue their trip. The satellite high school he attended had no extracurricular activities, not even sports programs. This led Burningham to concentrate on his academic pursuits.

Taking classes from the local community college was part of this effort as he gained dual credits and was able to graduate from high school in three years at 16.

After high school, he attended Community College of South Nevada in Las Vegas, graduating with an associate



**Lt. Burningham**

degree in general education. Further work led to a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 2008.

“From a young age, I had an interest in helping others and, as I got older, the chance to do something different also piqued my interest,” he said.

This interest led to the Conway (Ark.) Police Department and the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy. His 15-year career took him from patrol officer to supervisor of patrol and narcotics teams, to his position as lieutenant over the narcotics unit. He also has the crime suppression unit under his command. In 2018, his leadership efforts were recognized as he was named Supervisor of the Year.

In 2023, Burningham was selected to attend the FBI National Academy. He graduated June 8. According to the FBI, the academy is a professional course of study for U.S. and international law enforcement managers nominated by their agency heads because of demonstrated leadership qualities.

The 10-week program — which provides coursework in intelligence theory, terrorism and terrorist mindsets, management science, law, behavioral science, law enforcement

communication and forensic science — serves to improve the administration of justice in police departments and agencies at home and abroad, and to raise law enforcement standards, knowledge and cooperation worldwide.

Leaders and managers of state, local, county, tribal, military, federal and international law enforcement agencies attend the FBI National Academy.

Sessions include about 265 officers (including up to 35 international students), who take undergraduate and/or graduate courses at the FBI Academy campus. Classes are offered in a diverse set of areas, and officers participate in a wide range of leadership and specialized trainings. Officers share ideas, techniques and experiences with each other and create lifelong partnerships that transcend state and national borders. Burningham found this to be most true.

“This provided a unique opportunity to talk to law enforcement officers from every corner of the country and get an idea of the challenges they face,” he said. “I met people that I still talk to and seek their advice.”

Burningham plans to use the methodologies he learned on effectively speaking with and interviewing victims or suspects. These techniques also transfer into his supervisory role as a lieutenant so he may better communicate with his own team of officers.

Burningham has been married for 16 years to Serena. She is an administrative nurse at a local hospital, in charge of training new nurses. They have three children, a 15-year-old son, a 13-year-old son and a 7-year-old daughter. Noah is in the JROTC at the high school, as well as in the marching band. Mason runs track and Cali does gymnastics.

In his spare time, Burningham enjoys working on old cars.

“I have an old Volkswagen that I have restored, as well as a 1961 F-100 that I am currently working on,” he said.



**The Burningham family on vacation**



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Samantha Doyle

### **North Carolina**

Liliana Ashburn

Nicholas Ruff

Claire Williams

Lucy Yopp

### **South Carolina**

Margaret Findley

Jordan Lester

### **Tennessee**

Madison Adams

Mary Hannah Craddock

Atlee Dean

Teagan Naillone

### **Virginia**

Brooke Bruggeman

Abbie Cooperthite

Madeline DiLuigi

Delilah Fox

### **West Virginia**

Katie Kuykendall

Hannah Stephens

### **Foundation**

Atlee Dean

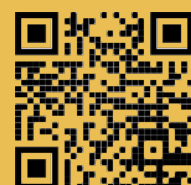
Madeline DiLuigi

Hannah Stephens

### **Jack L. Roberts**

Not awarded

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# VIRGINIA MEMBER NAMED OFFICER OF THE YEAR

**By Randy Byrd**  
**Director of Foundation and Media Relations**

Spending time with her grandfather while growing up had a tremendous influence on Hopewell police Detective Tara Clark and her career choice -- influence that would lead her to be the first female SWAT operator with her agency and the 2023 Officer of the Year.

"I spent a lot of time with my grandfather, who had a love for anything police-related," she said. "There was always some kind of police-related show or movie on the television at the house. He always had the utmost respect for law enforcement and members of public safety. It wasn't until years into my career that I realized the impact that had on my career choice."

A local girl by all measures, Clark grew up in Hopewell and Chesterfield, Va. Her father was a brick mason and her mother worked for a housing authority.

Clark graduated from Thomas Dale High School in 2005, where she played varsity soccer all four years of high school. She also played volleyball, was selected to attend a youth leadership conference in 10th grade and was a member of the National Honors Society.

An obvious overachiever, she entered Virginia Commonwealth University and graduated in 2009. She earned a dual degree in psychology and criminal justice with a forensic crime scene investigation concentration.

Not one to slow down, Clark entered the 78th Basic Law Enforcement Academy at Crater Criminal Justice and Training Academy and after graduation began work at the Hopewell Police Department. She has worked for Hopewell PD for her entire career.

Clark started her work as a patrol officer in field services and later became the training coordinator.

During this time, she became a



**Hopewell police Detective Tara Clark**

general instructor and a lead field training instructor for the field training officer development program. After transferring back to patrol, she continued her role as a field training officer and was also trained as a supervisor for her shift. She transferred to the criminal investigations unit in July 2022 as a major crimes detective.

"During that same time, I also tried out for the Hopewell Police Department (SWAT) and became the first female in the history of Hopewell PD to be selected as a member," she said.

Clark was formally recognized at the 79th Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 637 Anniversary and Community Awards Banquet as the Officer of the Year. Clark was nominated by her supervisor, Detective Sgt. Ryan Morris, in part because of her keen investigative

abilities.

"She brought new ideas, investigative techniques, and much more to include bringing this unit to where technology has advanced over the years," said Morris. "She has utilized all of this to not only assist other members within the department, other members in CIU, but also has solved several high-profile cases to include homicides."

One case in particular was a homicide of a young juvenile. There was almost no evidence in this case. There was one bullet that was recovered from the scene and a description of a vehicle that fled the area. This was all detectives had to work with.

"Detective Clark worked this case from every angle she could come up with," Morris said. "She eventually got a

breakthrough after she was called out for another homicide. She was able to utilize new technology that the city employed to solve the new homicide within roughly 24 hours.”

While interviewing the suspects involved in that homicide, Clark ultimately got confessions, and she also got the key piece of information that led her to solving the homicide of the young juvenile that she was still working.

“Both of these cases brought indictments due to her hard work and determination,” said Morris.

Clark is driven by the support of her husband, Bob, and her faith system.

“I am fortunate to have had many mentors who have had a significant impact on my career, but the person who has had the most substantial influence on my career is my husband,” she said.

Her husband is also in law enforcement as a lieutenant with the Colonial Heights Police Department.

“As for leaders, nothing compares to Jesus Christ and his teachings,” she said. “He was a humble leader that emphasized the importance of being discerning without controlling the disciples. He showed grace to everyone,

not to just those who followed Him or had the same beliefs as Him. He spoke the truth even when it wasn’t popular, but carried out His mission with kindness and compassion.”

Clark and her husband have been married for 10 years and they have three girls, Brooklyn, Emma and Rylee. In her spare time, she enjoys reading and learning about history.

Spending time with her family, visiting historical landmarks, visiting museums, watching musicals and attending Broadway shows are also part of her interests. Clark also likes cooking and learning how to cook dishes from other cultures and parts of the world.

She is proud to be part of law enforcement and to be a member of PBA.

“We often have to make split second decisions in situations and are expected to always make the right decision,” she said. “We are often praised and persecuted at the same time and have to maintain valor with poise and good deportment.

“The services offered by the PBA are critical to ensure the fair protection for officers and to make sure that the law enforcement community has a voice,” continued Clark.



**Clark with her husband and three daughters**



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# AT-WILL RESIGNATION: IS TWO WEEKS' NOTICE THE BEST IDEA?

**By Dale Preiser**  
**SSPBA Senior Staff Attorney**

When is the last time you heard an employer terminate an employee with a two-weeks' notice?

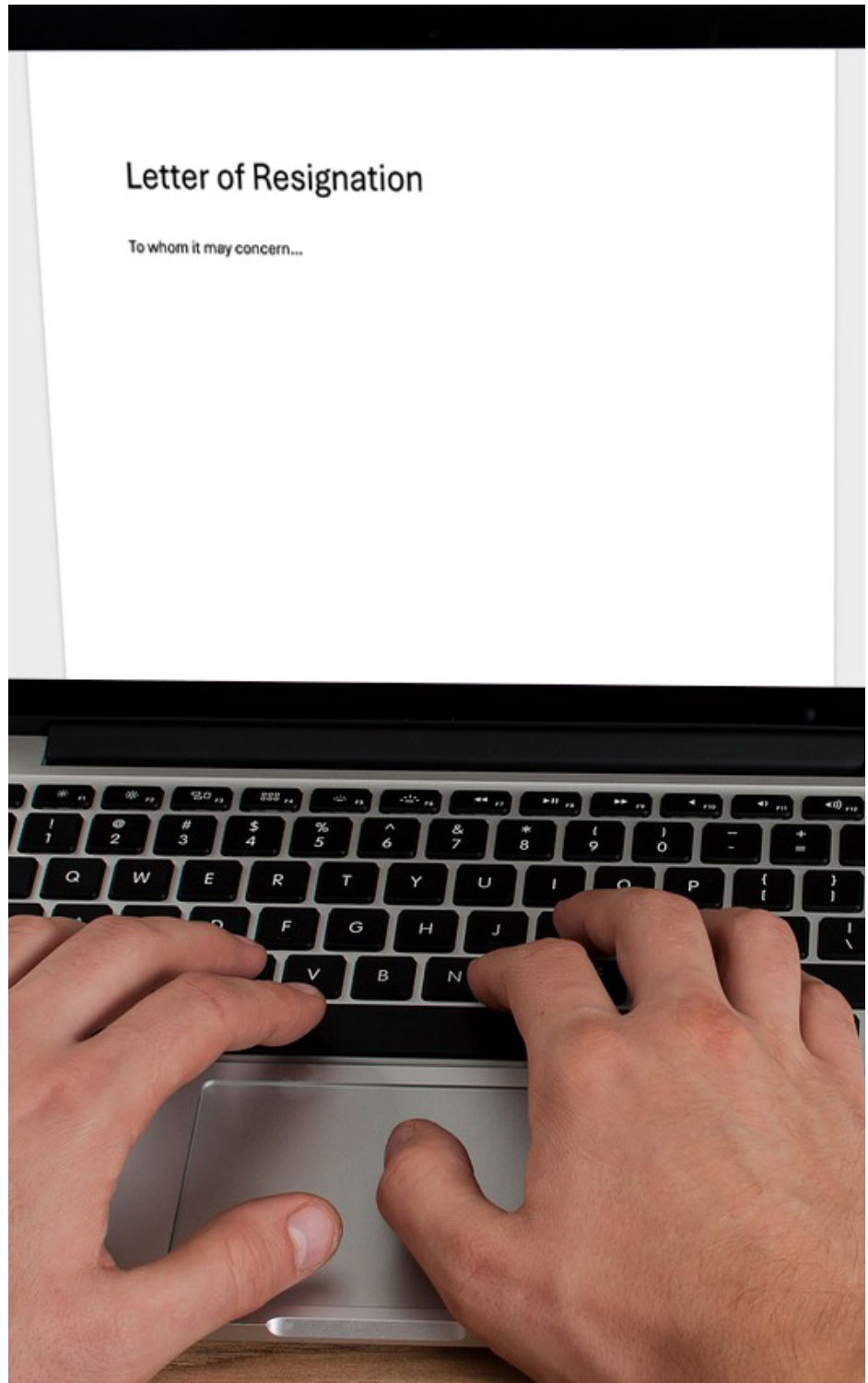
If you said "Never," you are probably correct. It would be courteous and respectful to give the terminated employee a chance to move on, right?

Rather, most employers put their interest first and consider the consequences of keeping a potentially disgruntled or disinterested employee among the ranks and opt to make the termination effective immediately.

This begs the question of why do employees resign with a two-weeks' notice? There is no state or federal law which requires a two-weeks' notice. The common reasons for an employee to give a two-weeks' notice include etiquette and consideration of the employer's need to replace a worker and not "burning bridges" by putting an employer short on covering shifts that have already been scheduled. After all, a letter of recommendation is often helpful.

Over the past several years, possibly due to short-staffing at agencies, there has been an increasing number of calls from members who have submitted their resignation and then find themselves mired in policy violations, disciplinary action and termination prior to the final date of the resignation. Once an employer finds out an officer is leaving, it is not uncommon for the employer to "put paper" on the employee to hamper efforts to move on.

The way a separation of employment is reported to Standards and Training or POST is also a consideration. If the employer has a two-week opportunity to take action to report termination, resignation in lieu of termination, resignation under investigation, or request decertification causing a certification review, then an immediate clean resignation could eliminate these



possibilities.

Whether or not you should consider making your next resignation effectively immediately or with two weeks' notice is not clear cut. Factors to consider include: the employer's reputation for

what they have done in the past to other officers; whether you already have a target on your back; whether you need a reference; and certification issues. We recommend giving some thought to the matter rather than automatically providing the traditional notice.

# 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 12 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](http://pbfi.org/about-us)





## PBA ASSISTS TNPBA MEMBER WITH MAINTAINING CAREER

**By Dale Preiser**  
**SSPBA senior staff attorney**

As a PBA staff attorney, it is a great privilege to assist members when they are experiencing what could be considered one of the worst days of their lives.

Back in September 2020, I received one of those calls from a Tennessee member. He had just been placed on administrative leave pending investigation for a use of force incident.

He had been with the agency for 13 years and PBA member since 2007. He had a family, a career, a home, his reputation and everything to lose from simply doing his job correctly.

The investigation continued for four months until this member received his notice of termination at the end of January 2021. The alleged policy violations

were career-ending.

Local PBA counsel was assigned after a brief coverage review. Fortunately, this member was entitled to civil service protection.

Over the next two years, a battle ensued. The assigned PBA attorney left no stones unturned. Counsel relentlessly sought medical records and documents needed for his client's defense.

A medical examiner and use of force expert were consulted to show that the suspect's injuries occurred while resisting and then attempting to evade arrest.

In March 2023, vindication arrived. After a short deliberation, the civil service board unanimously ordered reinstatement.

For personal and professional reasons,

our member has elected to maintain anonymity. He has moved on with his law enforcement career.

We have discussed his case and shared our appreciation for him choosing to be a member of Southern States Police Benevolent Association.

Our member wanted to share his thoughts on the PBA: "There are no words to express my appreciation and sincere thanks to the entire SSPBA organization and local counsel. Without the SSPBA, I would have basically been ruined. They fulfilled every benefit immediately and without hesitation. Please, join today if you aren't a member and encourage your friends and coworkers to join. Don't leave your driveway without being a member. It could make the difference in keeping everything you've worked for, your career and your retirement."

## Check out our foundation's site: [pbfi.org](http://pbfi.org)



**Get information on:**

**Scholarships**

**Glow Runs**

**PTSD Seminars**

**Fundraisers**

# AUGUSTA, GA CAR SHOW IS POPULAR FUNDRAISER FOR PBF

**By Katharine Jefcoats  
Editor**

What better car to display in a show designed to raise money for law enforcement officers than a restored former police car?

It took owner David Roland of Pelion, S.C., a year to restore the 1929 Dodge DA sedan. The sedan was originally used as a police car in Jefferson County, Ga.

Roland and wife Sandy made the one hour trip west of their home to Augusta, Ga., for the Back the Badge Car Show held to benefit the Police Benevolent Foundation. Classic Collision hosted the event, which was supported by many local donors.

PBF provides funds to law enforcement officers who are members of PBA and in need, scholarships to offspring of members and provides free seminars to bring awareness to PTSD and suicide to first responders.

Roland thanked his mother and sons for their assistance in restoring the car, which he said was done in honor of his father, Harold Roland. The elder Roland never got to building the car, he said.

"This took a lot of work," said Roland.

The 2023 event was the second Back the Badge Car Show. A brainchild of the PBA's Augusta's River Region Chapter, the show was developed as a fundraiser.

The chapter 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, said Patrick Cullinan, SSPBA Georgia staff representative.

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, Cullinan said. His garage holds a 1973 Corvette Stingray his wife owns and a 1987 Buick Grand National that is his.



**Wyatt Workman, who attended the car show with his dad, Bryan Workman, takes a shine to this classic car.**

Driving a stroked and turbocharged 86 Mustang GT making about 600hp led Kitchens 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.

Anthony Thuan, a State Farm Insurance agent in Augusta, is one of the car enthusiasts who attended the 2023 show.

"I like car shows," said Thuan. "We get together and show off what we have. It's not a judgment, we are all here to have fun and also look at other people's cars."

His show car was a 1959 Corvette with a 327 motor and four-speed transmission,

fully restored in 1996. But it's not his only car. At the time of the car show, he was finishing up a 1957 Chevrolet Bel-Air.

"I plan to leave my car collection to my kids," said Thuan. "Specialty cars hold their value for resale."

Larry Bracken, SSPBA vice president and Augusta's River Region Chapter president, attended the 2023 car show. The weather on that day started drizzly and cloudy but dried up and provided a perfect temperature for an outdoor crowd.

"The weather was playing tricks and we got a little bit of rain," he said. "Car owners sure don't want to bring cars out in bad weather."



Bracken concurred with Thuan on the sentiment behind car shows.

“It brings the community together,” he said. “It’s a collaboration where we can share what we do as a people to raise money and generate more community involvement.”

Bracken has nearly three decades of service in law enforcement in the Richmond County Marshal’s Office.

To say the chapter was pleased with the success of their first car show in 2022 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.

The 2023 event did not disappoint, either.

“We met the goal of \$10,000,” said Bracken. “We had really good sponsors and that helped tremendously.”









# PTSD SEMINARS VITAL TO FIRST RESPONDERS' MENTAL HEALTH

**By Katharine Jefcoats  
Editor**

Police suicide is real and happens more often than civilians probably realize – that's likely the primary lesson first responders learn during a PBF-sponsored Behind the Badge PTSD and Suicide Prevention seminar.

Kitty Webb learned the hard way. She married Don Webb, who became a police lieutenant for Greensboro, N.C., and began a family with the birth of daughter Sarah Madalyn -- Maddie. The union lasted 12 years and the divorce that followed lasted 10 years.

Despite the split, the two remained best friends.

"If you didn't know we were divorced, you wouldn't," she said. "People often described us as the poster children of what a divorced couple should look like. What I mean by that is, we were best friends. While we could not be married, we still did so much together."

The former couple still had meals together, celebrated holidays, attended functions for their daughter, went to barbecues together, sat on their front porches and had long talks together. The divorce was more a formality, where they thought they could be better parents to their daughter not married than married.

Kitty said she and her former husband often exchanged light-hearted banter, typical of people who have a long-term relationship. It was not unusual for Kitty and Don to tease each other about who was wrong about something and who was right. Kitty felt a familiar tug in that direction June 28, 2022, during what would be the last phone conversation in which she and Don engaged.

Not even the sound of a gunshot on Don's end startled her or caused her alarm.

"My mind goes back to that day of the phone conversation, hearing the gun



**Presenter Tim Rutledge has decades of experience as a LEO and instructor**

go off, but not realizing that's what had happened and continuing to talk to him on the telephone, and not hearing him talk back to me," she said. "I thought to myself, 'He's not talking back to me, because for once in his life, Don Webb is listening to me.'

"It was always a rolling joke between us that he was always right, and I was always wrong, so when there was silence on the other end, I thought he was actually listening to me," Kitty continued. "I heard the sirens start to approach, and in my mind, I then thought he was on a police call and, perhaps, forgot to mute me. I thought to myself, 'I'll just hang out here on the line. Maybe this will be an interesting police call and I'll get to hear it.'

"It was then that my mind started racing," she said. "I started calling his name on the phone. Screaming it. He wouldn't answer. But I was still

connected. I started screaming for help and asking if anybody could hear me out there.

"Finally, the responding officer picked up the phone and said they would call me back, after asking who she was speaking to," said Webb.

The responding officer called back moments later and still in disbelief, Webb said, "Is Don OK?" The officer responded, "No, Don is not OK. He has been shot. He shot himself."

Kitty could hear Don's agonal breathing because he did not die immediately.

"I heard him take his last breath, and then I raced out of my office and got to the police substation," she said. "I don't remember getting there. Equally as traumatizing was when the police brought my daughter to me to the substation. When her eyes met mine, we

both fell to our knees.”

Don was holding a photo of his daughter when he died.

The responding officer was Greensboro police Sgt. D. L. Rasecke, a 20-year veteran of law enforcement. She remembered her relationship with Don as affirmative and constructive.

“My first impression of Don was a positive one,” she said. “He was immediately open and approachable. He not only made it clear he was available to help in any way, he demonstrated that as well. Don was the kind of supervisor that I could call and ask for advice or assistance in trying to figure something out, and he always took the time to do so.

“But even more so, he did so in a manner that made people feel like they were just asking an old friend for help,” continued Sgt. Rasecke. “I never felt like Don judged me as a person or as a supervisor. He was kind, genuine and trustworthy. We often talked on a more personal level after taking care of business on scene, and I learned very quickly how much he loved his daughter, Maddie, and how dedicated he was to her. He spoke of her quite often. I knew that he loved to golf and smoke cigars and even sang with a choir. He was a funny guy, likable and easy to be around.”

She was on patrol near his neighborhood when the shooting call came in. Running on the adrenaline of a veteran police officer, Sgt. Rasecke said she didn’t comprehend she was responding to his house.

“I remember forming an opinion in my head that it sounded like an accidental shooting,” she said. “I was so close that the dispatcher wasn’t able to add notes or warn me before I was already out of my patrol car. I remember seeing what I would call ‘clues’ but my brain never put those clues together. I was completely unaware I had responded to Don’s residence. I didn’t even realize it was him until after he had passed.

“I had stepped away to make a phone

call to someone, and instead my own phone rang with the person asking me if it was Don” continued Sgt. Rasecke. “All of a sudden, those words formed this realization in my head. All the clues flashed through my head in an instant. The best way I can describe it is when you’re watching a movie and someone dies, and they have a ‘flash’ of their entire life in a matter of seconds. I immediately had this ‘flash’ of all the clues I had seen but hadn’t put together, and it felt like my mind exploded.”

Neither woman knows why Don took his own life, although he did leave notes behind.

“In the letter left for Greensboro Police Department, the last line read, ‘Please tell the nation police suicide is a real problem,’” Kitty said. “I know police departments across the nation are starting to become more assertive in supporting their officers who suffer with PTSD and talking about it more but not fast enough.



**Sgt. Danielle Rasecke**



**Maddie and Kitty Webb**





### **Houston County sheriff's Lt. Matt Moulton**

Slowly, the stigma is being chiseled away, but not fast enough.

"Therefore, Maddie and I make it our mission to tell the nation. We make it our mission to tell his story and help anyway we can."

Kitty and Sgt. Rasecke have since discovered Behind the Badge PTSD and Suicide Prevention seminars, provided free through the Police Benevolent Foundation for all LEOs and their families.

Kitty said she is making it her mission to help as many victims and survivors as she can.

"I have only been to one of these seminars and plan to do as many as I am invited to," she said. "The first one moved me immensely, and many people came up to me and showed their appreciation. I feel like I made a difference and that's all I can ask for. That's all Don asked for in his final written statement."

Sgt. Rasecke also attended a seminar and found it beneficial, especially the section on PTSD.

"I already knew I had PTSD, but to see it on the Power Point and check the boxes in my head made me process it differently," she said. "What I experienced after that incident were true

signs of PTSD. And when you talk about PTSD, some of the signs seem wild. And yet, they're normal. I am so lucky to have a good therapist who told me that very day what to expect. And in the first session, the very first thing she said to me was 'You're not going crazy.' I needed to hear that. And I think people need to hear that in the seminars as well. You're not crazy for feeling what you feel."

The seminars were a PBF staple until COVID hit in 2020. They resumed in 2023 and included a class held in Warner Robins, Ga. Houston County sheriff's Lt. Matt Moulton, a veteran with almost 30 years' experience, attended. He said he witnessed the worst of humanity in those decades.

"I think the PTSD seminars hosted by the PBF are crucial to the survival of law enforcement officers," he said. "I have been involved in incidents where deadly force was used to stop violent crimes. I have witnessed carnage following motor vehicles crashes. I have pulled children out of swimming pools that have drowned. I have witnessed the absolute worst of humanity."

"I have always considered myself to be mentally and emotionally sound. I am a master instructor in the Georgia Resiliency Program," continued Lt. Moulton. "I am a Christian and active in my church where I serve as a youth

leader in our high school ministry. I did not believe that I had let my career affect me and have never dwelled on all the horrific things I've seen."

However, marital discord broke him May 17, 2022, when his wife of 20 years told him she wanted a divorce. Lt. Moulton said he was stunned.

"We had a great marriage," he said. "We never argued. In fact, neither one of us had ever raised our voice at the other one. We have a 15-year-old daughter. I learned in the days following that she had been having an affair. To say I was devastated would be an understatement."

"I am so thankful for my experience in the PTSD seminar and the Georgia Resiliency Program," he continued. "Those two programs, along with my faith in God, allowed me to overcome the worst days of my life. I am not 100% over what happened, but I know God has me here for a reason."

Lt. Moulton said the material presented in the PTSD Seminar was relevant to what he experienced.

"I am so thankful for the opportunity to promote what I so greatly benefited from," he said. "I don't know what life will be like without my wife in my life, but I know that I will be here for my daughter, no matter what."

PBAGA Regional Director Guy Fussell played a role in getting the seminar to Warner Robins, one of three he has coordinated. Fussell is a sergeant and training facility supervisor at the Houston County Sheriff's Office and a LEO veteran of 37 years.

Sgt. Fussell agreed there is an overwhelming need for resources and services that cater to LEOs suffering from PTSD and suicidal ideations.

"During my career I have taken multiple courses on dealing with the mental health individuals and have become what I feel is very knowledgeable on how to deal with individuals in crisis," he said. "I personally have had minor PTSD episodes where after dealing with traumatic events throughout my career



**Sgt. Guy Fussell**

I have had flashbacks as well as night sweats and horrific nightmares. It's not something that most law enforcement officers enjoy talking about but it's something we all deal with. I have had incidents in my career where I have had to talk to fellow officers and civilians that were in full panic modes and contemplating suicide."

During the Warner Robins seminar in April 2023, Sgt. Fussell introduced participants to resources and programs that provide stress-relievers and coping skills to LEOs struggling with PTSD and ruminating on suicide.

Some of those groups include Family Counseling Center of Central Georgia in Warner Robins, Ga.; Shatterproof, based in Norwalk, Conn.; Georgia Resiliency Program; Fort Valley, Ga.-based Cup of Blue, founded by Dan and Tess Rebman of Marshallville who lost their son, South Carolina state Trooper Keith Rebman in a car crash; Christian's Touch in Macon, Ga., which supports officers in need; Phoenix Equine Assist Program in Fort Valley and Tails of Hope in Gay, Ga.

Kitty and Sgt. Rasecke have also shared their stories at Behind the Badge seminars.

The presenter for the more recent seminars is Tim Rutledge with LEAPS LLC. Rutledge is a retired Mississippi LEO who presents for free at seminars all over the south. Participants learn the average life expectancy for LEOs is 59 and, not surprisingly, divorce, heart attacks, domestic violence and addiction rates are higher than average for LEOs.

Sgt. Fussell has learned through experience that no LEO is immune from anxiety or stress arising from traumatic events.

"The worst thing I can hear an officer say after a traumatic incident is 'I'm fine,' so my response is always 'No, you're not, and we are going to talk,'" he said. "We, as LEOs, need to realize that everyone deals with traumatic incidents differently and that just because we pinned on a badge, it doesn't make us immune for crisis."

Newport News, Va., police Lt. Randy W. Rajkumar said first responders who suffer from the effects of the job are often reluctant to get help for fear of being seen as weak and ineffectual.

"If you tell someone you are hurting inside, you are seen as weak, unstable, blacklisted, never to be promoted, get a chance of a good assignment, etc. etc.," said Rajkumar. "Perhaps, this is why so many who decide to end their lives,

remain quiet until they one day commit that final act. We take care of the world's problems, wear so many different hats as first responders, etc. Who takes care of us when we are hurting inside?"

Rajkumar praised the Behind the Badge seminars as powerful and essential to his profession. He said he speaks from experience.

"It was a very good seminar on a very real, dark issue of suicide within the law enforcement family," he said. "I have lost two colleagues myself in my agency and I knew them both very well. It hurts when you interacted with them and everything seemed normal, but when that shocking dreaded news is received, you are left speechless and in disbelief."

Too often, that officer's reputation as a stellar LEO is showcased only in death, at a somber, well-meaning ceremony honoring his or her life. For Rajkumar, it seems too little too late.

"What hurts even more, is the fact that no one seems to care or give that 'blue family' concern until that person's death," he said. "All the kind, 'great guy,' 'great officer,' 'hard working,' etc., praises often come too late, even at one's funeral. After a month or so, you are forgotten, maybe only remembered by your family, if that."



**First Sgt. Amanda Nevel (c) with co-workers**



Emphasizing that PTSD and suicidal ideations are “real illnesses,” Rajkumar said officer wellness should become a priority in all agencies. A big part of that wellness should include Behind the Badge seminars, which focus on the challenges LEOs face and the helpful resources available to them.

“My point is, it’s a real illness,” he said, “that too many of us, especially those in executive leadership, don’t seem to understand how it effects our men and women on the front line. From the everyday personal life struggles, to what we see and encounter on the job every day, it takes a toll on that person. There needs to be greater awareness, assistance, treatment, resources and eradication of the ‘stigma.’”

Rajkumar noted that the seminar instructor had an enlightening approach to making those vital points.

“It was refreshing to learn from our lecturer that there should maybe be greater emphasis on how each individual agency should take it upon themselves to increase their efforts on officer-wellness within their agency,” he said.

He quoted inspirational blogger and Tiny Buddha founder Lori Deschene as highlighting compassion for others in pain, “You may never know what someone is going through, but if you notice any signs of pain — hostility, negativity or oversensitivity — then odds are, you know how they feel. Respond to the pain instead of judging the signs.”

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources police First Sgt. Amanda Nevel was tasked with hosting the 2023 Behind the Badge seminar in Virginia.

Sgt. Nevel is president of the VAPBA Natural Resources Chapter and a decorated member of her department.

Nevel is an active member on her peer support team at the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, which joined up with Virginia LEAP, a non-profit whose whole goal is to provide law enforcement-friendly mental health services for any first responder including debriefs, counseling and workshops. She said she



**Greensboro police Master Officer Thomas Sescio**

has seen the program work for numerous officers across the state firsthand.

“Police officers are expected to be on the front lines of some of humanity’s worse traumas day in and day out,” she said. “If we don’t take the time to address the traumas we encounter, the results are catastrophic.

“In general suicide is the highest cause of death for first responders each year,” continued Nevel. “On average, 22 veterans alone commit suicide a day. Law enforcement officers have a 54% increase of suicide risk compared to the civilian population.”

Behind the Badge seminars are instrumental in bringing awareness to the statistics and what can be done to

whittle away at those numbers.

“We have to bring attention to the numbers and address the reasons,” she said. “We need to break the stigmatism and address the trauma that we encounter at work. Admitting that you need help does not mean you are weak. It takes a strong person to admit that they need help when the work culture is against them.”

Like so many other LEOs, Nevel has been touched by suicide and recognizes the dire need for peer support teams in every agency.

“I have lost a childhood friend, veterans I served with and first responders in my community to suicide,” she said. “Addressing mental health within the

first responder community is much needed and overdue. Every department should have a peer support team or partner with VALEAP to have one. Officers not only need it, but they also deserve it.”

Winston-Salem police Lt. Jason “Jake” Swaim attended the Behind the Badge Seminar in his town in December 2023. Lt. Swaim is also a senior vice president of the NCPBA Winston-Salem Triad Chapter. He said he was impressed by the information relayed to LEOs and their families.

“The seminar was phenomenal,” he said. “It was worthwhile and should be required annually for all law enforcement officers. Being physically and mentally healthy should be a top priority for agency heads. Sadly, heart disease was a top cause of death among law enforcement officers, and now suicide is becoming a leading cause of death.”

Just as bias training and sensitivity training are required, so should training such as the PTSD seminar presented by the PBF, said Lt. Swaim.

“The PTSD seminar is life-changing and saves lives,” he said. “Law enforcement agencies must become proactive concerning mental health and be at the forefront of these life-changing seminars like the PBA/PBF. I truly enjoyed the seminar, as what I learned will help me personally and give me tools to help co-workers.

“The training is a reminder that we have to take our health, mental and physical, as seriously, if not more seriously, than marksmanship, driving, defensive tactics, etc., because if we are not healthy, we cannot be proficient in all other areas of our jobs and lives.”

Thomas Sescoc is president of NCPBA Piedmont Triad Chapter and a master police officer for Greensboro PD. He is a patrol and training officer, a member of the Special Events Team and a bike officer. Sescoc has earned an advanced law enforcement certification through the N.C. Criminal Justice Training Standards Commission.



**Winston-Salem police Lt. Swaim**

He is a LEO veteran with nearly a dozen years under his belt, the last five in Greensboro.

“I’ve done this job for so long and have never been taught on how to manage, maintain and repair my mental health until I attended my first Behind the Badge seminar,” said Sescoc. “One thing that I’ve learned over the years is that the longer you work in law enforcement, the more the strain on your mental and physical health can manifest into something you do not wish to have.”

Sescoc explained that the years of working nights and responding to high-stress and traumatic calls, wears on officers, destroying their mental and physical health. It also causes disease, and the job literally hijacks an officer’s immune system.

“Before I attended the seminar, my physical health was declining,” he said. “I was gaining weight and losing motivation to exercise, and it was coupled with the loss of my dog of almost 15 years.”

Sescoc found his immune system took a toll and he constantly found himself

sick and worried that he had some type of chronic illness -- which caused even more stress. However, the seminar provided the support and information he didn’t realize he needed.

“Within the first hour of the seminar, the instructor explained almost everything I’ve been experiencing and told me why,” he said. “I could not believe the amount of knowledge that I received from the instructor. The simplest things such as getting a full eight hours of sleep, exercising and cutting out junk food can repair your immune system, physical and mental health.”

Sescoc was also educated on the various coping techniques and resources that first responders have available.

“The seminar gave me the motivation to dive right into repairing myself and taught me how to better manage shift work,” he said. “I think that the best aspect of the seminar was that it explains that there is an answer for why you are suffering and there is a way to fix it. I truly believe that this seminar has saved countless lives of first responders nationwide and will save many more.”



# OFFICER OF THE YEAR CARED FOR FALLEN OFFICER'S FAMILY

By Rachel Davis Karr  
Alabama Trooper News editor

When Lee County sheriff's Deputy Chris Salomone suffered a severe stroke in his home in mid-April 2023, Opelika Field Officer John Chad Leverette responded to the hospital to comfort the family and support his friend.

Leverette works for the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles.

When Salomone's wife said she could not bear to return to the home after witnessing the medical emergency, Leverette went to work finding a new home for them. He secured a rental, gathered their belongings and moved the family. He also became the point of contact for family, friends and the law enforcement community.

Leverette organized an honor walk for Salomone as he was transported to Birmingham to save lives as an organ donor.

After honoring Salomone again at his funeral, Leverette set out to ensure his friend's wife never had to return to the home — working with the family's church to repaint and prepare a new home for them. Just three months after losing her husband, Salomone's wife and family were able to move into their new home, once again with Leverette's help.

Opelika Field Officer-in-Charge Joshua McDonald wrote a nominating letter to the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles in seeking the Officer of the Year Award for Leverette.

"To say that Officer Leverette went above and beyond would be an understatement, given the unselfish actions he took on during this time and the unconditional friendship provided to a fellow officer," he wrote.

It sounds extraordinary, but a desire to help is the reason Leverette became an officer in the first place.

"I wanted to help people and try to make



a change in my community," Leverette said.

That legacy of hard work and service came from his father, a battalion chief at the Auburn Fire Department.

"He showed me how public service and hard work could lead to a rewarding career," Leverette said. "He taught me that if I ever wanted anything in life, I had to work hard for it, because no one would just hand it to you."

His hard work, dedication and commitment is the reason Leverette was awarded 2023 Officer of the Year.

His desire to help is also the reason he joined PBA. "[I wanted] to help out other LEOs," Leverette said. "PBA has been good to me, my family and fellow LEOs."

McDonald wrote in his nomination that Leverette is more than deserving of the

award.

"All in all, Officer Leverette is an invaluable asset to the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles," he wrote. "He brings more than can be put on paper to both the Opelika Field Office and the Bureau. Officer Leverette is an officer and a person of integrity and honor."

In addition to his dad, Leverette was inspired by leaders in the departments he worked in, particularly Alexander City police Chief Charles Rafford.

"He always expected you to work hard, do your job to the highest standard, and would 100% back you if you did both of those," Leverette said. "He once called me in his office, and the first thing out of his mouth was, 'Do you know that I get more citizen complaints on you than all the other officers, combined? Are you wondering why this is the first time you are hearing about this? I watch the body



cameras on all complaints that come in. When I watch yours, you are always professional, consistent and fair ... in every single video. If you are doing your job well, you will get more complaints. You continue doing an excellent job, and I will continue to field the complaints.”

Leverette graduated from Auburn University with his bachelor's and began his career in law enforcement working for the Lee County Commission in June 2003. Almost seven years later, Leverette joined the Alexander City Police Department, where he was assigned to the traffic unit.

He then continued his work as a K9 handler and traffic homicide investigator with Opelika Police Department, before joining the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles in 2018.

When he isn't at work, he enjoys hunting and spending time with his family. His wife, Holly, is the county administrator for Lee County and his daughter, Faith, is a second-year pharmacy student at her dad's alma mater. He has also owned University Carpet and Upholstery Cleaning for the last 23 years.



**Leverette enjoys duck hunting during his leisure time.**



**Leverette with his father, Danny, wife Holly and mother Judy after he accepted the Officer of the Year Award from Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles.**



**Leverette worked as K9 handler and traffic homicide investigator when he worked for Opelika Police Department. After leaving OPD, Leverette started working for Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles.**



# SSPBA PROVIDES THE LEGAL BENEFITS WE PROMISE

**Total Requests for Service Opened in 2023:  
2356**

## **MOST COMMON REQUEST BY CATEGORY**

<b>Disciplinary</b>	<b>318</b>
<b>Grievance</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Serious Accident</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Criminal Investigation</b>	<b>365</b>
<b>Lawsuit</b>	<b>506</b>
<b>Death in Custody</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Shooting</b>	<b>651</b>
<b>Legal Opinion</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Certification</b>	<b>101</b>

# BERKELEY COUNTY WV DEPUTY OF THE YEAR IS DENNIS JENKINS

**By Cindy Baugher**  
**Communications Project Coordinator**

A unanimous vote by his colleagues declared Berkeley County sheriff's Deputy Dennis Jenkins as the Deputy of the Year for 2023.

Sheriff Rob Blair said it was "clear that Deputy Dennis Jenkins was an excellent addition to the team" when he joined in October 2021. He calls his performance exemplary.

"Primarily assigned to criminal interdiction on major highways/roadways, he gives his all to keeping our community safe, what's more – he enjoys it," said Blair. "In addition to his main interdiction work, Deputy Jenkins always jumps in to help the patrol division when their calls get heavy. Deputy Jenkins is proactive about education, always trying to better himself by seeking out training that will enhance his skill set. He is well-regarded by his peers."

Born and raised in the same community he serves, Jenkins graduated from Martinsburg High School in 2003. It was in high school that he began riding along with police officers as he was involved with the Martinsburg City Police Explorer program.

Through those experiences, he realized that law enforcement was a job he'd love. He attended the West Virginia State Police Academy and graduated in 2008. Jenkins began his career in Morgan County Sheriff's Department, before moving to his position in Berkeley County.

In his work with BCPD, he has made several arrests which resulted in important narcotics seizures, successfully removing illicit drugs from the streets. These arrests garnered praise of Deputy Jenkins' "thorough and detailed work over the past year" from the prosecuting attorney.

Jenkins chose this profession "because of the camaraderie, the sense of adventure, and the never-knowing what the day



**Sheriff Blair congratulates Jenkins**



**Jenkins with the command staff**

may hold for you...this is something I truly love to do."

At the 15-year point of his career, he has had several different roles within the agency: patrol, traffic unit, drug and criminal interdiction and, his most recent assignment, the criminal investigation division. Jenkins said his favorite leader, past or present, is Sheriff Grady Judd of Polk County, Fla.

"I've never met the guy, but always enjoy

watching his videos," said Jenkins. "(The) man ain't afraid to speak the truth."

Jenkins is a PBA member because, after listening to some members of his department discussing the benefits of membership, he did some research of his own and realized it was valuable.

Traveling the U.S. on his Harley Davidson and playing golf are hobbies that Jenkins enjoys in his down time. Spending time with his family, including his wife,



a NICU nurse, and daughter, an avid softball player, is also important to him.

Jenkins names his grandfather as the greatest influence in his life. That is understandable given that he was raised by his grandparents. His grandmother was a secretary and his grandfather, a salesman for a building supply company.

He said his grandfather taught him “to treat people fair and treat people with respect.”

Both are guidelines anyone would hope for in a Deputy of the Year such as Dennis Jenkins.



**Jenkins with other attendees**



**Jenkins accepts the award**



**Jenkins with his daughter**



# REASONS TO BECOME ACTIVE IN LOCAL PBA CHAPTERS

**By Brian DiYorio**  
**Catawba River Valley Chapter**  
**president**

Being a member of the Southern States Police Benevolent Association is rewarding because of the great benefits the association provides. Benefits such as legal defense, death benefits, accidental death and dismemberment, and being active in the political world are important. But what else is out there in the realm of SSPBA? Why go above and beyond as a member?

I remember graduating from the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy and returning to the Goose Creek Police Department to start my field training. A seasoned investigator stopped me in the hallway and handed me a trifold pamphlet with the SSPBA logo and all the benefits I mentioned. He told me that deciding to join would be one of the most important things I did in my entire career.

As a new rookie, I took his word as the gospel without knowing better and decided to join. I went on about my business at Goose Creek Police Department as a member and never thought anything of that choice. Fast forward to where I am now as the secretary of the North Carolina Police Benevolent Association division and the Catawba Chapter River president. I look back at the casual conversation in the hallway and realize what that investigator said was the gospel. In today's law enforcement world, having some representation is paramount.

But I even take it one step further and look at how being the voice of law enforcement has become a passion of mine and I have been rewarded in so many other ways besides just the expected benefits.

Back in 2018, a few guys at work were talking about the state of the department, and we found ourselves asking how to improve it. I was brought up as a member of the SSPBA. At the time, there were only two members of the SSPBA



**DiYorio (third from left) and Catawba River Chapter with Gastonia Mayor Richard Franks**

at my agency, with me being one of them. I talked to a few guys about what the SSPBA could do for us. We decided to get active, and I called the SSPBA, letting them know that a few of us wanted to become active. Not long after that, I received a phone call from former NCPBA president Randy Byrd and spoke with him for about an hour. I remember ending that phone call thinking, "Man, what did I get myself into?" But I was filled with hope and determination. Randy invited me to the NCPBA board meeting in Cary that was to occur in a few weeks. I worked the day before the meeting, and as soon as I got off work, I had my car loaded down with a suit and a change of clothes.

That night, I got to the hotel in Cary, and while I was unloading my car, I realized I had stepped on a fire ant hill. Again, I was thinking, man, what did I get myself into, driving all the way here just to get eaten up by fire ants? At the division meeting, I met countless officers from across the state. I soon realized that the challenges we faced back home were those others were facing, and the SSPBA was helping them. I left that meeting and returned home. I told the guys at work about my experience, and we took off.

In August 2018, I was elected chapter president, and we brought our chapter out of dormancy. The SSPBA helped with many of the issues we were facing. The best thing about it was that I wasn't

doing this alone; I had my friends from my agency with me, and I had the SSPBA staff and NCPBA division board helping guide each of our steps. Since then, becoming active in the SSPBA has been one of the best choices I have made in my law enforcement career.

So, what will you gain if you become active? Well, let me tell you about my experiences. First, I look at the many friendships I have gained. I remember that first division board meeting where another officer out east had just brought their chapter back from dormancy and was elected president. He and I would be at the General Assembly, helping champion the causes and issues of the SSPBA to legislators. We would see each other at the division board meetings, which became a friendship outside the SSPBA.

He is an East Carolina alum, and I am an Appalachian State alum, so when App State played ECU in Charlotte a few years ago, we went to the game together, which was a blast because App State won. Since our friendship started in 2018, he has become the chief of an agency in North Carolina. There are so many members that are now friends of mine from across the state.

The SSPBA staff members have been tremendous as well. John Midgett, NCPBA Executive Director, and Brandon McGaha, NCPBA staff representative, have both provided the support and guidance that



have led to our success.

Being involved with politics can be intimidating, and sometimes, people say they don't want to get involved because they don't like politicians. While I can say the latter can be true sometimes, overwhelmingly, you will find good people wanting to be active in their communities. The other great benefit is that you can help conduct political screenings of candidates for local, state, and even federal elections. You get to hear from the actual mouths of the people who hold the key to making our jobs easier or harder. The most important thing I have taken away from this process is the sheer amount of misunderstanding people have about law enforcement. Developing relationships with those who hold the keys is essential. I have built professional relationships that have turned into personal relationships with some of the local and state politicians. You must always remain neutral when conducting these screenings and understand the importance of the issues that the SSPBA brings up from its members and the best way to champion those issues.

Developing relationships is vital to your local areas as well. I regularly get phone calls from politicians asking questions about law enforcement. Who would educate them if they didn't have anyone to call? Or if they only had to call a chief or sheriff? Where I am located, our sheriff and chief have not forgotten where they came from as patrol officers, but other places are not as lucky. When you become active in your local chapter, it can help with your career in a few different ways. If you become a board member, you are a leader for your chapter, and depending on where that chapter is, you could be a leader for 100 people or thousands of people.

The Catawba River Chapter had 188 members in 2018. We have worked hard and moved that number to over 800 members. You will participate in meetings and organize the political screenings mentioned. Doing so helps you develop people and organizational skills that can lead to promotions.

The most important benefit of becoming active is that you are fighting for the bet-



**DiYorio and fellow chapter rep presenting a PBF check to an injured member**



**House Speaker Tim Moore and President DiYorio**



**DiYorio representing Catawba River Chapter at a public safety event to showcase the PBA**

terment of law enforcement. In a society that is constantly attacking officers' actions but yet too afraid to put on a badge and walk the walk with us, fighting for the betterment of society is a noble cause. Just as in police work, it most often is a thankless job, but you get to look around and realize that you affected the profession, whether it be something local or even at the state level.

These are a few rewarding things that can occur if you decide to get active with SSPBA in your chapter. I leave you with this question: "Do you like what is occurring around you at your department or state?" If your answer is no, what will you do about it? Or will you stand idle and let someone else fight your fight?

I challenge you to contact the SSPBA, find out where your next chapter meeting is, and attend to see what you can do for law enforcement.



**Catawba River Chapter President Brian DiYorio with N.C. House Rules Chairman Rep. Destin Hall**

# 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.

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# 3 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN THE SSPBA



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

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

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

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

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

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

\*A full description of these benefits and all others that come with a PBA membership can be found by visiting [www.sspba.org](http://www.sspba.org).



# NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

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



**SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT**