



**For Immediate Release:**

Wednesday, August 2, 2023

**Contact:**

William Stander, (850) 212-3250, [william@williamstander.com](mailto:william@williamstander.com)

**Florida Police Chiefs Association Announces  
2022 Outstanding Chief, Commanders, Officers,  
Agencies and Partnerships of the Year  
U.S. Senator Marco Rubio Provides Keynote Address**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – The Florida Police Chiefs Association (FPCA) announced the 2022 William B. Berger Outstanding Chief Executive of the Year and a series of additional awards and recognitions at the FPCA's 71th Annual Summer Training Conference and Exposition held in Bonita Springs, FL.

Following a video montage profiling each of the award recipients, FPCA president Fellsmere Police Department Chief Keith Touchberry said, "The accomplishments of each of the individuals and agencies recognized this year embody the highest ideals of our profession, and are worthy of public recognition for their contributions to supporting and advancing public safety in Florida. Additionally, we were honored to have U.S. Senator Marco Rubio, an incredible champion of law enforcement and public safety, further honor these award winners with his keynote address."

The FPCA Wall of Honor is a permanent recognition for retired members of the FPCA or other persons of distinction who made major contributions to the FPCA. The recipients this year were:

- Former FPCA Executive Director Amy Mercer
- Retired Chief Philip Thorne
- Retired Chief Roy Arigo

Sponsoring the Wall of Honor awards were the Alarm Association of Florida, Inc. and the Security Industry Alarm Coalition.

The William B. Berger Outstanding Chief Executive of the Year and the Outstanding Command Officer of the Year awards recognize individuals for exceptional performance and support and advancement of the law enforcement profession. The recipients were:

- Chief Executive of the Year – Chief Ed Hudak, Coral Gables Police Department
- Command Officer of the Year – Assistant Chief Richard Del Toro, Port St. Lucie Police Department

Sponsoring the William B. Berger Outstanding Chief Executive of the Year award was Altumint.

FPCA recognizes that law enforcement is a team effort, including non-sworn personnel serving in many and sometimes multiple roles. Recipients of these awards were:

- Civilian Employee of the Year – Amanda White, Leesburg Police Department
- Dispatcher Communications Employee of the Year – Lisa Corbin, South Miami Police Department
- Executive Assistant of the Year – Joni DiPaolo, Palm Bay Police Department

The Lee McGehee Police Officer of the Year Awards recognize individual officers for outstanding police work, based on agency size. The recipients were:

- Corporal Eldon Raines, Dunnellon Police Department, Small Agency
- Corporal Ritchie Revis, Sebastian Police Department, Medium Agency
- Detective Daniel Melgar, Boca Raton Police Department, Large Agency

Sponsoring the Lee McGehee Police Officer of the Year Awards was Publix Super Markets, Inc.

The Rocky Pomerance Excellence in Policing Awards recognize member agencies, also based on size, that develop and implement innovative approaches to policing. The recipients were:

- Treasure Island Police Department, Small Agency
- Groveland Police Department, Medium Agency
- Clearwater Police Department, Large Agency

Sponsoring the Rocky Pomerance Excellence in Policing Awards was United Badges Insurance Services.

The recipient of the FPCA's President's Award for exceptional service to FPCA was:

- David Marsey, Rumberger Kirk

The Operation Cooperation Award recognizes excellence in private sector partnerships with law enforcement agencies working together to address community needs and enhance public safety. The recipients were:

- The Philadelphia Phillies / Clearwater Threshers Baseball Organization and the Clearwater Police Department

The Glen Mowrey Pillars of Success Award recognizes individuals who previously served as law enforcement officers and who have successfully transitioned to the private sector. This year the FPCA renamed this award after retired Deputy Chief Glen Mowrey, whose visionary work with the FPCA on behalf of the Security Industry Alarm Coalition laid the groundwork for the FPCA's subsequent Public-Private-Partnership Committee work and awards. The recipient was:

- Retired Chief John O'Grady, Advance Security Advisers

FPCA recognizes exceptional acts of heroism that result in saving lives. The following agencies were acknowledged for Lifesaving Awards, which will be formally presented at a later date:

- Coconut Creek Police Department
- Florida Atlantic University Police Department
- Gulfport Police Department

Sponsoring the Lifesaving Awards was L3 Harris.

Finally, recognizing the tremendous time and effort necessary to support and protect attendees at a conference of this size, FPCA recognized the following with Host Appreciation Awards:

- West Central Florida Police Chiefs Association
- Southwest Florida Police Chiefs Association
- Chief Pamela Davis, Punta Gorda Police Department

More detail on each of the award recipients follows.

#### FPCA Wall of Honor – Amy Mercer

Amy Mercer came to work for the FPCA in 1999 as an Executive Assistant and ultimately became the Executive Director in 2004. She served with distinction in that

role for 17 years. Under Amy's leadership, the Association experienced exponential growth both in finances and membership. During her tenure, the FPCA acquired a new headquarters building and ran a successful building fund campaign that enabled the FPCA to become mortgage-free very quickly.

As the Executive Director, she was instrumental in the passage of numerous legislative initiatives that have proven to be extremely beneficial for law enforcement throughout Florida. Amy led the way in establishing the STARS program which has provided many municipalities with quality chiefs of police. Additionally, she was effective in establishing and revamping numerous training programs including developing the CORE training for law enforcement's executive assistants.

Amy will forever be remembered for her servant's heart and her natural ability to make everyone she meets feel welcome and part of the FPCA family.

#### FPCA Wall of Honor – Retired Chief Philip Thorne

Chief Philip Thorne dedicated nearly 40 years of his life to the law enforcement profession, serving in numerous capacities throughout his career in both municipal and county organizations. He served as the police chief for the Panama City-Bay County International Airport for five years, and as the police chief for the City of Springfield for ten years. Chief Thorne has also been a resolute member of the Florida Police Chiefs Association since 1998 and served on the board of directors, executive board of directors, President, Foundation board member, Foundation Board President, legislative committee, and legislative committee chair.

Chief Thorne dedicated an untold number of hours as a member or participant in numerous projects, work groups, and other initiatives throughout the state as either a police chief or member of our association; all of which were designed to serve the Association and its members, advance our profession, or improve the quality of life for public safety personnel. His service as a professional law enforcement leader and dedication to the mission of the FPCA are remarkable.

#### FPCA Wall of Honor – Retired Chief Roy Arigo

Chief Arigo began his career in 1973 with the New York City Housing Police Department, but quickly relocated to Florida to serve at two different law enforcement agencies. In 1976 he joined the City of Coral Springs Police Department where he quickly rose through the ranks, becoming one of the youngest Lieutenants in the police department's history and ultimately was the most highly decorated officer in the department.

Chief Arigo was dedicated to enhancing the law enforcement profession and he

headed the Coral Springs PD accreditation efforts. He went on to serve 10 years as an assessor and team leader for the Commission on Accreditation for Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). In 1987, he was promoted to Deputy Chief, and in 1989 was promoted to Chief as the youngest police chief in Broward County.

### William B. Berger Outstanding Chief Executive of the Year – Chief Ed Hudak

Chief Ed Hudak, appointed as Coral Gables Chief of Police in 2014, has a rich 30-year history in policing. He currently serves as the FPCA district director for Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, and as Past President of the 200 Club of Miami, a direct support organization for families of fallen officers. He is also a security advisor and mentor for the University of Miami's Athletic Department. His contributions in these roles have greatly benefited the community, but none more so than the exceptional leadership and commitment he demonstrated following Hurricane Ian's devastation of Florida's southwest coast.

In the days preceding the hurricane, Chief Hudak reached out to various regional police chiefs reassuring them of immediate assistance post-storm. This outreach was not limited to one area; he made similar assurances to many other chiefs.

Post-storm, he swiftly organized the chiefs in Miami-Dade County and personally spearheaded a strike team consisting of several Miami-Dade agencies. Among the chiefs Hudak contacted was Chief Anthony Sizemore of the Cape Coral Police Department. In addition to dispatching officers from Miami-Dade County through mutual aid, he provided personal advice and mentorship to Chief Sizemore, frequently checking in on his needs and morale. Chief Sizemore said, "Chief Hudak is a leader and mentor, and I consider him a friend after this experience."

His collaboration extended to Chief William Dalton of the Sanibel Police Department, who credited Hudak with providing critical leadership and securing needed resources, saying, "I don't think we would have gotten off the ground without Ed."

Recognizing the need for a more comprehensive response, Chief Hudak brought concerns to the FPCA's attention, leading to his instrumental role in coordinating resources and developing a model for continued disaster response over the following months. His efforts went beyond aiding individual departments; he leveraged the FPCA's position as a premier state law enforcement association to ensure local law enforcement agencies' needs were met.

Finally, Chief Hudak is active in advancing FPCA's legislative initiatives. His efforts were vital to passing legislation enhancing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder treatment and compensation, engaging with several legislators to highlight the previous law's deficiencies and emphasize the need to better support officers exposed to traumatic

events. His dedication to his peers and profession is evident in his many roles and accomplishments.

#### Command Officer of the Year – Assistant Chief Richard Del Toro

Assistant Chief Del Toro leads the Neighborhood Policing Bureau in Port St. Lucie, managing a \$26.5 million budget and overseeing a diverse team including three commanders, six lieutenants, 27 sergeants, 169 police officers, and civilian support staff. The bureau successfully handled 700 customer service complaints and approximately 154,789 service calls in the past year, maintaining one of the lowest crime rates in Florida for cities with over 100,000 residents.

Assistant Chief Del Toro stresses accountability, customer service, and crime reduction. He facilitates weekly Collaborative, Operational, Analysis, and Response (C.O.A.R.) meetings as part of a stratified crime reduction model, promoting evidence-based strategies and cross-divisional communication. He has managed various projects including renovations to the department's first floor, and expanding the traffic unit to enhance public safety with the creation of a Model Traffic Stop Coordinator position and the 'Steve Brown' Model Traffic Program.

As the SWAT Team leader, he served as incident commander during several high-risk incidents, including barricaded subjects and high-risk search warrants, and maintains a superior SWAT Team by providing the team state of the art equipment, training, and other necessary safety measures. His leadership skills extend to financial prudence, ensuring timely budget request submissions, with his guidance leading to the approval of five new officer positions and the implementation of four shift lieutenants.

Assistant Chief Del Toro actively promotes community engagement, participating in numerous local events and fostering positive police-public relations. He writes monthly articles for local publications and serves on community boards, including the Children's Services Council and the Boys and Girls Club. Renowned for his expertise, he's frequently consulted by other police executives.

Assistant Chief Del Toro is committed to transforming the Port St. Lucie Police Department into a high-performance, responsive law enforcement agency, and maintaining a low crime rate.

#### Civilian Employee of the Year – Amanda White

Amanda White currently serves the Leesburg Police Department as the Civilian Crime Analyst. Amanda joined the Leesburg Police Department in 2016 as an administrative assistant in the Criminal Investigations Division, and in 2018 was

selected for the newly created position of Civilian Crime Analyst.

In 2022, she became the primary organizer for intelligence meetings of Lake County law enforcement agencies, and subsequently organized information-sharing meetings of school resource officers and deputies, which has now expanded countywide. She was also instrumental in the selection and implementation of new crime analysis software as the agency transitioned from Uniform Crime Reporting to the National Incident Based Reporting System.

As a result of her hard work, dedication to the agency, and caring attitude towards her coworkers, Amanda's coworkers and supervisors have recognized her as Outstanding Civilian Employee of the Year in 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021. The votes are currently being tallied for the agency's 2022 award recipients and Amanda is understandably expected to once again be among those recognized.

#### Dispatcher Communications Employee of the Year – Lisa Corbin

Lisa Corbin is a Communications Manager (CM) with the South Miami Police Department, and has served the department for 34 years as a dispatcher, trainer, crime analyst, and CM, was the first supervisor of the Communication Center in 1996, and still comes to work with the same enthusiasm and work ethic she has exhibited for over three decades.

Corbin undertakes multiple roles and responsibilities including overseeing the department's social media pages, maintaining relations with the public, and planning and directing daily operations of the Communication Center. She also develops and monitors the center's policies and procedures, maintains liaisons with various service providers and agencies, prepares annual plans for budgeting and equipment needs, and handles financial matters like accounts payable and payroll. As the agency's crime analyst, she produces weekly reports for law enforcement purposes.

Corbin maintains the functionality of all communication equipment, fills in for dispatching shortages, and trains new dispatchers. As a system administrator, she manages various software and oversees E-citation and crash reporting. She is the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's point of contact for several agencies and oversees tech audits and training. In the last three years, Corbin led the transition from Uniform Crime Reporting to the National Incident-Based Reporting System.

CM Corbin is proficient in incident management and has been a vital asset during community events such as the annual "Safe Street Halloween" celebration. She consistently goes above and beyond to serve the public, the officers, the administration, other agencies, and co-workers, and exemplifies the department's values of Excellence, Integrity, and Inclusion.

## Executive Assistant of the Year – Joni DiPaolo

Joni DiPaolo has served the City of Palm Bay as an administrative professional for 42 years, including 40 of them with the Palm Bay Police Department. During her impressive tenure, she has worked with nine chiefs, building and maintaining vital relationships within the community, and demonstrating daily compassion, empathy, and dedication to resolving citizens' issues.

DiPaolo's contributions go beyond standard administrative tasks; her institutional knowledge is priceless, and her qualities of confidence, kindness, and loyalty, along with her commitment to meeting deadlines and producing quality solutions, make her an irreplaceable asset to the department. She has shown selflessness by volunteering to serve others, temporarily filling in vacancies, and avoiding the spotlight while creating opportunities for others to be recognized.

DiPaolo started her career at the City Hall reception in 1980. She quickly made a positive impression with her personality and problem-solving abilities, leading her to be recruited to the Police Department. Her "can do" attitude, knowledge, skills, and extensive internal and external network have made her a significant resource for multiple Chiefs. Her service goes beyond the City of Palm Bay, as she is recognized and appreciated across jurisdictional lines.

DiPaolo's impact on, and the significant contribution she makes to, the Department, City, and County of Brevard each and every day is undeniable and worthy of recognition.

## Lee McGehee Police Officer of the Year – Small Agency – Corporal Eldon Raines

The Dunnellon Police Department, responsible for around 1,800 residents, consists of 10 full-time officers. As a result, officers cannot refer cases to specialty units, but instead must act as detectives, conducting follow-up investigation and interviews for each case they receive.

Corporal Eldon Raines supervises three officers on his squad while simultaneously being the most proactive officer in reference to narcotics enforcement, working with great dedication to successfully reduce the sale, use, or possession of narcotics in the City of Dunnellon.

For example, on August 5, 2022, he developed probable cause to prepare a search warrant for a house suspected to be connected to a burglary case. The search operation yielded a significant haul of narcotics, including cocaine and fentanyl, along with \$12,200 in cash. Although the suspect wasn't present during the operation, Corporal Raines pursued him diligently, eventually arresting him with



additional narcotics and \$5,000 cash in possession. On the same day, he responded to a burglary in progress, arresting a suspect on several charges and multiple outstanding warrants.

Over the past year, Corporal Raines has conducted 21 drug-related investigations, resulting in 17 arrests of known drug dealers, accounting for 47 charges, 29 of them felonies. His accomplishments include shutting down the Meredith House, notorious for drug sales, overdoses, and prostitution, and facilitating the closure of another house following a drug overdose death.

Corporal Raines's proactive approach to tackling the drug issue in Dunnellon underscores his indispensable role in the police department and his success in saving numerous lives by eliminating dangerous narcotics from the streets.

#### Lee McGehee Police Officer of the Year – Medium Agency – Corporal Ritchie Revis

Sebastian Police Department's Corporal Revis is being lauded for his exceptional bravery and tactical expertise following his involvement in several critical law enforcement operations in the Indian River County and Sebastian jurisdictions. Notably, Corporal Revis played a vital role in several key incidents.

First, he was instrumental in locating and apprehending a drive-by shooting suspect who had exchanged gunfire with deputies during a traffic stop. Hearing the incident in real-time, Corporal Revis joined the small team that successfully tracked and arrested the suspect. In a second incident, he led a team to confront and capture a double murder suspect who had possibly fled to Sebastian to target other two family members. Using his tactical acumen, Corporal Revis helped design a plan that led to the suspect's peaceful arrest. He also demonstrated remarkable tenacity during a high-risk drug bust, where he effectively immobilized a suspect's vehicle, leading to the arrest and seizure of large amounts of fentanyl, cocaine, and pills.

Finally, Corporal Revis earned the Medal of Honor for his role in a high-speed chase and hostage rescue operation that took place on June 25, 2022. Responding to a bulletin about a kidnapping, he became the lead vehicle in a pursuit that involved gunfire from the kidnapper. Despite the risks, he remained relentless, and when the kidnapper's vehicle became stuck, he maintained a strategic position, anticipating a potential ambush. The situation culminated in a dark, wooded area, where – equipped with night vision – he led a rescue team to the suspect and hostages. Under Corporal Revis's direction, and despite coming under fire, the team successfully neutralized the suspect and rescued the hostages.

In all these operations, Corporal Revis's involvement proved vital, underscoring his exceptional bravery, quick thinking, and commitment to public safety.

## Lee McGehee Police Officer of the Year – Large Agency – Detective Daniel Melgar

In 2022, Detective Daniel Melgar of the Boca Raton Police Department accomplished a notable track record in tackling complex cases involving computer crimes and electronic forensics.

One significant case Detective Melgar resolved involved an adult male who misrepresented his age to engage in sexual activities with a minor. Through comprehensive investigations, he verified the suspect's identity, age, and interstate travel, culminating in an arrest and a nine-year prison sentence for the suspect. Notably, his diligent investigation unveiled the suspect's similar offenses in Wisconsin, leading to an additional investigation in that state.

In another accomplishment, Detective Melgar effectively handled a case involving a juvenile female tricked into sharing explicit content with her peers through a deceptive social media account. Using digital forensic tools and extensive interviews, he gathered enough evidence to charge two juvenile females with serious offenses, including transmitting child pornography and soliciting a child for unlawful sexual conduct using computer services or devices.

Furthermore, he played an instrumental role in handling cybercrimes, such as phishing, email compromises, and potential fraud cases across the City of Boca Raton administration. He also assisted with cyberbullying and cyber sexual harassment cases, proving his versatility and readiness to aid in diverse cases.

Detective Melgar furthered his forensic examination training at the National Computer Forensics Institute, which also equipped the department with tools for advanced forensic investigations. Additionally, at the Florida ICAC Training Conference in December 2022, Melgar represented the Computer Crimes Unit to present a case study that demonstrated the effectiveness of ICAC Task Forces in prosecuting cases, which was lauded by attendees.

These accomplishments solidify Detective Melgar's dedication, expertise, and value to his agency, underscoring his crucial role in handling computer crimes and contributing significantly to the public safety of Boca Raton.

## Rocky Pomerance Excellence in Policing – Small Agency – Treasure Island Police Department

Treasure Island faced recurring problems of homelessness and mental health crises. Frequent service calls for law enforcement involving the same individuals with similar issues had officers and the local community frustrated. Recognizing the lack of long-

term solutions, Officer Daren Chiaputti, who had recently undergone Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training, began analyzing the details of the service calls. They identified a key issue was accessing the necessary resources and care providers.

In response to the growing crisis, the city administration and local agencies initiated brainstorming sessions to tackle the problem. They reached out to various service providers, consulted with other departments, and started educating community members about the situation. This led to the formation of the Life Intervention Focus Team (LIFT), a cooperative effort between the city and community to provide access to various programs, services, and housing for vulnerable citizens.

LIFT convenes different community resources including crisis intervention professionals, the Treasure Island Fire Department, multiple health organizations, and homeless support programs. It aims to provide personalized support to Treasure Island residents based on their individual needs. Instead of viewing arrests as a solution, LIFT focuses on elevating lives and providing solutions.

One innovative solution implemented by LIFT is the Telehealth Remote Access to Crisis Evaluation (TRACE) program. TRACE allows law enforcement officers to have immediate access to counselors from the Directions for Living organization. This technology-driven program enables real-time mental health assessments, guidance, and timely access to mental health services.

The LIFT program has had notable successes, and by 2022 it was gaining momentum. It formed into a board of five residents selected by the commission to manage fundraising and public education. The city also partnered with the City of Gulfport to share the cost of a full-time case worker to ensure immediate access to necessary resources. Moreover, LIFT has seen tangible success stories with three individuals no longer living on the streets.

### Rocky Pomerance Excellence in Policing – Medium Agency – Groveland Police Department

The Groveland Police Department, led by Chief Shawn Ramsey, addressed issues of police legitimacy, procedural justice, and citizen satisfaction in the wake of George Floyd's death and the subsequent calls for police reform and community engagement. Chief Ramsey recognized the need to ensure the safety of the community and foster positive relations with citizens.

To achieve these goals, the department reviewed its use of force policy, ensuring it aligned with national standards, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) model policy and Campaign Zero's 8 Can't Wait Campaign.

Additionally, they adopted the Obama Foundation's Reimagine Policing Pledge, focusing on reviewing and reforming use of force policies and combating systemic racism within law enforcement.

One of the key steps taken by Chief Ramsey was the creation of an annual citizen's use of force review board. This board consisted of ten volunteers from diverse backgrounds within the Groveland community, including retirees, business owners, and members from different races and ethnicities. The board conducted a thorough review of the department's use of force policy, analyzed use of force incidents from the previous year, and suggested improvements to the policy.

The annual review process proved successful in building strong relationships with the community and increasing legitimacy, procedural justice, mobilization, and citizen satisfaction with the police department. The participants provided positive feedback through a survey, further reinforcing the program's effectiveness.

The program's sustainability and low cost made it easy to implement and continue annually. The benefits of this approach extended to both the police department and the community, leading to its continued success.

By adopting evidence-based solutions and engaging the community through the annual review process, the Groveland Police Department effectively addressed issues related to police legitimacy, procedural justice, and citizen satisfaction. This approach fostered positive relationships, built trust, and increased public confidence in the police, contributing to a safer community environment.

### Rocky Pomerance Excellence in Policing – Large Agency – Clearwater Police Department

In a national climate with little tolerance for policing errors, ensuring officers have accurate and timely information can make a difference. To take the next step in modern policing, the Clearwater Police Department (CPD) created a Real-Time Operations Center (ROC) to provide officers with real-time data and surveillance, maximizing efficiency, enhancing public safety, and increasing the closure rate of criminal cases.

The inception of the ROC involved extensive research and benchmarking of similar systems. The CPD visited other agencies, including the London Metropolitan Police, to understand how they were successfully utilizing technology such as CCTV networks. Upon conceptualization, the CPD engaged with politicians and community leaders to ensure transparency and alleviate privacy concerns. The access to the ROC system is strictly limited to authorized personnel for legitimate criminal justice needs.

During the implementation phase, the department faced challenges with software providers, some of which failed to deliver as promised. However, they quickly divested from such products and identified more reliable ones. Regular training sessions were conducted to ensure the effective use of these new tools.

Since its implementation, the ROC has significantly improved operational efficiencies within the CPD, leading to an increase in successful case closures, arrests, and safer police responses. The center has hired new analysts, expanded its coverage times, and significantly evolved its technical capabilities. These developments include integrating advanced databases, cloud-based crime center software, new equipment, and a new camera registry and integration program. These initiatives have led to significant successes, including the recovery of stolen vehicles and the apprehension of wanted suspects.

The ROC's success hinges on the dedicated team of analysts and detectives, who serve as "air-traffic controllers" of information, working diligently to make Clearwater a safer place. Officers often remark, "It's hard to imagine working Patrol without the ROC now". The successful launch and development of the ROC highlight the transformative power of integrating technology into law enforcement, establishing strong community partnerships, and dedicated teamwork.

#### President's Award – David Marsey

David Marsey is the long-time General Counsel to the Florida Police Chiefs Association. He represents clients in constitutional, employment, casualty litigation and appeals. He defends state and local government agencies and law enforcement officers against allegations of civil rights and tort violations including general negligence, negligent hiring or retention, vehicle liability and pursuits, false arrest, improper use of force, in-custody and other wrongful deaths. David also handles the litigation of qualified and sovereign immunities.

Having previously served as a sworn officer, investigator and law enforcement instructor, David incorporates his training and experience in the areas of death, injury, property and traffic accident investigations for his clients. Prior to private practice, he served as a state prosecutor with extensive trial experience, and successfully tried felony crimes up to and including homicide, as well as law enforcement liability cases involving the use of the baton, Taser and the discharge of firearms resulting in death.

#### Operation Cooperation Award – The Philadelphia Phillies / Clearwater Threshers Baseball Organization and the Clearwater Police Department

The Clearwater Police Department and the Phillies/Threshers baseball organization have forged a longstanding public-private collaboration to promote crime prevention and community engagement in Clearwater. The partnership has enabled the police to work closely with the stadium security at the Carpenter Complex and BayCare Ballpark. Preparedness measures include walk-through magnetometers, traffic mitigation devices, expanded police staffing, and action plans for various contingencies.

A significant component of this partnership is a crime prevention initiative known as “Lock, Take, Secure”, aimed at curbing unlocked vehicle burglaries, vehicle thefts, and theft of personal property. Clearwater detectives and Phillies organization staff jointly promote this initiative through rack cards, parking passes, and community events.

Furthermore, the collaboration supports Clearwater for Youth and the police department to back youth athletic programs. The funds raised ensure that all children can participate in sports irrespective of their ability to pay. In addition to sports, the partnership also supports arts and creative programs for children.

The Phillies/Threshers organization demonstrates deep respect for law enforcement, sponsoring a charitable softball game each year with part of the proceeds aiding a local first responder in crisis. They also arrange city employee nights and have crafted a custom Phillies baseball hat adorned with the CPD badge.

This relationship is indicative of how public-private partnerships can foster community growth, supporting programs, engendering trust, and encouraging unity. It is a model of how such collaborations can help create safer and more supportive communities, with the Phillies and Threshers proving to be community champions both on and off the field.

#### Glen Mowrey Pillars of Success Award

In 2005, Glen Mowrey, the National Law Enforcement Liaison for the Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC), proposed the idea of an Alarm Management Committee to the Florida Police Chiefs Association (FPCA). He cited the success of similar committees in Tennessee and Georgia, which brought together law enforcement and the alarm industry, leading to a reduction in alarm calls.

After establishing the committee, the FPCA Board recognized the need to broaden the committee’s scope, and in 2008 established the Public-Private-Partnership committee, modeled after the IACP's Private Sector Liaison Committee, and including other subcommittees like Retail Security and Security Guard Services. The committee's resources and membership expanded to over forty members.

As a result of the committee's successful public-private partnership initiatives, the FPCA introduced four awards presented annually to recognize excellence in such collaborations that enhance public safety and address community problems. These include the Fallen Hero Award for security officers who died in the line of duty, the Operation Cooperation Award for outstanding problem-solving partnerships between police departments and private sector entities, the Pillar of Success Award for individuals who transitioned successfully from law enforcement to private sector security, and the Helping Hand Award for those who significantly assisted law enforcement.

For his central role in helping create, grow, and support FPCA's formal outreach to and coordination with the private sector, the Florida Police Chiefs Association is pleased to rename the Pillars of Success Award as the Glen Mowrey Pillars of Success Award.

#### Glen Mowrey Pillars of Success Award – Retired Chief John O'Grady

Florida native Chief John O'Grady has had a distinguished career in public safety spanning over three decades. He began his career in 1986 with the Orlando Police Department, rising to the rank of Captain before retiring in 2013. In that role, he developed a reputation as a servant leader and professional with extensive experience in leading operations, administration, projects and programs, and staff.

After retiring from Orlando, he was selected as the Chief of Police for the City of Mount Dora, later becoming its Public Safety Director in 2017. In this role, O'Grady led a large, diverse team responsible for police and fire services. Under his leadership, the Police Department achieved 'Excelsior' accreditation status, while the Fire Department improved its ISO rating and received its first accreditation.

In 2019, O'Grady transitioned to the private sector, establishing his own firm, Advanced Security Advisors. As a Public Safety Advisor, he provides assistance in negotiations, strategic planning, accreditation, and sensitive investigations for government entities. His clientele includes several public safety companies, such as Fusus, a leading-edge Real-Time Crime Center platform, and Fortress Secured LLC, a public-private partnership specialist that aids local governments in public safety facility development.

O'Grady has continually supported the law enforcement profession and the FPCA, encouraging others to become FPCA supporters. His successful transition from public service to the private sector is a model for this award.

#### Lifesaving Award – Lieutenant Ryan Marken, Sergeant Dante Tanfulla, and Officer

## Justin Abram, Coconut Creek Police Department

On December 22, 2022, Lieutenant Ryan Marken, Sergeant Dante Tanfulla, and Officer Justin Abram responded to a call that someone had driven a car into a lake at Tradewinds Park. Arriving on scene, the officers saw the vehicle well away from the lake shore, and entered the water to save the driver. The officers realized she had intentionally driven her car into the water when she refused to help. Sergeant Tanfulla was able to partially open the driver's side door after the car fully submerged. Officer Abram broke one of the windows, cutting his right palm in the process.

The driver continued to resist by gripping the steering wheel, but finally the officers were able to break her grip and surface with her, swimming her back to shore where paramedics from Coconut Creek Fire Rescue were waiting. On the bank of the lake the officers found the young woman's driver's license, cell phone, and a suicide note. An officer later went to the hospital to try and talk to her but she declined.

For their bravery and teamwork that gave one young woman another opportunity for life, Lieutenant Ryan Marken, Sergeant Dante Tanfulla, and Officer Justin Abram are recognized with this FPCA Lifesaving Award.

## Lifesaving Award – Officers Danielle Luciano, Kaitlyn LaCroix, and Shiraz Belfon Cave, and Community Service Officer Justin Gadson, Florida Atlantic University Police Department

On May 12, 2022, Florida Atlantic University Communications dispatched officers to a vehicle crash, reporting that the vehicle was occupied by a driver slumped forward and not moving, with front and side airbags deployed and a fire in the engine compartment.

Officer Danielle Luciano arrived and observed the vehicle crushed against a tree and flames coming from the engine compartment. With the driver now answering he was in pain, Officer Luciano tried to open the driver's door but it was partially obstructed by the crushed frame. FAU Community Service Officer Justin Gadson arrived and assisted Officer Luciano in prying open the door. Officer Luciano used her pocketknife to deflate and remove the side airbag, while Officer Kaitlyn LaCroix reached inside the vehicle to help extract the driver's legs from under the dashboard. Officer Shiraz Belfon Cave arrived and with Officers LaCroix and Luciano carried the driver to a safe distance from the burning vehicle.

It should be noted that in the course of saving this driver's life, Officers Luciano, LaCroix, and Belfon Cave were exposed to bodily fluids from the driver's punctured colostomy bag. By their complete disregard for their own safety and quick actions,



Officers Luciano, LaCroix, and Belfon Cave, and CSO Gadson saved the life of this driver.

Lifesaving Award – Officer Cory Smith and Sergeant Michael Marotta, Gulfport Police Department

On December 23, 2022, Officer Cory Smith responded to the scene of a crash where a vehicle jumped a curb, crashed through a fence, and came to rest on the bank of a retention pond. Officer Smith found that car was on fire, with flames and smoke visible inside the passenger compartment and the driver yelling for help. All the doors were locked and windows closed, and the driver was unable to open them from inside.

Sprinting back to his patrol car, Officer Smith got a window punch, and then with assistance from Sergeant Michael Marotta and two Pinellas Sheriff's deputies, break the windows. While one deputy worked to extinguish the growing fire, Officer Smith, Sergeant Marotta and the other deputy proceeded to remove the broken glass and side airbag, all while standing within feet of flames coming from under the hood of the car and while inhaling smoke from the fire. Reaching into the car, they unlocked and opened the door and pulled the driver from the car. Body camera footage clearly depicts flames inside the car as they removed the driver and escorted him to safety. Thanks to Officer Smith and Sergeant Marotta's outstanding courage and teamwork, the driver of this vehicle not only survived, but (except for a totaled car and a DUI charge) was relatively unscathed.

**About the Florida Police Chiefs Association**

The Florida Police Chiefs Association (FPCA) is the nation's pre-eminent law enforcement professional association, speaking for over 1,300 of Florida's top law enforcement executives, and providing guidance and leadership for the future of law enforcement and our communities. The FPCA serves municipal, airport, college and university, and tribal police departments, as well as private businesses and security firms and federal, state and county law enforcement agencies across every region of the state. For more information about the FPCA, please visit [www.fpca.com](http://www.fpca.com).

###