



Law Enforcement Charitable Foundation Intelligence Brief



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Remembering Fallen Officers

December 2022 to April 2023

Detective Sergeant
Frank Gualdino

Deputy Sheriff
Jose Angel DeLeon

Border Patrol Agent
Raul Humberto Gonzalez, Jr.

Reserve Deputy
Brad Miller

Court Services Officer
Curtis Matthew Worland

Senior Corrections Officer
Scott Ozburn Riner

Police Officer
Branden Paul Estorffe

Sergeant
Steven Robin

Sergeant
Donald Scoby

Deputy Sheriff
Daniel J. Kin

Deputy Sheriff
Oscar Yovani Bolanso-Anavisca, Jr.

Chief of Police
Joe Carey

Detective
Paul Daniel Newell

Deputy Sheriff
Corey D. McElroy

Corporal
Ray Charles Hamilton

Deputy Sheriff
Isaiah Cordero

Chief of Police
Justin McIntire

Police Officer
Carl Douglas Kimball

Deputy Sheriff
Darnell Calhoun

Supervisory Officer
Jacqueline Montanaro

Corrections Officer
Lawrence Christopher Prather

Master Patrol Officer
Clarence L. "CJ" Williams

Police Officer
Gonzalo Carrasco, Jr.

Police Officer
Sean L. Sluganski

Police Officer
Peter E. C. Jerving

Police Officer
Charles Herring

Police Officer
Julian Becerra

Correctional Officer
Jay Miller

Police Officer
James Muhlbauer

Sergeant
Christopher D. Fitzgerald

Police Officer
Geoffrey Redd

Detention Officer
Kenneth Fowler

Police Officer
Andres M. Vasquez Lasso

Deputy Sheriff
Asson Hacker

Master Trooper
James R. Bailey

Detective Sergeant
Mason Griffith

Deputy Sheriff
Jeremy McCain

Patrolman
Joseph Barlow

Sergeant
David Poirrier

Corporal
Scotty Canezaro

Police Officer
Garrett Crumby

Police Officer
Timothy James Unwin, III

Detective Sergeant
Nicholas Pepper

Police Officer
Emily Ann Breidenbach

Police Officer
Hunter Timothy Scheel

Senior Police Officer
Trevor Abney

Investigator
Patrick J. Hogan

Deputy Sheriff
Josh Owen

Reserve Corporal
Joseph Johnson

Senior Investigator
Nicholas Georgeadis

Deputy Sheriff
Kaitie Leising

Police Officer
Robert Shisler

Names gathered by The Officer Down Memorial Page, Inc.

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Letter From LECF



Since its inception in 2016, the Law Enforcement Charitable Foundation (LECF) has prioritized assisting the families of fallen officers. Additionally, the Foundation offers grants for protective equipment to law-enforcement agencies and promotes a strong relationship between communities and local law enforcement through education, programs, and briefings. The LECF is a non-profit organization that operates with one part-time staff member and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) entity by the IRS.

The LECF is honored to introduce a Medal of Valor to pay tribute to police officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty. These officers deserve to be honored for their bravery and sacrifice. Awarding them a Medal of Valor is a fitting tribute to their dedication to keeping our communities safe. These officers put themselves in harm's way to protect others, and their service should never be forgotten. Let us honor and remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country.

The LECF will use the guidelines set forth in the federal Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2022 to help determine the recipients of the medal. Who is eligible? Law-enforcement officers, including corrections officers, are eligible to receive the medal. How does the LECF define "killed in the line of duty"? This term applies to any officer who dies as a direct and proximate result of a personal injury or exposure sustained in the line of duty. This includes officers who, while in an off-duty capacity, are killed while responding to a crime. It also includes off-duty officers who are killed while en route to or from a specific emergency or request for assistance, as well as officers who are killed while driving (as required or authorized by law or condition of employment) their own vehicle or their employer's vehicle to or from work. Additionally, the term includes suicides determined to result from an officer being "ex-



posed" to a traumatic event, including if the officer, while on duty, directly experiences or witnesses a traumatic event or is intensely subjected to aversive consequences of a traumatic event (e.g., a public-safety officer collecting human remains).

The medals (pictured) are 1.50" x 1.44" in size with a blue and black ribbon. The center emblem contains the LECF logo. The top rocker of the medal is inscribed with the words, "In Valor There Is Hope." The bottom rocker will be engraved with the name of the fallen officer. The estimated annual cost of the medals is \$6,000. This is based on a yearly average of 300 fallen heroes and includes costs for a case, engraving, and shipping. If you want to donate to help offset the cost of the medals, you can do so by scanning the QR code next to the ribbon in the picture above, or by mailing a donation to the Law Enforcement Charitable Foundation, P.O. Box 1241, Appleton, WI 54912.

We understand this is a polarizing subject that involves personal and religious convictions, among other factors. However, these heroes need to know it's okay to not be okay. They are humans with emotions. Those emotions and the way our bodies and minds involuntarily react to an incident — or a lifetime of incidents — will not be diminished by a lack of support for a brother or sister in need.

— Matt Harper, Director, LECF, Inc
(920) 225-5763
mharper@lecf-inc.org



I want to help. Please contact me about:

- A grant for a family of an officer in my community killed in the line of duty
- Educational aid through FreedomProject Academy
- A community grant for protective police equipment
- An award for an outstanding officer in my community
- Adding a name to "Memorializing Fallen Officers" list
- A tax-exempt donation to LECF
- A personal endorsement for LECF
- I would like this newsletter sent to me electronically.

Here's my email: _____

Name _____ Address _____ Phone _____

Mail to: P.O. Box 1241 • Appleton, WI 54912-1241 or visit www.LECF-Inc.org

LECF2023

Sheriff Counters Demand for More Gun Laws Following Horrific Murder of Three Teens in Florida

by Bob Adelman

Marion County (Florida) Sheriff Billy Woods anticipated the question that would inevitably arise following his press conference on April 7, and seized the high ground in advance. He angrily decried the murder of three teens in Florida by three other teen criminals, following it with this:

We are shocked. Not only are the victims juveniles, but the murderers are juveniles as well.

I know each of you in the media here and the viewers out there [have] heard us in law enforcement ... talk about what is the problem.

I'm going to go ahead and address the first thing that I know is going to come up because there are individuals out there viewing, including some of you media, who want to blame the one thing that has no ability or the capacity to commit the crime itself — and that's the gun.

These *individuals* committed the crime. [Emphasis added.]

“The bad guy's gonna get a gun no matter what law you have in place,” he added.

One of the suspects was only 12 years old. Another, 16-year-old Tahj Brewton, sports a remarkable arrest record considering his age: He was wanted for several felony offenses, including carjacking with a firearm, aggravated assault, grand theft of a motor vehicle, fleeing a law-enforcement officer, and tampering with an electronic monitor the court had required him to wear.

The firearms used in the murders were stolen.

Woods blamed schools for the murders: “Our school districts ... need to stop minimizing the actions of their students ... that's where the failure is.”

Predictably, the leftist media savaged Woods' comments. NBC News called his words a “wild rant,” and then piously intoned more statistics decrying the increase in juveniles shooting other juveniles to prove the need for more gun control.

Alan Gottlieb, chairman of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms (CCRKBA), long ago ran out of patience with such distortions by the anti-gun media. Following NBC's coverage of Sheriff Woods' press conference, Gottlieb scolded the news outlet:

It's deplorable that NBC News chose to describe Sheriff Woods' remarks as a “wild rant” against gun control when he responded to a question from a reporter. The sheriff is a career lawman, and he's got more than enough experience



to make the distinction between an inanimate object and an individual with an evil heart. If anyone is guilty of going off on a rant, it's NBC News.

Evidently, some in the media can't stand the truth. When they quoted Sheriff Woods, some reports deliberately omitted his reference to the media among those wanting to blame the gun. The sheriff got it right, and the establishment media knows it. The terrible crime in his county which left three teens dead was committed by individuals, not a gun, and it is time for the anti-gun press and the gun prohibition lobby to admit it.

The fact that a stolen gun was apparently used in this crime simply underscores the sheriff's remarks about the failure of gun control laws to prevent criminals, regardless of their age, from getting their hands on firearms.

As we've said before, America doesn't have a problem with guns, it has a problem with criminals, and with a justice system that treats them like victims. Gun control proponents, including the media, need to put the blame where it belongs. Otherwise, they'll be demanding Sheriff Woods and his colleagues should arrest guns instead of the people who misuse them. ■

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Positivity Shines Through Adversity



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by Kris Hauser

Do you ever wonder why we don't see more upbeat stories in the news about our law-enforcement officers? There are many cases of police officers working in their communities for the good of those living in them. However, it seems that every time we turn on the news — mainstream media, that is — we only see the negative and ugly stories about law enforcement. I believe we should also spotlight the positive and heroic stories.

There is good and bad in all of us. However, in my opinion, the good always outweighs the bad. That should be our focus as a society. If the media reported the positive acts our law-enforcement officers perform monthly, weekly, and daily, it would help bring together police and citizens. People want and need to believe in those who are there to protect and serve them. It also goes the other way; the police will be encouraged to know that their com-

munities support them. How can anyone properly perform their duties when they are constantly in doubt? That would be a heavy weight to bear.

As the LECF's mission statement declares, we strive to protect the bond that exists between communities and local law enforcement. The following story is about a program that started with a vision to do just that — and then made that vision a reality.

That program is Police Lights of Christmas, an outreach started in 2016. Q90 FM, one of Northeast Wisconsin's local Christian nonprofit radio stations, started this initiative to benefit those in the area who are less fortunate — the homeless, needy, and brokenhearted. The staff at Q90 FM had an amazing vision: They proposed collecting gift cards, going out into the community at Christmastime, and surprising those who needed to be shown love and compassion. However, they had a problem: How would they find the family who did not

have enough food to last them through the week, or who could not pay their next electricity bill? What about that person who is living in his car, or who is grieving and lonely? The answers to these questions were vital to the entire concept of the Police Lights of Christmas outreach.

In July 2016, multiple police officers were tragically ambushed in Dallas, Texas. Five officers were killed, and nine others were injured. Two civilians also were wounded in the ambush. The shooter was enraged over the shootings of black men that occurred days before this horrific incident. This tragedy, along with the media's continued highlighting of negative news regarding law enforcement, put a strain between police officers and a sizable portion of Americans. Those Americans distrusted the police, and the police feared violence directed against them.

This incident led to a "wake-up" moment. The staff at Q90 FM believed God was calling them to shed a positive light



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on law enforcement while helping those in need. It dawned on them that their local police officers knew how to locate the needy in their communities. They knew who the homeless people were, and where to find them. They knew how to find those who were struggling from day to day. Police officers regularly encounter those who need a helping hand, and many dig into their own wallets to help the less fortunate. The staff at Q90 FM now knew what to do! The police were best equipped to distribute gift cards and help the needy. So, Q90 FM decided to partner with local law enforcement. They would stock area police officers' vehicles with gift cards, and when those officers were on patrol, they would distribute the gift cards to needy individuals and families they encountered.

The police were not only helping their neighbors in need, but their actions started neutralizing the hate and negative stigma promoted by mainstream media. This doubled the impact the outreach generated. As the Police Lights of Christmas website declares, "we will proactively do what we can to maintain positive relationships between our officers and the communities they serve — setting an example for the rest of the world; setting the bar."

To build constructive relationships between communities and the police officers

who protect and serve them, both must come together. This outreach program is succeeding in doing just that.

In addition to gift cards for specific businesses — including Kwik Trip, Culver's, Walmart, McDonald's, and Subway — Visa gift cards are also given to those who are homeless or who do not have a place to stay at the time. These gift cards can be used for hotel stays, car repairs, gas, and many other necessities.

For example, the Green Bay Police Department used these gift cards to help two families who each had a child with cancer. They purchased groceries for the families, not just for the holidays, but to last them a couple of weeks. The families spend all their time and energy paying medical bills for the cancer treatments. This helped them concentrate on their children without worrying about groceries, even if for a short time.

The Police Lights of Christmas program distributes more than just gift cards. For example, it accepts donated items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, socks, mittens, and other necessities. These are combined into "care backpacks" and distributed to local police departments, who then distribute them to the needy.

This outreach program gives police

officers an opportunity to help others in need, and it allows them to interact in a positive way with people within the community. It is a wonderful way for police officers to start a conversation with people who are not in an emergency. The emotions of those they encounter are genuine. At first, they may be apprehensive, but this is usually followed by tears of happiness and sincere gratitude. This outreach program is building trust and changing the way countless people perceive the police.

The Police Lights of Christmas outreach has grown bigger and stronger each year since its inception in 2016. The program started with two police departments, \$10K in gift cards and 100 backpacks. Look at how much it has grown with each passing year:

- In 2017, there were five police departments involved, \$25K in gift cards, and 250 backpacks.
- In 2018, there were 20 police departments involved, \$50K in gift cards, and 600 backpacks.
- In 2019, there were 25 police departments involved, \$75K in gift cards, and 750 backpacks.
- In 2020, there were 30 police departments involved, \$100K in gift cards, and 750 backpacks.
- In 2021, there were 50 police departments involved, \$165K in gift cards, and 1,000 backpacks.
- In 2022, there were 55 police departments involved, \$185K in gift cards, and 1,000 backpacks.



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I can't wait to see what the numbers will be this year. So many people benefit from this amazing program; tens of thousands of neighbors in need have been helped by thousands of police officers. Those who donate are a key reason why this program is so successful — they are the heroes behind the heroes. If you would like to participate in helping those who are less fortunate, while at the same time supporting our law-enforcement officers, you can donate by visiting lightsofchristmas.us.

The 2023 Police Lights of Christmas program will begin with its "Christmas in July" events, which will take place across Wisconsin. If you would like to see a full list of this year's fundraising events, they will be posted online by the end of May.

What follows is an example of the fundraising events that help support this worthy program.

Twice a year, the police officers in Portage County, Wisconsin, trade their uniforms and badges for aprons and gloves.

They take the place of cooks and servers at local restaurants to raise funds for the Police Lights of Christmas outreach.

Last year, officers donated their time at Culver's and Pizza Ranch. They were at Pizza Ranch in Plover in July, and Culver's in Stevens Point in October. According to Stevens Point's chief of police, Bob Kussow, the officers enter the restaurants and do whatever needs to be done — they wipe down counters, do dishes, and even deliver food. They literally take over for the staff. It does not matter what needs to be done; the officers jump on board to help those in need. The money received is divided between all the departments and goes back into their respective communities.

Patrol officers can distribute both the gift cards and care backpacks while they are out and about. Those gifts are given to those who are struggling, whether financially, mentally, or physically. If an individual had a very bad day, these items can be given to lift their spirits. The gifts also

have been given to those victimized by a crime. In some cases, if an officer spots someone doing a good deed, he will hand that person a gift card.

Another example of fostering favorable attitudes toward police may occur when an officer pulls over someone for a traffic violation. Instead of a ticket, the officer will hand them a warning and a gift card. Can you imagine that person's shock? The individual not only avoided a costly ticket, but also received a gift. What a great feeling that must be, not only for the recipient, but also for the giver. What better time of year than the Christmas season to be an example of love and compassion — after all, isn't that what it's all about?

In Neenah, Wisconsin, a single mother of three found that caring for our neighbors really does happen. She heard a knock on her door and went to investigate. She saw a police officer standing there and was immediately filled with apprehension and negativity. *What happened now? Is someone hurt, or worse?*

However, the officer from the Neenah Police Department handed her three gift cards. She was shocked — it was the last thing she expected. The officer told her to have a Merry Christmas and left. She was touched; it meant the world to her.

Thank you to everyone involved in the Police Lights of Christmas program. The LECF wishes continued success in achieving the all-important goal of restoring trust between police and citizens. This is a vision the LECF strives to attain as it is vital to sustaining safe and healthy communities. ■





Soros-backed Prosecutor Resigns Before Being Fired



On February 18, repeat offender Daniel Riley struck teenage athlete Janae Edmonson in downtown St. Louis as she was walking to her hotel. Riley was free because Circuit Attorney Kimberly Gardner had let him out on bond. This incident led Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey to file a petition to remove Gardner from office.

by Bob Adelman

Protesting to the very end that the attacks on her as St. Louis Circuit Attorney were politically and racially motivated, Kimberly Gardner finally caved. In her tweet on May 4 to the city's residents who had endured nearly six years of rising crime due to her malfeasance, she attempted a classic misdirection:

Since day one of my tenure as Circuit Attorney, I have experienced attacks on my reforms, on my judgment, on my integrity, on my prosecutorial discretion, on my responsibility to direct the limited resources of this office and more.

Some of these attacks seem designed to stop the office from func-

tioning, at the expense of public safety. We have experienced an onslaught of records requests that no office in the country could reasonably fulfill, along with attacks on our hard-working line attorneys designed to demoralize these public servants. There is no sign that the onslaught would stop for as long as I am in the office.

Those "attacks" began almost from the first day she took office in 2016. She revamped the rules under which her attorneys would bring cases to trial. She loaded them up with unbearable numbers, often exceeding 100 for each attorney in her office, resulting in delays averaging 340 days between charging and trial.

Within months she created an "exclusion list" of nearly 30 police officers,

prohibiting them from filing charges with her office.

It didn't take long for crime in St. Louis to rise. The 264 homicides the city reported in 2020 were more than 36 percent more than the year before. Property crime soared, and is now more than four times the national average, while the murder rate is eight times the national average.

Neighborhood Scout rates St. Louis as one of the most crime-ridden cities in the nation.

Her determination to undermine the rule of law in the name of equity finally resulted in Missouri's Attorney General Andrew Bailey filing a petition to remove her from office. That petition was likely driven by the final straw: the maiming of a young woman by a criminal whom Gardner had let out on bond.



Bailey’s petition provided the details of the ghastly incident:

Janae Edmonson, a teenage athlete, was walking back to her hotel in downtown St. Louis on Saturday, February 18. Ms. Edmonson, who was in town for a volleyball tournament, had just verbally committed to play sports for a college in Tennessee.

As Ms. Edmonson and her family walked down the sidewalk, a speeding car driven by Daniel Riley crashed into another car and struck Ms. Edmonson, severing one of her legs and maiming the other.

Her father, thanks to his quick thinking and military service, applied two belts as tourniquets as he watched the life drain from her face.

Thankfully, Ms. Edmonson survived, although both of her legs were amputated.

Just who is Daniel Riley? Bailey explained:

Daniel Riley never should have been driving that car. In 2020, the St. Louis Circuit Attorney’s Office charged Riley with First Degree Robbery and Armed Criminal Action for stealing a firearm from [a] victim at gunpoint.

The Circuit Attorney [Gardner] dismissed and refiled that case on July 18, 2022, but not before Riley — who was out on bond — earned 54 separate violations for failing to comply with the pre-trial bond conditions.

After the Circuit Attorney refiled the case, Riley earned 50 *more* violations. The Circuit Attorney never filed a motion to revoke Riley’s bond. [Emphasis in original.]

But her office had plenty of time to prosecute Mark and Patricia McCloskey, the couple who protected their property during the George Floyd riots by displaying their legally owned firearms. The judge in that case saw through Gardner’s real motives, writing that her attempt was “a crim-



AP Images

From the beginning of her tenure as Circuit Attorney, Gardner implemented multiple policy changes that undermined the rule of law by making it harder to prosecute criminals. As a result, crime in St. Louis significantly increased while she held office.

inal prosecution for political purposes.”

In her resignation tweet, Gardner expressed pride in her accomplishments: “Under my leadership ... this office has made tremendous strides in redefining public safety.” She was correct about that. That “redefining” meant that her office dismissed nearly 12,000 criminal cases, including some involving first-degree murder.

Her resignation was met with a sigh of relief from many, including U.S. Representative Ann Wagner (R-Mo.), who tweeted, “She has presided over miscarriages of justice for years, hurting countless victims who put their trust in her and letting dangerous criminals escape the accountability they deserve. St. Louis will be better off without her.”

Missouri House Speaker Dean Plocher, along with the House Speaker Pro Tem Mike Henderson and House Majority Floor Leader Jon Patterson, issued a joint statement:

We have achieved an important victory in restoring law and order in the City of St. Louis with this resignation. Addressing the violent crime crisis that has destabilized the St. Louis region has been one of our highest priorities this session, which has included holding the Circuit At-

torney accountable for the willful neglect of her constitutional duties.

Even judges on the St. Louis Circuit Court were relieved at the news of her resignation: “We hope St. Louis’ next Circuit Attorney is successful in restoring stability to the Office and rebuilding its ranks with experienced prosecutors.”

State Attorney General Bailey can’t wait for Gardner’s reign of terror to end:

There is absolutely no reason for the circuit attorney to remain in office until June 1.

We remain undeterred with our legal quest to forcibly remove her from office. Every day she remains puts the city of St. Louis in more danger.

How many victims will there be between now and June 1? How many defendants will have their constitutional rights violated? How many cases will continue to go unprosecuted?

Missouri Governor Mike Parson will name Gardner’s replacement. ■

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Arizona, Montana Bills

Would Protect Local Control Over Law Enforcement

by Peter Rykowski

Legislation was introduced earlier this year in Arizona and Montana to protect local control over law enforcement and prevent attempts to strengthen federal control over it.

Arizona's Bill

In Arizona, House Bill 2309 (H.B. 2309) was sponsored by Representative Rachel Jones (R-Tucson) and eight other representatives. In its original iteration, it would prohibit state and local agencies from complying with federal law-enforcement edicts that contradict state law.

H.B. 2309, as originally introduced, declares:

Pursuant to the sovereign authority of this state and Article II, Section 3, Constitution of Arizona, this state and all political subdivisions of this state are prohibited from using any personnel or financial resources to enforce, administer or cooperate with any act, law, treaty, order, rule or regulation of the United States government that is inconsistent with any law of this state regarding the authority of state and local law enforcement agencies.

On February 28, the Arizona House of Representatives passed H.B. 2309 by a party-line 31-28 vote. The Senate amended the bill before passing it by a party-line 16-14 vote. As of this writing, the House and Senate are negotiating a final bill text.

Montana "Sheriffs First" Bill

In Montana, House Bill No. 604 (H.B. 604), referred to as a "Sheriffs First" bill, was introduced by Representative Jennifer Carlson (R-Manhattan). In its original iteration, this bill would ban federal agents from making "an arrest, search, or seizure in this state without the written permission of the sheriff or designee of the sheriff of

the county in which the arrest, search, or seizure will occur...”

Furthermore, H.B. 604 nullifies any federal law usurping the authority of county sheriffs:

Pursuant to the 10th amendment to the United States constitution and this state’s compact with the other states, the legislature declares that any federal law purporting to give federal employees the authority of a county sheriff in this state is not recognized by and is specifically rejected by this state and is declared to be invalid in this state.

H.B. 604 contains certain exceptions, such as if the arrest, search, or seizure happens on a federal enclave, or if the person being arrested is an employee of the sheriff’s office. For some of these exceptions, the federal government would still need written permission from Montana’s attorney general before acting.

Under H.B. 604, federal agents who violate the law would be liable to prosecution by the attorney of the county where the violation occurred.

On February 27, the House Judiciary Committee passed H.B. 604 by a 12-7 vote

after amending the bill to weaken the penalty for federal agents who violate the law to a misdemeanor, and to allow sheriffs to ignore the bill’s provisions. However, on March 2, the House voted 32-68 against H.B. 604, killing it for this year. Nonetheless, the bill, in its original iteration, remains a strong model for legislators in other states to use.

Importance of Local Police

Arizona’s H.B. 2309 and Montana’s H.B. 604 are excellent applications of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution, which states, “This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof ... shall be the supreme Law of the Land.”

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution does not grant the federal government any authority over law-enforcement matters, nor does it allow the federal government to usurp the authority of county sheriffs. As reinforced by the 10th Amendment, such matters are reserved to the states and the people. Accordingly, any federal involvement in local law enforcement is not “in Pursuance” of the Constitution — and state and local officials have a duty to enforce the Constitution by nullifying such involvement.

Locally controlled law enforcement is integral to a free society. When local control is diluted, accountability to local voters is also diluted, and big-government power is increased. Federal involvement in local police is dangerous; it makes the latter dependent on the former, thus allowing the federal government to insidiously take over local police departments. This is a major step toward federalized police.

Local police and county sheriffs are key to protecting citizens against tyranny — they were at the forefront of nullifying state and federal Covid/vaccine mandates, and they also have protected against state and federal gun-control measures. In countries with federalized police — including Canada, China, and the socialist-run European countries — nothing prevents the central government from violating people’s God-given rights.

Accordingly, legislation such as Arizona’s H.B. 2309 and Montana’s H.B. 604 would help prevent such tyranny from occurring in the United States. ■

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AP Images



FINDING PURPOSE

Outside of Law Enforcement



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by Sgt. Ian Seaholm (Ret.)

One of the hardest transitions into civilian life was the feeling that my identity as a law-enforcement officer was shrouded in a dark veil. What would I do, professionally speaking, with all the training and experience I had amassed over almost 15 years as a police officer? I knew private security and loss prevention were options, but in the few interviews I had, I felt that my experience would make me more proactive than desired in a corporate setting. Plus, many corporate loss-prevention policies prohibit employees from even verbally confronting suspected shoplifters. That's something I would have struggled with. Then there was the likely scenario that — despite my

training and experience — I would start in an entry-level position as I would only be available to work part-time. This is a hard pill to swallow for an individual who achieved moderate rank and accolades in his career. Many of the positions that I applied for needed more hours from me than I could give.

I even tried several part-time jobs unrelated to law enforcement or public service. This included working for local businesses (think retail), doing tasks requiring little mental activation — essentially showing up, working, and going home. It was difficult to find any sense of worth in these positions or to adapt to the private sector. The businesses I worked for, while local, still had corporate supervision overseeing the operations of their

local branches. Many of their policies and procedures are designed to make the company run smoothly and keep people safe (e.g., requirements that workers use safety scissors). But, coming from law enforcement, a dangerous profession where one can experience life-and-death situations daily, the policies just annoyed me. That's not to say the work itself was meaningless or didn't serve a purpose, or that the companies themselves were bad. It just wasn't my "calling." What I found lacking in these jobs was the opportunity to apply the critical thinking and deductive reasoning skills I had built up during my policing career.

I discussed with my therapist my dissatisfaction with my post-law-enforcement career. She was crucial in getting



AP Images

Dispatchers perform a wide range of duties, including monitoring on-duty police officers, answering phone calls, and typing officers' report dictations. As in Officer Seaholm's case, it can be a satisfying career choice for former law-enforcement officers.

me to accept that at this particular moment, I might not find something completely satisfying. She also explained to me that my situation was similar to other officers she had known. For the time being, I just had to accept where I was.

Late last year, I saw a part-time dispatching vacancy with the Clintonville Police Department. What really stuck out to me was the position required a minimum of only four shifts a month, which worked well with my disability limitations. I applied, interviewed, and was offered the position. I started in late February of this year. Right off the bat, I noticed how accepting the Department was of me, as a former officer, *and* of my situation and limitations. As of this writing, I am in my last week of field training before starting my regular part-time shift rotation. Clintonville, Wisconsin, is about 50 minutes northwest of Oshkosh, but I am familiar with the area as I grew up in New London, Wisconsin, which is just south of Clintonville. Clintonville staffs dispatchers 24 hours a day, 365

days a year. While 911 calls go through the Waupaca County Sheriff, Clintonville handles all non-emergency calls. Furthermore, dispatchers also process some DMV transactions such as registration renewals; type officers' report dictations; accept and log fine payments, burning permits, and lost-and-found property (including cats); and answer many non-police-related phone calls. They do all of this while monitoring on-duty officers and their locations, dispatching them to calls for service, and providing them with necessary information such as driver's license, wanted person, and vehicle statuses. I immediately fell back into answering questions and calls for service, and I found dispatching and communicating over radio as easy as riding a bike. Using my training and experience in an applicable setting was deeply satisfying and rewarding — I was again doing something that mattered in a profession that I knew. It doesn't bother me that I'm not physically responding to the calls; I am just using and applying my law-enforcement

knowledge in a different way. I am also learning different procedures and policies strictly related to the Department and position themselves. The job is not entirely the same as what I did in Oshkosh — so it's new, challenging, and refreshing — but it still has the basic template I know and have grown to love.

In a way, it's similar to a movie franchise, for instance *Star Wars*. There are original films, prequels, sequels, remakes, reboots, legacy sequels, stand-alones, prequels to the sequels — you get the drift. Everyone is different. Some people can retire from their main career and find something completely different and satisfying. I guess that isn't me, at least right now. Maybe for me, law enforcement really is a calling. If my law-enforcement career was a movie series, I'd call this latest entry a "legacy sequel." My review: It is just as good as the original, with a few new additions, cast members, and storylines to make it fresh and current. That sounds like a pretty good movie to me. ■

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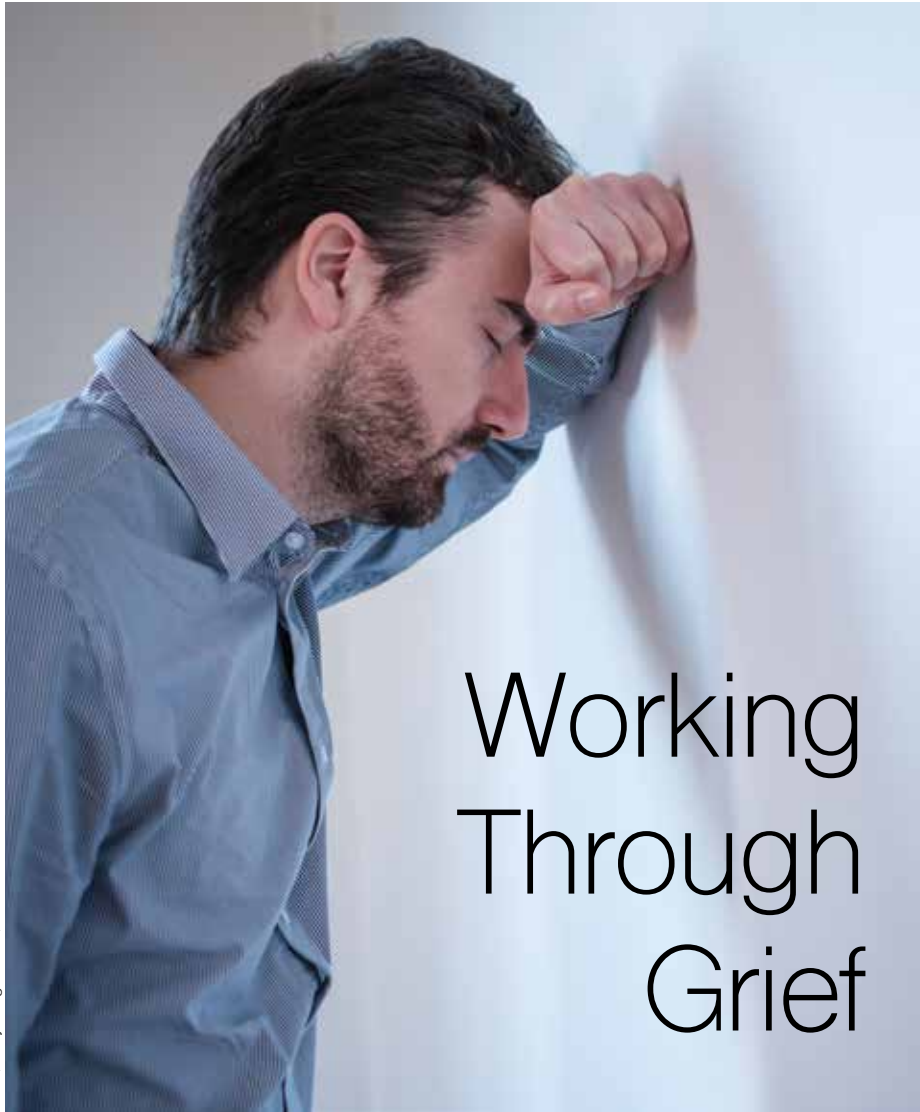


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Working Through Grief

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by *Sherri Martin*

The past couple of years have been among the toughest times for law enforcement in our country. To date, our profession has lost hundreds of officers to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of us have also experienced the loss of family members and other loved ones to the pandemic. Facing an unprecedented rise in violent attacks on law enforcement, we have also borne the grief of losing co-workers killed in the line of duty by violent assaults. And of course, we must never forget our broth-

ers and sisters in law enforcement who suffered silently and died by their own hands. Each and every life lost brings about feelings of grief and loss, yet we rarely discuss our grief. The FOP Division of Wellness Services recognizes the toll this takes on us, and we would like to share resources and information for coping.

Grief is a natural reaction to loss, but for some it can become overwhelming, causing struggles with daily life. It is both a universal and personal experience and can look different for everyone. While we cannot control the pro-

cess of grief, we can become informed about and prepare for the various stages of the experience. Consider these tips for working through grief.

Remember to give yourself time. Mourning can last for months or years. Generally, pain is tempered as time passes and we adapt to life without loved ones. We may try to place limits on grief, believing that after a certain amount of time we should be “over it.” However, not allowing time to experience grief through all its stages may actually cause more harm in the long term. We should never attempt to limit our own or another’s experience of grief, but should instead seek to allow grace to ourselves and provide support to others going through the process.

Your experience of grief is likely to be different from others’. For some people, grief is a short-term phenomenon, also known as acute grief, although the pain may return unexpectedly at a later time. But other individuals may experience prolonged grief, also known as complicated grief, lasting months or years. Some people may show more pronounced expressions of grief, with outward displays of emotion. Others may experience grief more quietly, becoming withdrawn and seemingly depressed. The misperception that “more” grief is better or that there is a proper way to grieve can make the process more difficult.

Learn and recognize the stages of grief. The Five Stages of Grief is a theory developed by psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. It suggests that we go through five distinct stages after the loss of a loved one: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally acceptance.

• **Denial:** It can be hard to believe we have lost an important person in our lives, especially when we may have just spoken with them the previous week or even the previous day. During this stage, our reality has shifted completely, and it can take time to adjust. Denial serves the purpose of helping us feel less overwhelmed by the loss while we absorb and comprehend what has happened.



• **Anger:** At a time when we are processing so much in our loss, anger can feel like an acceptable emotional outlet. For many, it may feel more socially acceptable to admit we are angry than to say we are scared. Expressing anger allows us to express emotion without fear of judgment. Anger also tends to be the first thing we feel when starting to release emotions related to loss.

• **Bargaining:** When coping with loss, it isn't unusual to feel so desperate that we are willing to do anything to alleviate or minimize the pain. During this stage in grieving, we may try to bargain to change the situation. This may look like directing our requests to a higher power or something bigger than us that might influence a different outcome. There is an acute awareness of our humanness in this stage of grieving, when we realize there is nothing we can do to influence change or create a better end result. Bargaining comes from a feeling of helplessness and gives us a perceived sense of control over something that feels so out of control.

• **Depression:** At this stage, we start to feel the loss of our loved one more abundantly. Our panic begins to subside, the emotional fog begins to clear, and the loss feels more present and unavoidable. During our experience of processing grief, there comes a time when we slowly start to look at the reality of our present situation. Bargaining no longer feels like an option and we are faced with what is happening. In those moments, we tend to pull inward as the sadness grows. We might find ourselves retreating, being less sociable and reaching out less to others about what we are going through.

• **Acceptance:** Acceptance comes when we begin to be able to move forward from the loss. When we come to a place of acceptance, it is not that we no longer feel the pain of loss. Instead, we are no longer resisting the reality of our situation, and we are not struggling to make it something different. Sadness and regret can still be present in this phase. But the emotional survival tactics of denial, bargaining, and anger are less



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likely to be present during this phase of the grieving process.

Remember: Grief is not limited to the loss of a loved one, but when it follows the loss of a loved one, it may be compounded by feelings of guilt and confusion, especially if the relationship was a difficult one. Many people expect to experience denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, in that order, due to the continuing influence of *On Death and Dying*, the 1969 book by Kübler-Ross. However, it has been demonstrated that many, if not most, people will not progress through these stages. While some people do experience the stages, and eventually reach acceptance after a loss, grief is now understood to be highly individualized and unpredictable.

Understand that grief is born out of love. As we work through the process of grief, it may help to remember that grief occurs because we have experienced great love. Focusing on happy and memorable moments shared with lost loved ones has the power to shift our experiences of grief to an appreciation of that love. When working through the negative emotions that come with grief

and loss, making a concerted effort to temper those with positive recollections of love and fondness for the person can allow some light to shine in.

Be prepared for grief to ebb and flow. The course of grief is unpredictable. During an anniversary, you might experience the intense emotions and reactions that you first experienced when you lost your loved one. Even years after a loss, you might continue to feel sadness when you're confronted with reminders of their death. As you continue healing, take steps to cope with reminders of your loss. Some of the following examples have worked for others: Consider planning a distraction. Schedule a gathering or a visit with friends or family during times when you're likely to feel alone or be reminded of your loved one. Remember to focus on the good things about your relationship with your loved one and the time you had together, rather than the loss. Write a letter to them or a note about some of your good memories. Start a new tradition. Make a donation to a charitable organization in your loved one's name on birthdays or holidays, or plant a tree in their honor. Finally, con-

nect with others. Draw friends and family close to you, including people who were special to your loved one.

Engage with sources of support. Find someone who will encourage you to talk about your loss. Stay connected to your usual support systems, such as spiritual leaders and social groups. If you are uncertain about whether your grieving process is normal, consider consulting a professional counselor. Outside help is sometimes beneficial to people trying to recover and adjust, and is a perfectly normal resource when coping with a life-changing loss. As always, the Division of Wellness Services is here to support you as well, and can provide further information and resources to guide you on your path back to wellness. ■

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

John 15:13

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Meet Jacole Hall

Photo courtesy by Don Krueger and Dave Jackson

We were lucky to catch up with Jacole Hall recently, and have shared our conversation below.

Provided by CanvasRebel

Alright, Jacole, thanks for taking the time to share your stories and insights with us today. Let's kick things off with your mission — what is it, and what's the story behind why it's your mission?

The story behind Vaspire316 is about love, loss, loyalty, and legacy.

Dominic Hall was a Force Reconnaissance Marine, Army Special Forces soldier, Appleton police officer, father of two small children, and my faithful husband. He had a few combat deployments during his time of service, including responding to the 2011 nuclear power plant disaster in Fukushima, Japan. An earthquake knocked out power to the plant, and a tsunami wiped out backup emergency generators. Three of these generators exploded, releasing an enormous amount of radioactivity into the environment. It is said to be the second-worst nuclear accident in history.

In May 2021, my 31-year-old husband was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. After a few weeks of shock and determination to fight, we were connected with Chelsey Simoni of the HunterSeven Foundation.

We were told Dominic's tumor was on the head of his pancreas and only at stage 1B. We felt so blessed to have caught it early! It was wrapped around some blood vessels, so the plan was to shrink it — first with chemotherapy, and then later with a different mix of chemotherapy and radiation treatment. Dominic was told to have a genetic test done to see if there was a more reasonable answer as to why this 31-year-old, young, fit, and healthy veteran had cancer. His test came back positive for Lynch syndrome, which is an inherited genetic mutation causing individuals to be prone to cancer at an early age — “early” being 50, and “cancer” being colon cancer. It didn't make any sense to me. We were told the chemotherapy was not working. After all that vomit, diarrhea, weight loss,



Photo courtesy by Don Krueger and Dave Jackson

and suffering, it didn't work. After the discovery of Lynch, the team of doctors switched his treatment to immunotherapy, letting his body fight the cancer cells naturally.

Dominic's family was then told to be tested so we could get to the bottom of where it stemmed from. The bizarre part: Neither of his parents tested positive. No one else in his family has it; now, only our children have a 50/50 chance of inheriting the gene.

Immunotherapy seemed too good to be true, and you know how that saying goes. Right before starting chemo/radiation, we were told another heavy load of news: There were some new spots on his liver.

On November 1, 2021, Dominic was taken off the all-too-good-to-be-true immunotherapy, which we were once again told did not work. Perhaps the first round of chemo may have worked, but by this point in the game, it was too late to go back. Moving forward, it was time for Dominic to face the demons of a new kind of chemo-plus-radiation therapy. For

five-and-a-half weeks, we would travel two hours from home to his appointments Monday through Friday.

Chemo/radiation was a slow-burning beast, and by the fourth week, Dominic was down 14 pounds. He was admitted to the hospital for a week, where he would be put on a nutrition plan called total parenteral nutrition (TPN). In short, this was a feeding tube placed in his vein to build his body back up so he could stay in the fight.

Due to Covid rules, I could not stay overnight with my husband at the hospital, so I drove back and forth daily. On the night of December 1, 2021, he called me and said he was having one of the worst days of his life. For my incredibly strong military husband, those words had serious weight.

During our treatments, we experienced days where Dominic would go in for an appointment and could not receive treatment due to low blood counts, low white cell count, and weight loss. Once in a while, he wasn't on the schedule when he should have been; someone forgot to



Photo courtesy by Don Krueger and Dave Jackson

add him. At times, it felt like we were at the mercy of the roll of a dice whether we were getting treatment that day or not — being “forgotten about” was always a hard pill to swallow. And speaking of pills, by this time we had worked out a routine where we could skip 3 a.m. pills (previously, Dominic needed to take pills every three hours). This allowed me to go to bed at 11 p.m. and wake up at 6 a.m. for the next dose of pills. By this time, he was taking roughly 32 pills a day.

December 27, 2021 was our seven-year wedding anniversary. We had an appointment at 6 a.m. on December 28 to discuss the mysterious spots on his liver. We were told it could be either an infection or cancer. So, we decided to make the most of our anniversary and stay overnight in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at a hotel across from the hospital. We had pizza delivered and watched the kid’s world bake-off on TV. It was a perfect night. The next morning at our appointment, we learned yet another tragic reality: If the spots were indeed cancer, Dominic would no longer be eligible for surgery. He would die.

With that news, they sent us home. We were engulfed with back-and-forth news of the tumor growing, shrinking, and growing

again. Some spots on his liver got bigger, and some shrunk. The back-and-forth tug of war on our hearts was paralyzing at times. But we remained faithful to God’s plan. “Jesus, I trust in you,” we would often say. Dominic brought others together for a nightly 7 p.m. Rosary and continued to believe that “something beautiful is going to come from all of this suffering, I just know it.” He often said this.

January 12, 2022 was surgery day. We had learned the tumor shrunk enough for surgery — praise Jesus! The spots on his liver were looking more and more like an infection. We were told that some of the most renowned doctors were leaning toward them being an infection. We drove the two hours that morning to the hospital, not knowing whether Dominic’s fate was to live or die. He was briefly put under so the doctor could take a speed biopsy of the liver to determine if it was cancer or an infection. Once again, due to Covid rules, I could not be with him. He would wake up alone.

It seemed like hours upon hours in the waiting room. I read Job from the Bible over and over again, and I waited for the phone on the wall to ring, with the doctor on the other end whispering my husband’s

fate. The concierges behind the desk all wore red jackets, laughing with one another as they talked about cookies and emails. There were small meeting rooms behind me. I wondered how many wives, mothers, and fathers have cried in those rooms, and I reminded myself to be like Job. A couple sat a few chairs in front of me, waiting for the results of their son. My mother- and father-in-law were in the chapel across the hallway — they too were not allowed in due to Covid rules — waiting to learn their son’s fate. I heard a faint phone ring, and someone in a red jacket came over to me. I clenched my Bible. “The doctor is going to call you soon,” the concierge said. “You may go stand over by the wall and wait for the phone to ring.” I was shaking. The black phone looked as if it was out of my reach, hanging on the wall at the entrance of the waiting room. I faced it, with the high-trafficked hospital hallway on my right, and others sitting in the waiting room on my left. I happened to see a familiar face in the hallway: a friend with his 85-year-old grandfather who also had pancreatic cancer. As I started to say hi, the phone rang — a loud, deafening ring. It was so loud it made me jump. I set down my notebook and Bible as it rang again, so loud that I jumped again. I did the sign of the cross and somehow was able to reach the phone to answer the call. “It’s cancer. I’m so sorry,” the person on the other end said. I was in instant shock. My body started shaking, and I could feel my fight-or-flight instinct start to take over. I hung up the phone, looked at my friend, and shook my head “no.” He instantly engulfed me in a hug. I let out three sorrowful sighs and pulled myself together. The doctor was coming down to talk with me, and I was ushered to one of those little rooms in the back to wait. The doctor came in and held my hand. “If we do surgery, the cancer will spread like wildfire,” he said. I thought, “can’t we just try?” I thought I was begging, pleading, screaming — maybe I was just thinking it. The thought of him waking up alone shook my soul. My heart broke. I needed to be with my other half. Those vows are sacred, we are one, and I *need* to be with him when he wakes up, I thought. He cannot be alone

with a random nurse delivering his fate, or to look down and realize surgery did not happen. Death is the future.

I was told to wait. I was told I couldn't be with my husband. I didn't know where to go or what to do. I waited. I was calmly in shock. I decided to try to find him. I was determined to find him — I could not let him wake up alone. The concierges drew me a map on a piece of paper. A map, whatever that meant. I held it in my hand in the exact same position as they handed it to me the entire time as I searched for where to go, not once glancing at it. I was frozen. I'm still surprised I found my way back up to him. I waited in line. I didn't know who to ask for. I didn't know which room he was in. Finally, it was my turn to be helped. "I'm sorry sweetie, but you cannot see him right now," is what I was told over and over. I finally started to weep. "We didn't get good news," I softly squeaked out. "I don't know where to go or what to do." My breaths got heavy, and the mask wasn't helping. I had to hold the mask away from my mouth so I could breathe as it kept going down my throat as I tried to take deep breaths, I looked

out the window and saw the organization Kathy's House. "Am I supposed to walk across the street and go there and wait?" That thought made me feel sick.

Finally, I was able to see him. They led me back to him. It was such a maze. All I could think about was where he was; never in my life had I needed to see him as much as I did at that moment. He was waking up, and I rushed to hold his hand. "Hi mama," he said with a smile. "Hi daddy," I said with the deepest loving sigh and smiled. I knew that he knew, and he knew that I knew. He smiled and said, "It's all going to be ok mama."

He closed his eyes to sleep off the medications, and I started making phone calls. I called his mother; it was the most dreaded phone call of my life. With each phone call that I made, the sound on the other end was friends and loved ones fighting back tears. It was gut wrenching. But if it helped my husband from having to make the calls, I would have gladly twisted the knife into my gut over and over again for him. I finally took a break from the calls. I held his hand, and I just looked at him, the love of my life.

The next nine months were equally grueling. We got into a good vomit routine and rejoiced at the moments when he could fight it back. We celebrated his 33rd birthday on August 23, 2022. One of his goals was to make it to his 33rd birthday because that was how old Jesus was when he died. The next day, he was able to see his oldest son, Victor, just 4 years old, off to his first day of school, something we used to dream about doing together.

On September 4, 2022, Dominic answered God's call. He whispered his last words to me, his wife: "I love you too." My heart filled with joy and sorrow as he was unresponsive for a few hours. In my heart, I knew these would be his last words. Once again, he gave his wife everything she needed, no matter his state. He arrived on a Sunday as I made the agonizing decision to transition from at-home hospice to hospital care. We were there for a week. He fought hard and was called home also on a Sunday — the Lord's Day. It was very suiting for such a strongly Catholic man. He was surrounded by his family, once again giving me the opportunity to have what I needed. His breathing pattern changed, and I knew it was the end. With "Misty Mountains" by Peter Hollens and Tim Frost playing on repeat in the background, I made sure to fill his one last request: that I was holding his hand when he passed. At 12:23 p.m., Dominic peacefully took his last breath. Amid the tears from his passing, I was brokenhearted. I had lived all my vows to the fullest: "For better or for worse, for rich or for poor, in sickness or in health, I will love you." I silently moved my wedding ring from my left hand to my right hand. Our bond was broken. I now faced the world as a widow. Heartbroken, but refusing to be broken.

During all this time of sadness, sorrow, pain, and suffering, my husband remained stoic, positive, and encouraging. The vibrant light he shone upon God was inspiring, always making sure everyone around him was happy and at peace. The support and love we were showered with from the community were overwhelming. We could never pay anyone back, so we de-



Photos courtesy by Don Krueger and Dave Jackson



Jacole Hall with her and Dominic's two sons



Photos courtesy by Don Krueger and Dave Jackson

cided to pay it forward. Thus, Vaspire316 was born, and Dominic's legacy will live on.

Wow. So, before we get to the rest of our questions, can you briefly introduce yourself to our readers?

Absolutely. During the unexpected journey of morphing into a caretaker for my husband, I learned an entirely different level of love, devotion, pain, and respect for marriage. My husband was a decorated veteran, and he lived out the words "if not me, then who?" He happily signed his name in blood and was willing to die for you and his country. He did just that, and then some. Because of his never-ending selfless services, as well as the amazing organization HunterSeven, there is a new up-and-coming system called "The TRACE Model." This new model will save many lives. Dominic Hall will never be forgotten. Just google his name and you

too will instantly fall in love with my stoic masterpiece.

As for me, his wife, I will continue to bring him good and not evil all the days of my life and raise his boys as strong, God-fearing gentlemen. I have been so blessed to have been married to Dominic Hall. The person I am today is because of his love for me. My blessings come from all over the country, from his brothers-in-arms who reach out frequently to check on me, to the police department making sure I was invited to the SWAT Team Christmas party, among other activities. My circle of friends, along with his family and my family, are absolutely nothing short of amazing. So, when Dominic and I created Vaspire316, we had all of them in mind. I grew up in a small town called Freedom, which I'd like to think adds another level of sweetness to our story. I am petite in frame, as some may say measuring in at a fierce 5' 2", but in my mind, I

am 6' 5" and 250 pounds! I may be small, but I am fierce! Bringing others happiness and helping them see their own beauty and potential truly brings me joy. It has been my newfound mission in life to make sure every one of God's children sees themselves in His vision. My beautiful fellow widows/widowers, you are not alone, and you are so loved.

"Vaspire" simply means "do good things" — to live out the virtues of life and have virtuous aspirations. "316" stands for love — as in John 3:16.

I have also been so blessed to have the Recon & Sniper Foundation take Vaspire316 under their wing and help with our mission — to raise funds for other veteran families diagnosed with cancer or other rare diseases from toxic exposures, and to raise funds for veterans to get pre-screened for cancer using the Galleri Early Detection Cancer Screening Test Kit by CureMatch. If we had known about this screening, our story would be much different, and my husband would be alive. Our goal is to write a check for \$10,000, and I want to personally hand it to a cancer-fighting family. It would bring me so much joy. I also am seeking monthly donors and sponsors to graciously add to our goal of funding the \$950 Galleri Test Kits. Along with fundraising, I am working on creating an online store and, someday, a physical store for Vaspire316 apparel. When you wear Vaspire316, you are honoring those who have gone before us, honoring those fighting cancer, and honoring the widows and children of those who gave their life. You are fighting right alongside them and lifting them up in prayer.

When you wear Vaspire316, you are keeping Dominic Hall's name alive. He is a true American hero. When you wear Vaspire316, you are showing his children that tragedy doesn't define you. "Not this day. This day we fight."

Incredible. Thank you for sharing. Let's talk about resilience next — do you have a story you can share with us?

Me? Tell a story? Why yes, I most definitely can.

Sadly, I lost my mother to breast cancer on August 26, 2005, when I was 19

years old. I always say a part of my father died along with her. My father passed away on January 28, 2021. Two weeks after we buried my father, my husband was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Going from wife, to caretaker, to at-home nurse was incredibly challenging. I sort through layers of pain and anguish every day. My sister was the first person to say to me how resilient God has made me. However, if I had to go through the suffering and sorting of pain from the loss of my mother to help navigate my boys through their pain, I would do it all over again. A mother's love for her children knows no bounds. Along with my mother's death, I was faced with a new level of challenge: Huntington's disease (HD). HD is a combination of ALS, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's disease all in one. I had just lost my mother when I learned I had a 50-percent chance of inheriting the gene and developing HD myself. One of the consequences of HD was possibly not being able to have children. The struggles of who would want to marry me crept over my soul. It was my mother's dying wish that I wouldn't get tested and instead just live life as normal. "Normal, what is that?" I thought. "I am already suffering the loss of my family. How is this normal?" I lived at risk and in fear of HD for 13 years. When I met Dominic, I knew he was the type of man I could share this fear with. He supported and loved every ounce of me. We married in 2014, and after his 2015-2016 deployment, we decided it was the perfect time to get tested. The testing process for me took about a year. I had to talk with a counselor, see a neurologist, and talk with a therapist to see if I was in a good place of mind to receive the news if it was positive. Three times a year, we drove three hours to the testing site to meet with a counselor and take my blood draw. If my blood numbers were above 40/40, I would be considered positive for HD and would face an agonizing death. Going into 2017, I received my blood numbers. They were 20/17 — I tested negative. I could have children; the fear was gone. That was the moment my faith strengthened tenfold, and I knew God was good.



Our first son was born in 2018, and our second in 2020. I believe in facing your fears and living your life to the absolute fullest. Every day is truly a gift. Ask, seek, knock, find, and create joy, even if it's for a brief moment between the stream of tears, and even if you need to use a magnifying glass. I promise, it's there.

Again, thank you for sharing! Can you open up about how you founded your business?

I have been extremely blessed with the support system God has created for me. While my husband was sick, the community, our family, and retired local and non-local fire and police personnel went above and beyond to care for us. Because of the love they showered us with, I was so inspired to give back. My heart knew there was work to be done, and other cancer fighters, caretakers, widows, and widowers walking alongside us needed to be helped. I created the non-profit organization Vaspire316 while taking notes from the homilies at church from Father Patrick Costello and Father Jim Jugenheimer. After helping my husband to bed with all his medications for the night and putting our 2- and 4-year-old to bed, I sat at the kitchen table and researched how to start a non-profit organization. It was therapy for me. My mind was able to escape the sadness of the day and focus a little bit on the good of helping others.

Dominic deployed with the now-pres-

ident of the Recon & Sniper Foundation, Chris Joliet, and they remained friends. I got a message one day from Chris saying he and the rest of the team from RSF wanted to help me with Vaspire316, take me under their wing, and invite me to be a part of their team. I couldn't believe it. I was honored and humbled. RSF has been so good to me thus far. It reminds me daily that God is good.

One final note: We recently had a pre-screening cancer testing event at our police department in Appleton, Wisconsin. Thirteen veterans who work for the police and fire departments were tested; all 13 tests came back negative. Praise Jesus. There are 45 veterans total between police and fire, and roughly \$30,000 needed to be raised in order to test the remaining vets. With the help of some amazing friends who believe in Vaspire316's mission, we were blessed to have two caring, loyal, and gracious donors to cover the costs. Within a week, a donation of \$10,000 and another of \$20,000 was made! All the veterans in our department will be pre-screened for cancer. God is good.

Take charge of your life and do what you can with what you have. Ask. Seek. Knock. Be better. You can cry about it, or you can be about it.

With Great Love and Blessings,
Jacole Hall and Family. ■

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