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Mike Joyner Award announced by Florida Intelligence Unit



Mike Joyner is seen in his seat as a member of the Levy County Board of County Commissioners

Story and Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © Dec. 6, 2017 at 11:07 p.m.

BRONSON -- Levy County Commissioner Mike Joyner was honored Tuesday morning (Dec. 5) when County Commission Chairman John Meeks shared with the general public information from an email that was sent to County Coordinator Wilbur Dean.

The Florida Intelligence Unit is hosting its annual training workshop this week, FIU Conference Manager Leslie Rabon (of the Leon County Sheriff's Office) noted in an email on Dec. 5 to Coordinator Dean.

County Coordinator Wilbur Dean speaks to the County Commission Tuesday.

The current FIU officers are President Tully T. Sparkman of the Second Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office; Secretary Norman Miller



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of the Sixth Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office; Sergeant-At-Arms Brandon Harvey of the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office; and Treasurer Edward "Butch" Doyle, retired Maitland police chief.

Farnell Cole, board advisor and past president, is of the Alachua County Sheriff's Office. Mike Joyner, board advisor and past president, is retired from the Levy County Sheriff's Office and is in his second four-year term as a member of the Levy County Board of County Commissioners.

Attorney Paula M. Sparkman, a shareholder at Messer Caparello, is the FIU legal advisor.



County Commission Chairman John Meeks



County Commissioner Rock Meeks

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County Commissioner Matt Brooks



County Commissioner Lilly Rooks

The FIU has existed since 1961, Rabon noted for Dean.

“This year,” she wrote, “the board of directors announced the implementation of a law enforcement officer of the year award program.

“Beginning in 2018, FIU will launch the award solicitation for the Mike Joyner Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award,” she continued. “This award was named in honor of him – his beliefs, character, morals and many career-long achievements.”

Rabon noted that Joyner has served on the FIU board and is a past president and current advisor still.

Joyner served as a law enforcement officer for almost 40 years, and even after retiring he continues to serve the people of Florida, Rabon wrote.

This award was developed to honor him and officers who go above and beyond the

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call of duty," Rabon wrote. "It represents the personal and professional sacrifices that they and their families make on a daily basis to ensure the safety of the citizens of the state of Florida."

A standard plate or plaque or trophy would not suffice as the symbol presented for this award, Rabon said.

Therefore the association is working with a local artist in the Panhandle to create a custom award "that represents all things Mike Joyner-his faith, his family, his career and most of all his heart."

As Chairman Meeks read the note, he mentioned his respect for Joyner and his years of service.

He called for a standing ovation and everyone stood

Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum was in the audience on Tuesday morning. He mentioned that he has served with Joyner for many years.

Sheriff McCallum said he himself has been an FIU member and was chaplain at one point, having been nominated to that honorable position by Joyner.

Joyner was a key investigator in the conviction of serial killer Aileen Carol Wuornos. She was executed Oct. 9, 2002 by lethal injection.

She was executed for the 1989 killing of Palm Harbor, Fla., electrician Harry Mallory, but has confessed to five others and was a suspect in a seventh. Mallory's trial was held in Daytona Beach.

"Wuornos was the first woman to be executed in Florida since Judy Buenoano was electrocuted March 30, 1998," journalist John Koch noted in 2002. "Buenoano was known as the "black widow" for poisoning her husband, drowning her handicapped son and for trying to kill her boyfriend. She was a suspect in the poison death of another boyfriend in Colorado, but she wasn't charged.

"Buenoano was the first woman to be executed in Florida since a freed slave was hanged in 1848," Koch said.

Information about Joyner's role in capturing that serial killer shows that he was an undercover officer at the time.

Marlee MacLeod noted that two undercover officers known as "Bucket" and "Drums," drug dealers down from Georgia, hit the streets hoping to track her down. On the evening of Jan. 8, 1991, Mike Joyner and Dick Martin, in their roles as "Bucket" and "Drums," spotted her at the Port Orange Pub.

"They meant for their takedown to develop gradually, as they wanted an airtight case, but Port Orange police entered suddenly and took Wuornos outside. Mike Joyner frantically phoned the command post at the Pirate's Cove Motel, where authorities from six jurisdictions had come to work the case," MacLeod wrote.

MacLeod in her writing shares more details about the role of Joyner and Martin in gathering evidence to bring in the killer, who was arrested in Marion County in January of 1991.

As for Joyner, this was just one case in several cases he worked as an undercover officer and as a uniformed deputy. His final eight years were as a bailiff in the Levy County Courthouse, which is where he performs some of his duties now as a Levy County Commission member.

Sheriff McCallum said on Tuesday that Joyner even worked in the Levy County Jail as an "inmate" and helped uncover suspected drug dealers through his undercover operations.