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**GCSO  
2018  
Awards  
Banquet  
honors  
the  
fallen  
and  
more**



Part of the event Tuesday night was the presentation of a check for \$10,300 to the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office from The Grit Foundation. Seen here during the presentation are (from left) Greg Pyle, Jessica Norfleet, Sheriff Bobby Schultz, Grit Foundation Vice President Kat Cammack and Grit Foundation President Matt Harrison. This money will help the GCSO add trauma kits to cruisers and it will help the GCSO make its website compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. For more about The Grit Foundation, click [HERE](#).

## Story Photos and Videos

By Jeff M. Hardison © March 7, 2019 at 3:09 p.m.

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**BELL** -- A two- and one-half hour banquet and awards ceremony Tuesday night (March 5) included a high-caliber barbecue dinner and seven of Florida's 67 counties' high sheriffs speaking about the role of law enforcement in society, and more.



**Marion  
County  
Sheriff Billy  
Woods stands  
with Gilchrist  
County  
Sheriff Bobby  
Schultz as  
both men's  
deputies and  
dine on Akins  
barbecue.**

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**(from left) Seminole County Sheriff Dennis Lemma, Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Shultz and Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum are seen socializing with each other during the banquet part of the evening.**



**Alachua County Sheriff Sadie Darnell stands with Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Shultz at the banquet.**

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**Lafayette County Sheriff Brian Lamb is seen at the banquet.**



**(from left) Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods, Seminole County Sheriff Dennis Lemma, Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum and Alachua County Sheriff Sadie Darnell are seated before the start of the awards ceremony. Lafayette County Sheriff Brian Lamb soon joined them there as Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz served as emcee for the night.**

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**Posing for the press are (from left) before the start of the awards ceremony are Seminole County Sheriff Dennis Lemma, Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum, Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz, Alachua County Sheriff Sadie Darnell, Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods and Lafayette County Sheriff Brian Lamb**

**<https://youtu.be/kc7uBadrpRw>**

**In this video, Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz talks about the 2018 GCSO One Team, One Mission Award, where everyone works together to make the community a place to safely live, work and raise a family. He also speaks about the 2018 Employee of the Year Award.**

Every man and woman with a five-pointed Florida sheriff's badge was honored directly or indirectly at the Annual Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office Awards Banquet, which did center around the April 19, 2018 murder of two deputies in Trenton.

As it occurs each year, this entire event was organized by the Bell Middle High School Criminal Justice students, who are learning from their teacher Mark Lundy.

The two students in that class who opened the awards part of the evening, by leading in the Pledge of Allegiance and singing The Star-Spangled Banner are planning careers in professions other than law enforcement.

Mackenzie Brantley, a senior and the president of the Criminal Justice Class, led everyone in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. She intends to be a dentist or a doctor, after college and medical school.

Sarah Manders, a junior, said she intends to major in music and become a professional performer.

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**Mackenzie Brantley (left) and Sarah Manders are the two Bell Middle High School students who are in the Criminal Justice Class who performed during the awards ceremony. They, their classmates and Instructor Mark Lundy were tasked with making the banquet and awards ceremony a success. Their hosting duties were a bit more strenuous this year in comparison with last.**



**Mark Lundy (left) and Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz confer during the banquet part of the night in the Bell Middle High School Cafeteria.**

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**Mark Lundy welcomes everyone to the awards ceremony as he says he is honored to do so on behalf of many leaders in education in Gilchrist County.**

As Criminal Justice Program Instructor Lundy welcomed everyone, he mentioned it was on behalf of the superintendent of schools, the Gilchrist County School Board, the Bell Middle High School principal and other administrators, as he specifically named them and others who are responsible for public education in Gilchrist County.

Also, during the opening, Lundy recognized each school resource officer in the county as he asked them each to stand. Those officers and their schools are Deputy Kris Beasley at Bell Elementary School; Dep. Earl Davidson at Bell High Middle School; Deputy Mike Rome at Trenton High School; and Deputy Jennifer Williams at Trenton Elementary School.

The Officer of the Year plaques this year went to families of the two men -- Sgt. Noel Ramirez, 29, and Deputy Taylor Lindsey, 25, -- who were killed in the line of duty on April 19, 2018 in Trenton.

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**Deputy Mike Rome (left) holds the 2018 Officer of the Year Award as he accepts it for the Ramirez family. 'Nan' Lindsey holds the other plaque for the 2018 Officer of the Year Award presented to her family for her son who was killed in the line of duty in 2018.**

Those plaques were presented to Deputy Lindsey's mother Nancy "Nan" Lindsey and to Deputy Mike Rome, who accepted for the Ramirez family, who were unable to attend.

Nan Lindsey shared her thoughts about accepting the plaque at the annual banquet. She said that her son had been nominated the previous year, and that he was supportive of the deputy who earned the plaque last year.

She told him that with his strong work ethic, and his dedication, in due time he would receive the GCSO Officer of the Year plaque.

She said she was proud and honored to accept the award.

"If Taylor could be here tonight," his mother said, "he would be so excited. And he would be bustin' to call me and say 'Momma, I got the award tonight.'

"So, for you Tate, I'm so excited," Nan Taylor continued. "You got the award tonight and I'll bring it home for ya'."

She told the sheriff and all of the members of the GCSO that she is thankful for what they do, and for what they have done for her and her family.

While the horror and terror of that day is forever etched in Florida history, the power of faith, love and hope, as well as the grit and determination of a multitude of responders has brought a wave of comfort since that fateful day.

Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz, Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum, Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods, Alachua County Sheriff Sadie Darnell, Lafayette County Sheriff Brian Lamb and Seminole County Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma each contributed to the whole of the quintessential awards ceremony held in the Bell High

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School Auditorium, after a delicious buffet-style barbecue dinner from Akins Barbecue of Bell, which was enjoyed in the BMHS Cafeteria.

Gilchrist County Chief Deputy Jeff Manning, Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office Capt. Sheryl Brown, Lt. Clint Anderson, Lt. Keagon Weatherford, Lt. Alex Gaston, Lt. Todd Holley and Lt. Scotty Douglas all helped present the certificates and plaques of recognition to GCSO team members this year.

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## **The Awards Ceremony**

Sheriff Schultz recognized the many, many special guests at the event that night as he began the event.

In addition to the other sheriffs and their deputies, there were also representatives of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Florida Highway Patrol, the Eighth Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office, the Trenton Public Safety Department, Gilchrist County Fire-Rescue and other agencies as well as many Gilchrist County constitutional officers.

He also mentioned the Grit Foundation, attorney Shannon Smith of the Smith Law Firm, Fanning Springs City Councilman Tommy Darus, who also works for the Florida Department of Probation and Parole, and others.

The sheriff said he greatly appreciates every single person in the room, because each of them were invited.

Sheriff Schultz said it is thanks to many people and agencies that Gilchrist County remained safe in the weeks and months after the attack, and he is extremely grateful for the help of everyone who responded.

The first set of people Sheriff Schultz recognized were Levy County Sheriff's Office Lt. Scott Tummond, Alachua County Sheriff's Office Public Information Officer Sgt. Brett Rhodenizer and Seminole County Sheriff's Office Det. Danny Anderson.

Schultz said he appreciates Sheriff McCallum and Sheriff Darnell sending Lt. Tummond and Sgt. Rhodenizer to be the public information officers for the GCSO during the first few weeks after this tragedy.

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**(from left) LCSO Lt. Scott Tummond, SCSO Det. Danny Anderson, Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz and ACSO Sgt. Brett Rhodenizer stand for a photo opportunity after the sheriff honored these three men.**

Det. Anderson, Sgt. Rhodenizer and Lt. Tummond brought stability to the GCSO, Sheriff Schultz said.

One of the officers asked “What more can I do?” Sheriff Schultz said, and he told them that he was not able to complete what needed to be done for the funerals for these heroes. Without hesitation Rhodenizer and Tummond said “Send me,” Schultz said.

Along with Det. Anderson and some others, that team of Rhodenizer and Tummond conducted one of the largest law enforcement funerals in Florid’ history, Schultz said.

Det. Anderson commanded groups of deputies from the Marion County Sheriff’s Office who were taking calls in the weeks that followed, Schultz said. Staff from Seminole, Levy and Alachua counties were taking calls in the 9-1-1 communications center in Trenton, he said.

As a method to say “Thank you,” the sheriff showed a video on a large screen. In the video there were many people saying “Thank you” for helping protect Gilchrist County.

The people in the video included every county elected official, every member of the elected county School Board and the superintendent, representatives from the three banks Drummond, Ameris and Capital City, scores of children, teachers, administrators and advisers from every school in Trenton and Bell.

Another person speaking to the agencies who responded was State Rep. Chuck Clemons, who mentioned he would be at the banquet but he was in Tallahassee at the time.

United States Rep. Ted Yoho said he hopes everyone is having a great time at the banquet.

“And I want to give a big shout out to this crew and share my appreciation for what

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you do every day to keep us safe,” Rep. Yoho said.

He mentioned that as a nation, American rely on law enforcement officers to keep communities safe. He thanked all of the Gilchrist County deputies who protect and serve the people. And Yoho added that he thanks all of the agencies who stepped up during the time of need in Gilchrist County. He said those actions showed the nation what it is like to live in a place where county lines do not matter, and people can come together for the good of everyone.

“And I want to say ‘Hello’ to Bobby Schultz, ‘America’s Sheriff,’” Rep. Yoho said in conclusion. “God bless you and take care.”

After the video, the sheriff said he especially appreciates that the visiting law enforcement officers treated the people of Gilchrist County as if they were their own.

## Life Saving Award



Seen here are (from left) Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz, Life Saving Award recipient GCSO Deputy Austin Ritchey and Lt. Alex Gaston. The lieutenant presented the award as he told about the Aug. 17, 2018 call to service where Deputy Ritchey save the life of a person by applying CPR for 10 minutes until EMS arrived. Without that immediate assistance by Deputy Ritchey, Lt. Gaston said, it is unlikely the patient would have survived. The deputy’s quick action, use of training and professionalism resulted in a life being saved, Lt. Gaston said.

The sheriffs each spoke to the audience during the awards ceremony. Following is some of what they had to say.

<https://youtu.be/yJWL8MIhseU>

In this video, Seminole County Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma uses a metaphor to show how leadership is of a NASCAR race, and that Gilchrist County

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**Sheriff Bobby Schultz leads a winning team. And he says here that law enforcement officers responded to this double-murder of deputies because it was the right thing to do, and that those two deputies sacrifice will be forever remembered.**

## **Seminole County Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma**

Sheriff Lemma was the first to speak. He is in his first term as the high sheriff, although he has been in the Sheriff's Office for the past 27 years.

The office of sheriff, he said, goes back more than 1,000 years, when kings would subdivide their kingdoms geographic areas of responsibility called "shires." Kings designated "reeves," which means "guardians" or "peacekeepers," Lemma said.

Over time, that English tradition was brought to America, where "shire" and "reeve" became "sheriff."

The Florida Constitution gives sheriffs four primary responsibilities, Lemma said. The sheriff is the chief law enforcement officer of the county; the chief administrative and executive officer of the circuit and county courts; the chief correctional officer (in most counties); and the conservator of the peace, he said.

The sheriff reminded every deputy and correctional officer who wears a five-pointed star that they are an extension of the sheriff whom they serve. They each have those responsibilities, he said.

Sheriff Lemma said these are the people who rise to that calling and meet those demands day-in and day-out.

The sheriff said deputies are not in their profession for money, fame or status. They accept this difficult job, he said, and sometimes it is tragic.

They keep coming back to their jobs, Lemma said, because nothing can be substituted for the feeling a deputy gets when he or she finds and returns a child – reuniting them with their family – after the little one has been lost for hours in the woods. And nothing can replace the feeling a deputy feels when he or she responds to a home invasion call and takes the family out of a closet where they were hiding for safety. And catch the bad guy, and go home safe, all in one night.

"Once you have experienced that one time, you come back over and over, and over again," Seminole County Sheriff Lemma said.

The sheriff said he feels there is great leadership ability in Sheriff Shultz, as was shown by his effort and his team's effort. Sheriff Lemma went on to say that he found Gilchrist County to be extremely welcoming.

Sheriff Lemma, a United States Marine Corps veteran and a graduate of the FBI Academy, earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a master's degree in administrative leadership.

## **Alachua County Sheriff Sadie Darnell**

Sheriff Darnell commented on Sheriff Lemma mentioning that he is a "new sheriff."

When she first took office, another sheriff told her the following after she said she is a new sheriff "Sheriff, you were elected by the citizens in your county. From that day, you are not a new sheriff. You're a sheriff."

Sheriff Darnell said every Florida sheriff in the Florida Sheriffs Association always has treated her just as they treat any other sheriff. She is the first female sheriff of

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Alachua County.

She is a 30-year veteran of the Gainesville Police Department, where she retired at the rank of captain. She was elected Sheriff of Alachua County, in November of 2006; and was reelected 2008, 2012 and 2016.

Sheriff Darnell said all of the 67 sheriffs in Florida have assets they will share with one another selflessly.

When a member of her command staff told Sheriff Darnell that two deputies had been shot and killed in Gilchrist County, they started toward the scene, she said.

Each member of her command staff who went to aid the people of Gilchrist County, Sheriff Darnell said, knew who they represented.

She said the lyrics to the song "Empty Chairs At Empty Tables" from the play *Les Misérables* capture the thoughts of being unable to express the pain and grief from these deputies being taken.

The first stanza of the song goes:

**“There's a grief that can't be spoken  
There's a pain goes on and on  
Empty chairs at empty tables  
Now my friends are dead and gone.”**

She said the empty chairs in the auditorium that night can be thought of representing the men and women whose lives are gone as a result of the perils in this profession.

She then spoke about the trust that must be given to law enforcement officers. Sheriff Darnell said there is some degree of hatred and mistrust of law enforcement officers.

“We've got to represent this calling, this profession,” Darnell said. “We've got to go one to honor Sgt. Ramirez and Deputy Lindsey and all of the others.”

The sheriff expressed her gratitude for the support shown by the people of Gilchrist County to her, her command staff and her deputies.

**<https://youtu.be/zN7vczHaXkM>**

**In this video, Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum tells about his and his deputies' response in April of 2018 and afterward. He notes that Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz, and all of the neighboring counties' sheriffs work together. Sheriff McCallum also spoke highly of Seminole County Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma.**

## **Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum**

Sheriff McCallum said he remembers speaking with Sheriff Schultz soon after his neighbor heard about the shooting.

Even as Sheriff McCallum was speaking with Sheriff Schultz, deputies from Levy County were on the way to Gilchrist County. The GCSO office in Trenton is fewer than two miles from the Levy-Gilchrist County line.

Sheriff McCallum said he was honored to be able to help the fellow officers and the people of Gilchrist County during this time of need.

He said he is thankful to the people of Gilchrist County who supported the LCSO staff who were visiting to help during this time of need. The BMHS Criminal Justice Class and Instructor Lundy were also mentioned as being appreciated by Sheriff McCallum for their great success in having a banquet and awards ceremony.

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<https://youtu.be/WMsoDzjhXL8>

**In this video, Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods lets the Gilchrist County residents and visitors know that there is nothing he is owed for the Marion County Sheriff's Office's help during the aftermath of the murder of two GCSO deputies. The sheriff says much more, including that he loves children -- so, the baby who was crying can continue during his speech if he or she wants to.**

## **Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods**

Sheriff Woods said he believes in the family of law enforcement.

When any agency needs help, he will come. When a sheriff calls, Woods' staff knows they must answer.

"That day," Sheriff Woods said, "no one had to ask (for help)."

The sheriff said God gave His only Son for every human on the Earth.

"How dare I not respond to the need," Sheriff Woods said, "of a fellow human being, especially in law enforcement."

## **Lafayette County Sheriff Brian Lamb**

Sheriff Lamb said he just wants to thank the GCSO.

"Continue to pray for Gilchrist County and Gilchrist Strong," Sheriff Lamb said.

## **Awards**

Chief Deputy Jeff Manning presented the Capt. Tony Cruse Community Service Award.

Each year, this captain's family sponsors the award to be given to an individual that has provided service to the community, as well as doing an outstanding job in the performance of their duties as they make a difference in the community.

"Captain Tony Cruse was that type of person," Manning said. "He was a longtime employee of the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office."

Cruse was lost to cancer after a courageous fight, Manning said.

This year, at the Cruse family's request, Manning said, the award is given to the entire GCSO.

"The epitome of One Team, One Mission," Manning said, "was demonstrated during the days and months that followed this tragedy."

Lt. Scotty Douglas presented the One Team, One Mission Award.

Rather than one person or one business, the award this year is dedicated to the people Gilchrist County and the surrounding counties "because the love and support shown to the GCSO in 2018 was beyond belief."

Lt. Keagon Weatherford presented the Years of Service Award. The 15-year award went to Jeannine Pfannschmidt of the administrative staff. The 10-year service award went to dispatcher Mike Austin. Five-year awards went to Laura Downey, corrections deputy; Gregg Hodge, civil deputy; Chief Deputy Jeff Manning; Brent Owens, the IT guy; Preston Richburg, corrections and transportation deputy; and Deputy Sheriff Mike Simpson.

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Captain Sheryl Brown presented the new employee acknowledgement.

Thanks to the help of the Gilchrist County Board of County Commissioners, Capt. Brown said, the GCSO was able to add road deputies, communications officers and correctional deputies. She asked the new GCSO members to stand and be recognized. The audience applauded them.

Lt. Clint Anderson recognized three people who retired from the GCSO in 2018.

Lt. Michelle Jones, who worked for the GCSO for eight years, retired in 2018. She started as a road deputy and earned her rank. She was over the patrol deputies when the two men who were under her command were killed.

Deputy Brent Strickland had worked for the GCSO for seven years when he retired to join his family's business.

Deputy David Aderholt had worked for the GCSO for 25 in many capacities. He was a school resource officer and then became the supervisor over the program.

As Sheriff Schultz closed the awards ceremony, he said that he appreciates the work of every GCSO support staff member, correctional officer, deputy sheriff and communications specialist.

"Know this," Sheriff Schultz said, "your job means something. What you do day-to-day means something."

The sheriff asked the members of the GCSO to ignore the people who breed hate and discontent, and to not let them discourage any of the GCSO team from doing the right thing.

"We are to oppose evil at every turn," Sheriff Schultz said. "And that's what we do. You decided to enter this field for a purpose."

The sheriff challenged the men and women of the GCSO to remember the excitement that they had on that very first day when they came to work at the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office.

He said when they face adversity, that they recall the reasons they made the choice to do what they do.

As he concluded the evening, Sheriff Schultz said that he is honored to be the sheriff of Gilchrist County and to work with some of the best professionals this world has to offer.