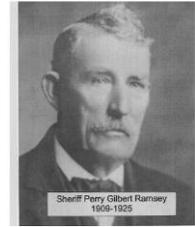


## 20<sup>th</sup> Century History of the Alachua County Sheriff's Office

**Sheriff Perry Gilbert Ramsey** was elected Sheriff in 1909. Ramsey was born in Milltown, Georgia, on September 15, 1857. Prior to his election as sheriff, he served as Democratic Executive Committeeman from 1879-1880 and as a Democratic delegate to the state nominating convention for Governor Mitchell in 1892. He moved to Gainesville in 1908 and was elected sheriff shortly thereafter. He was a charter member of the Florida Sheriffs' Association. He had five children with his second wife, one of whom also became an Alachua County Sheriff — J.P. Ramsey. Perry G. Ramsey died in September of 1933.



When Sheriff Perry Ramsey was first elected to office at the end of Sheriff Fennell's last term, Alachua County was still the violent and lawless place it had been in 1890, despite Sheriff Fennell's best efforts. Sheriff Ramsey however, had an advantage over Sheriff Fennell. By 1913, Sheriff Ramsey had 11 deputy sheriffs under his command. Although he did not have immediate every day supervision over each of the men and they were not considered to be full-time employees, he could still call upon them when the need arose. In what could be considered the very early beginnings of the community oriented policing philosophy, Ramsey's deputies worked the area of the county they lived in, although they only worked when necessary and only came in to the office on official business.

Sheriff Ramsey was considered to be good at hunting down murderers and bringing them to justice. Along with homicide, common crimes of the time were aggravated assault, breaking and entering, robbery and rape. Ramsey was not a sheriff who spent his time in his office. With a county as large as Alachua and with so few deputies, the sheriff was a working law enforcement officer, involved in the everyday apprehension of suspects. For example, in March of 1912, Sheriff Ramsey spent an entire morning tracking a missing man's tracks from his abandoned vehicle. Sheriff Ramsey came upon the crime scene later that morning, discovering the body of murder victim Dr. H.C. Spencer, who had been felled by a shotgun blast to his head. In another event, Sheriff Ramsey fetched two bloodhounds from the convict labor camps where they were being trained in order to set them on the track of a fugitive burglar. Sheriff Ramsey himself eventually cornered the fugitive in an old house.

### Early Alachua County Justice

Back in Sheriffs Fennell's and Ramsey's time, the administration of justice was a social event. Execution was by hanging from a gallows set up next to the jail. Most hangings took place at high noon with people sitting on the jail yard fence just to get a better view. Up until the 1920s, legal executions were carried out in the public eye, under the auspices and supervision of the sheriff. One of the earliest recorded executions in Alachua County occurred in 1875, under Sheriff L.A. Barnes. A crowd of nearly 2,000 people showed up to witness the spectacle.



Deputy Sheriff  
Charley Slaughter

One of the more notable cases was that of father and son, Cain and Fortune Perry, who were executed side-by-side in September, 1912. They were convicted of murdering Deputy Sheriff Charley Slaughter. Deputy Slaughter, who also served as the Marshal of Archer, had gone with deputized citizens J.A. Manning, and Flavious V. White, to arrest the wanted fugitives for possessing illegal firearms. The Perrys opened fire, killing Slaughter and a citizen. Manning was able to escape and the Perrys were later apprehended. At their trial, witnesses testified that Fortune Perry said, "Slaughter wants me, but he is not going to get me. I have got four guns here and if he crosses me, he gets what these four guns have got in them."

Sheriff Ramsey supervised the hanging and is quoted as saying, “Now boys, remember the debt you owe your country,” before he sprung the gallows trap.



*Deputy Sheriff  
Robert E. Arnou*

The last recorded public execution took place in 1922, also under Sheriff Ramsey, who personally conducted the hanging of John Bowyer.

Bowyer was tried and convicted for the murder of Alachua County Deputy Sheriff Robert E. Arnou. Deputy Arnou had tried to arrest Bowyer for carrying a concealed weapon, but instead of surrendering, Bowyer fired five shots into the deputy who later died of his injuries. Witnesses said Sheriff Ramsey personally tied the noose around Bowyer’s neck during the execution.

**Sheriff Charles Pinkoson** was elected Sheriff of Alachua County in November of 1924 and began serving in that capacity in 1925 until the end of 1928. The election was very close with Pinkoson defeating incumbent Perry Gilbert Ramsey by a narrow margin.

On January 24, 1925, Sheriff Pinkoson testified as a character witness for Leslie Nott, who was charged as a conspirator in a payroll robbery. Nott was found not guilty at trial.

In September of 1925, he charged a man with DUI after he put his wife out of their car and left her stranded on the side of the road.

During Sheriff Pinkoson’s tenure, farmers found a 1923 Studebaker buried in Lochloosa. Though it originally was thought to be a stolen car, it later turned out to have been used in a bank robbery in Citra, where the robbers got away with \$5,000.

In December, Sheriff Pinkoson got into an altercation with a man named Harvey Wolcott, striking him with a fist on December 22. Wolcott died on December 23, prompting an inquiry into the death by the coroner to see whether Sheriff Pinkoson’s blow caused the death. The coroner ruled the death was not caused by Sheriff Pinkoson, but all the evidence was sent to the Florida governor for final determination.

Sheriff Pinkoson was also instrumental in putting together the Alachua County Motorcycle Police force. The chief of this unit was William Brooker and in February of 1926, Sheriff Pinkoson ordered him to arrest all motorists and vehicle owners driving without 1926 license tags. The unit did not last long as deputies were still working on a commission basis and complaints of overenthusiastic cops were made.

That same month, Pinkoson was involved in a man hunt for James Williams who shot and killed his wife. In April, he and a Jacksonville Detective arrested Eddie Harrington for a three year old murder case. Harrington was transported to Jacksonville for prosecution.

On May 28, 1926, two prisoners held at the Alachua County Jail escaped after overpowering Jailer Torlay when he was feeding them dinner. Sheriff Pinkoson began a search. In August, Pinkoson went undercover, posing as a bar patron. He arrested Adolphus Robinson for selling liquor and operating a gambling establishment.

Christmas was especially tragic with four deaths over the holiday. Pinkoson investigated the death of two men who drowned as a result of a boating accident while duck hunting. At the same time, a man killed his wife and another man was killed during an argument. Sheriff Pinkoson ran for reelection in the November 6, 1928 election but lost to Robert J. Wells.

## **Sheriff Robert “Bob” J. Wells 1929-1933**



Sheriff Robert “Bob” J. Wells came to office in 1929 for one term. Prior to choosing a career in law enforcement, Wells was a railway conductor. He joined the Alachua County Sheriff's Office in 1912 as a deputy sheriff under Sheriff Perry Ramsey and stayed until 1920 when he left for the Gainesville Police Department. When he ran for office, he was up against incumbent Sheriff Charles Pinkoson and former Sheriff Perry Ramsey. Wells served one term before being defeated by Perry Ramsey's son, J.P. Ramsey. After his defeat, he served as a City Commissioner and Chief of Police for the City of Alachua. He worked as a deputy under later sheriffs, although almost exclusively in his own community of Alachua. He died on April 2, 1962, at the age of 71.

During Sheriff Wells' tenure in office, he tried to restart Sheriff Pinkoson's Highway and Traffic Division, but it was quickly dissolved by the county commission due to public outrage. However, Sheriff Wells had plenty of other fish to fry, literally. During Sheriff Wells' tenure, Game and Fish laws came into being and required enforcement. Ironically, Wells had his own brush with wildlife enforcement laws. He was arrested for unlawfully possessing a doe deer while he was hunting near Palatka.



*Alachua County Deputies in the early years of Well's Traffic Unit.*

Prohibition began during Wells' tenure and he sent his deputies out in an undercover capacity to infiltrate the moonshine stills before obtaining warrants to shut them down before moonshine could be widely distributed. Sheriff Wells and his men also caught liquor that was being transported through the county on its way to crime syndicates up north. On one such occasion, Sheriff Wells stopped a vehicle travelling through on its way to Chicago, Illinois, carrying 69 cases of illegal liquor. Another incident occurred in March 1932, when Wells and his men, along with federal and state agents, seized 1,875 gallons of mash from a pair of men in Cross Creek. The men were arrested and arraigned in federal court.

In Sheriff Wells' time, when enough moonshine was seized, the liquor was publicly destroyed. The bottles were broken on the back of a truck where the liquor would run onto the ground and down the drain at the corner of SE 1st Street and University Avenue.

This was also the beginning of the Great Depression. Other crimes included embezzlement, indecent exposure, forgery, DUI, arson, reckless driving, profanity and perjury. In his first year alone, Sheriff Wells handled 675 cases.

Sheriff Wells was ambitious to move into the twentieth century world of available new technology for crime-solving. Wells developed the card file index or master name index, in which records of all known criminals were kept. Wells also hired an outside fingerprint expert and a criminologist, Dr. R.A. Berga. Sheriff Wells relied upon Dr. Berga to head up nearly every major criminal investigation during his tenure. One such case was the murders of two members of a gang of robbers. The victims had been burned nearly beyond all recognition. Berga's initial investigation revealed one of the men had been shot in the head prior to being burned. He determined that the deceased pair was J.P. Dixon and W.B. Quinn. Berga continued his investigation and eventually concluded that "J.P. Dixon" was none other than the notorious gangster Walter Tracey, who had escaped from Raiford Prison the prior year.

Sheriff Wells made an arrangement with the University of Florida's WRUF radio station to make daily radio broadcasts in which descriptions of wanted criminals would be given out – similar to today's Most Wanted broadcasts. Station announcers Red Barber and Garland Powell read the Sheriff's Office broadcasts up to three times a day. Sheriff Wells stated, "I believe that in this way we can get closer together in the apprehension of criminals and believe also that this would have a tendency to reduce crime." Wells used radio not only to get messages out and announcements in, but to receive news from Georgia and from other parts of Florida. He considered radio to be far more effective than the use of mail circulars and flyers at reducing and solving crime.

## **Sheriff J.P. Ramsey 1933-1945**

Sheriff J.P. Ramsey was the son of Sheriff Perry G. Ramsey. He did not immediately fall into his father's footsteps as a lawman; instead he was a farmer and cattle rancher before deciding to run for sheriff. Ramsey was twice re-elected and led the Sheriff's Office during the majority of World War II. He was the vice-president of the Florida Sheriffs' Association. According to UF History Professor Joseph Spillane, Sheriff Ramsey was also the unnamed sheriff in Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' novel *Cross Creek*, though she did not portray Ramsey completely favorably. Sheriff Ramsey passed away on February 19, 1972 as the result of injuries suffered from a beating sustained when he confronted two trespassers on his property. Ramsey was married with one son.



When Sheriff J.P. Ramsey came to office after the Depression, his first mission was to reduce the Alachua County Sheriff's Office budget. He cut approximately \$5,000 by eliminating positions, bringing the full-time sworn staff down to three. With his two deputies and one patrol officer, he set about vigorous prosecution of the local liquor laws. Although national Prohibition was over by the time Ramsey came to office, Alachua County was still considered "dry" until 1963. That did not stop the county from being home to a healthy trade in illegal moonshine. In his first four years of office, Ramsey destroyed 36 stills and sent 141 cases to court for prosecution under law.

Another notable accomplishment during his tenure in the agency was making arrangements for purchase of radio receiving sets to be installed in all of the cars. In 1941, at a cost of \$7,500, all of the fleet cars had Motorola radios installed in them. A 150-foot tower was then erected at the county jail. Unfortunately, the signal was unable to connect to the furthest reaches of the county. Ramsey also tried to revive the road patrol, but he had no better success than his predecessor.

### **Sheriff Fred Hollomon 1945-1949**

Fred Holloman was born in Chipley, Florida, on December 8, 1886. Prior to his career in law enforcement, he was a machinist and a foreman for the railroad. During World War I, he served in France in the Army Corps of Engineers, Company C 49th Engineers and rose to the rank of First Lieutenant.

When he returned from the war, he joined the Alachua County Sheriff's Office and became the Chief Deputy for Sheriff J.P. Ramsey in 1933. He also served as a road patrolman when the county commission's road patrol was disbanded in 1934.

Holloman ran against and defeated Sheriff J.P. Ramsey in 1944. He served one term, from 1945-1949. His Chief Deputy was Frank Sexton, a deputy that served with him under Sheriff J.P. Ramsey. At the end of his first term, Sheriff Hollomon declined to run for a second so that Sexton could run for sheriff.

Sheriff Fred Hollomon died on June 23, 1973, of unknown causes at the VA hospital in Gainesville.

## **Sheriff Frank M. Sexton 1949-1955**



Frank Sexton was born in Jamesville, North Carolina on July 24, 1895. He was the beginning of a new breed of higher educated sheriffs. A graduate of Campbell College, he worked at a bank prior to serving in the military overseas during World War I. He came to Gainesville in 1921 to manage a grocery store.

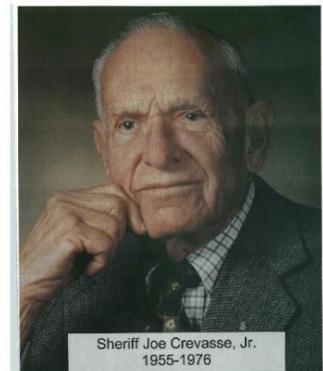
He did not join the Alachua County Sheriff's Office until 1933 when he was hired by Sheriff J.P. Ramsey in 1933. He was promoted to Chief Deputy in 1934, but left to join the Navy as a shore patrolman in 1945 during World War II. After World War II, he returned to work at the Alachua County Sheriff's Office under Sheriff Hollomon and then was elected Sheriff himself in 1948. He was re-elected in 1952, but he resigned halfway through his term due to health reasons. Sheriff Sexton sent Governor LeRoy Collins the following telegram on April 19, 1955:

“Due to my health and advice from doctor, I would like to tender my resignation as sheriff of Alachua County.” He was married to Belle Hardison, who passed away in 1952. Sheriff Sexton himself passed away in 1968, at the age of 72.

Sheriff Sexton, acting on a campaign promise, hired the first black deputy to work at the Alachua County Sheriff's Office. Deputy Walter J. Coleman was hired in 1949, at a time when there were few black deputies anywhere in the state of Florida. After Coleman was brought on board, Sheriff Sexton also hired Cleveland “Cleve” Kendall. Coleman found resistance to his presence on the force in the beginning from both fellow employees and from citizens, but over the years, both he and Kendall earned their respect. Both were retained when Sheriff Crevasse took over the agency. Deputy Coleman later became the first African-American criminal investigator in the state of Florida in 1964. Deputies Coleman and Kendall were also instrumental in the formation of the Florida Association of Negro Deputy Sheriffs in 1952 as more law enforcement sheriffs' offices recognized the need for equality. The first meeting was held in Gainesville, largely in part due to Sheriff Sexton's open support and encouragement. Deputies Coleman and Kendall were elected Treasurer and Secretary, respectively at the meeting. Sheriff Sexton was present, along with Chief Deputy Carl Morgan, to make certain that no one interfered with the proceedings.

## **Sheriff Joseph M. “Joe” Crevasse 1955-1976**

Joseph M. Crevasse, Jr., was born December 19, 1915, in Tampa, Florida. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Florida in 1939. He went on to earn his Master's degree from there as well in 1941. He left the University of Florida for Seminole country and took a position as Superintendent of Grounds at Florida State University, where he worked until 1944. At that time, he returned to the University of Florida to hold the same position here, only at UF the position included the title of Chief of Police. Sheriff Crevasse was married with two children, one of which is also a former ACSO employee, Captain J.M. “Buddy” Crevasse.



Sheriff Joe Crevasse was appointed by Governor LeRoy Collins to fill Sheriff Sexton's remaining time in office in 1955. He was then re-elected five times before retiring in 1976. During his tenure, he focused on building the agency from a small backwoods department into a professional organization. Crevasse's tenure represented a distinct change in ACSO's business outlook. Alachua County's population was growing exponentially. This meant more people to look after and protect. Sheriff Crevasse also expected the best from his own employees. Consequently, he cleaned house in his own agency of 20-25 people first, and within a month of his election to the office most of the existing deputies, including Chief Deputy Carl Morgan, were fired. Lu Hindery survived the cut and became Crevasse's Chief Deputy.

At this time, the Alachua County Sheriff's Office was also taken completely off of the fee system thanks to State Representative Ralph Turlington. Turlington introduced a bill that would make the sheriff's office budget part of the county's normal expenditures and not based on fees as it had been before. For example, each arrest earned the Alachua County Sheriff's Office \$7.50 and each prisoner in the jail earned the Sheriff's Office another \$1.50. Every bit of mileage was accounted for and every day the bailiff was in court guarding the judge was accounted for and all of these things were tallied and billed to the county commission in the form of fees for services rendered. That was how the sheriff's office handled operating expenses; Turlington's bill took that cumbersome system away and put in place the current budget process.



Sheriff Crevasse took a dim view of moonshine and crime in general. Shortly after his election, Sheriff Crevasse declared war on the moonshiners in Alachua County. However, the war was not easily won, as illicit moonshining was well-entrenched and profitable. Captain Buddy Crevasse recalled in a recent interview that his father's men fought the moonshiners for nearly ten years, but the Sheriff was determined to win. As a result, the largest single haul of moonshine in Alachua's history happened on his watch and put a large dent in illegal liquor operations in Waldo, the county's, "Moonshine Junction." Deputies from Alachua, Union and Bradford, along with State Beverage Department officials seized 40 five-gallon jugs of "top-grade white lightning." Illegal moonshine operations did become less frequent after that, but it was all a moot point by 1963, when the county voters repealed their "prohibition" on spirits.

Captain Buddy Crevasse also recalled that his father's office faced a second crime problem nearly as bad as moonshine – bolita. Bolita is a type of lottery game from Cuba where 100 small numbered balls are placed into a bag and mixed up. Bets are taken in advance, in ticket form, on which number will be drawn on Saturday night. On Sunday, people would start trying to collect their money on those bets, and trouble would ensue. The game was illegal in Florida, though it was common in Tampa in the Ybor City area. "As much time was spent trying to catch bolita operators as fighting drugs," Captain Crevasse remarked.

Sheriff Crevasse continued the practice originally begun by Sheriff Wells of daily radio broadcasts. This was the message [edited] for April 26, 1960:

*Good afternoon everybody. Sorry I was not able to be present for the broadcast yesterday, but there are times when I cannot be around, and Mr. Bejano will carry the program on during those times.*

*Two of our investigators working around the clock, solved the case that involved the eight block area in the Northwest section of Gainesville that included the breaking and entering of two houses and the attempted breaking and entering of four other houses. In these cases, the residents woke up or someone scared him off and the siphoning of gas from the automobiles parked in this area. The 17 year-old white male admitted to all the thefts, and attempted thefts in a statement to our personnel said that he had previously served time in a juvenile home.*

*We have been swamped with calls from this particular area and as a result, two assigned investigators moved into the area and remained there until the arrest of the young man. It is always important for you to call in and report any violation of the law such as the above or any suspicious act, as these tie together and help make a better case.*

*A monkey loose in the city, possibly escaped from the circus, is still in a tall pine tree in the garden of a local resident. So if he should move on to other gardens, don't be alarmed, just call us.*

*A drunk and completely passed out ... female was found in the middle of the NW 13th and 6th Street last night around midnight. This is just another reason why you should keep your eyes on the road at all times, particularly at night. About once a month we find someone out in the middle of some road, passed out cold.*

*Latest figures show that at least four persons are killed on the highways of Florida every day. We have been above average in our driving here in Alachua County lately—so let's keep it up.*

*Jail Count—51 adults, 5 juveniles, 0 insanity patients.*

## **Mobile Crime Lab**

In 1968, Sheriff Crevasse purchased a Ford van to utilize as a mobile crime lab. Sheriff Crevasse noted that, “we are sticklers for using the best available equipment and techniques. It costs money, but people are entitled to have serious crimes solved.”



The crime lab was run by Deputy C.E. Sidaway, Chief Criminologist & skeleton artist. Sidaway was responsible for all of the photography, latent print and sketch work for the ACSO. Basically, he was a one man Forensics Unit. While with the ACSO, Deputy Sidaway leased an “Identi-kit” in 1969. This kit contained a set of transparent images of various combinations of facial features which could be arranged in different way to create composite portraits of suspects.

## **Juveniles**

Sheriff Crevasse believed strongly that law enforcement should play a role in preventing at-risk youth from ending up as a jail statistic. He was firm supporter of the Florida Sheriffs' Youth Ranches, the first of which was established in 1957. Here in Alachua County, Sheriff Crevasse recognized that juvenile crime was a growing problem and he created the Juvenile Control Division in 1963, headed by Deputy Sheriff William E. Whitney. Deputy Whitney was responsible for supervising the Junior Deputy Sheriff League. He is quoted as saying, “we're trying to give the boys a respect for and understanding of law enforcement and instill good habits of citizenship in them.”

The juvenile division stayed small until 1969, when federal funds were added to combat juvenile delinquency before it could start. The idea was to target youth where they gathered and identify those at risk for delinquency and meet with those children and their parents, thereby heading off crime before it could get started. Sheriff Crevasse hired a female deputy and an African-American deputy for the juvenile division, the former to work with teen-age girls and the latter to work with the youths who at the time comprised over half of all the ACSO's juvenile cases.

## **Major Re-organization**

The juvenile unit was not the only thing that got up-graded in 1969. Sheriff Crevasse divided the ACSO into three major divisions: Uniform Patrol Division, Criminal Investigation Division and the Administration and Service Division. This last division was a new one and contained Planning & Research, the Jail, Animal Control, Records, Communications, Property, Civil, Juvenile Control, and Community Relations.

## **Equal Rights**

While women had been working diligently at the Sheriff's Office in clerical capacities for some time, the mean streets of law enforcement still belonged to the men in uniform. Sheriff Crevasse started the gradual change to an equalized work force. A Gainesville Sun article lists Lydie Whiting Blocker as Alachua County's first uniformed woman deputy. Blocker was also a graduate of Stetson College and a veteran of World War II where she served in the Signal Corps as a communications specialist. Other recollections have named Novella Price as being the very first. We know that by the mid-1970s, ACSO was slowly moving towards a more level gender playing field. Hired in 1975, Julie Nelson was the second uniformed female deputy. In 1980, Deputy Carol Walker became the first woman to be promoted to Sergeant. Deputy Della Shealy was the first woman at the Sheriff's Office to be promoted to Lieutenant and then to Captain.

## **Vice Squad**

By 1970's, the Alachua County Sheriff's Office partnered with the county's other law enforcement agencies and formed a vice squad, targeting and executing raids, gathering intelligence and working with Federal agencies. With funding secured through the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, a former United States federal agency under the auspices of the Department of Justice that administered funding to criminal justice agencies, ASO's Deputy Ron Stanley headed up the Region II Drug Squad.

The Vice Squad was a successful endeavor and made over 1,500 arrests in three years with nearly 60% of those being in Gainesville proper. Through a series of small raids, the group was able to meet their goal of slowing the regional drug trade. The squad stayed in existence, though restructured many times, through the late 1990's, when the county's focus was shifted to street-level drug and vice operations.

## **S.W.A.T.**

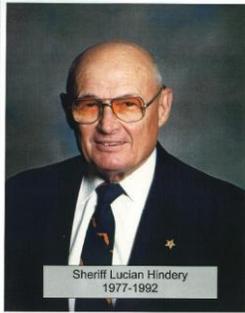
The Special Weapons and Tactics (S.W.A.T.) team was created in 1973 as part of the Special Services Unit. Then as now, the S.W.A.T. team was designed to handle major crime incidents, and bomb threats, barricaded subjects and other dangerous situations requiring specially trained and outfitted deputies. In the early days, S.W.A.T. also got called for the less glorious missions such as dealing with drunk and reckless drivers. The original five S.W.A.T. team members were Deputies Hershhal Meizus, Marvin Rose, John P. Jones and Robert Markham, commanded by Sergeant Jerry Hansen.

## **Patrol Innovations**

Up until 1972, patrol cars were driven continuously 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week by each shift, without a break. This created no end of maintenance difficulties. This changed under Sheriff Crevasse who added enough cars to the fleet for each deputy to have an assigned vehicle. This allowed the patrol deputies to begin taking their vehicles home, adding to the visibility of deputies in their neighborhoods and elsewhere in the community. Also in 1973, the agency was able to obtain its very first radar speed detection devices on a trial basis.

The 1970's also saw a unique challenge for Sheriff Crevasse and his Chief Deputy and successor, Lu Hindery, to face - protest riots. The Vietnam War was going on and the University of Florida, like many other colleges and educational institutions around the nation, was a hotbed of student unrest. This left deputies, city police officers and highway patrol troopers, standing in for National Guard troops, in an attempt to quell the uprisings. Although the student unrest and violence was directed toward the University of Florida's administration, not the ACSO, deputies got the brunt of it anyway. According to former Captain Buddy Crevasse, "we were the peacekeepers...we just happened to be there to deal with it."

## Sheriff Lucian J. “Lu” Hindery 1976-1992



Lucian J. “Lu” Hindery was born in Deland, Florida, on January 7, 1924. He served in World War II in the U.S. Army Infantry before attending the University of Florida to earn his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, on the G.I. bill.

While still attending college, he started working part-time for the Alachua County Sheriff’s Office under Sheriff Fred Hollomon, as a jailer. He returned to military service during the Korean War, where he was a military policeman in the Army. When he was discharged he attended law school for one year before leaving to come to work for ACSO full-time. He became Sheriff Crevasse’s Chief Deputy in 1955.

While serving under Sheriff Crevasse, Hindery was the first Alachua County Sheriff’s Office employee to attend the FBI National Academy. Sheriff Lu Hindery was elected to the office in 1976, and was re-elected for three more terms. Hindery was an active politician. During his tenure, he served as the State Democratic Executive Committeemen from Alachua County. He continued Sheriff Crevasse’s tradition of support for the Florida Sheriffs’ Youth Ranches, becoming a member of the Youth Ranches Governing Board.

In many ways, Hindery exemplified the last of an era for the ACSO. He was a tie to the days when deputies still hunted for moonshiners and yet, he was known for another side as well. Commissioner Kate Barnes said when she originally met Sheriff Hindery, she considered him to be a real Southern law enforcement officer. She was quoted by the Gainesville Sun in an October 31, 1992, article as saying, “The last thing I expected was to find he was an art and ballet buff... He’s truly a Renaissance man.”

While the county was not happy with the price tag, Sheriff Hindery’s grand accomplishment was the addition of a Computer Aided Dispatch program. He pushed hard throughout his tenure in office for consolidation of dispatching services, but he was resisted by a stubborn city commission. Sheriff Hindery was also pro-unification of law enforcement. He thought the needs of the citizens would be best served if the Alachua County Sheriff’s Office and the Gainesville Police Department merged into one entity. That argument is still going on to this day and is no closer to being resolved.

Sheriff Hindery was also unfortunate in that he was the presiding Sheriff over two of Gainesville’s most notorious tragic cases - Tiffany Sessions and the Gainesville Student Murders.

### Tiffany Sessions



On February 9, 1989, Tiffany Sessions, a junior in UF’s economics program left her Casablanca apartment after telling her roommate she was going for a jog. She never returned.

The Alachua County Sheriff’s Office Cold Case Unit is diligently working on this case, among others. New technology that was not available to searchers twenty years ago, such as ground penetrating radar that has been added to the investigators’ repertoire.

## The Gainesville Student Murders

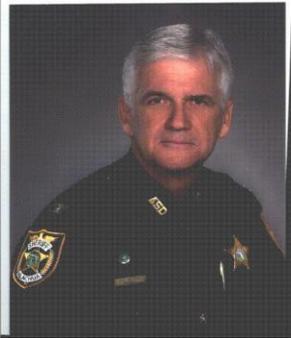
The Gainesville Student Murders represents one of the darkest chapters in Gainesville's history and was perhaps one of the most sensational cases in ACSO's history. Tragically, it also took the life of one of our own employees, a young records clerk named Christa Leigh Hoyt. The nightmare began on August 26, 1990, when the bodies of Sonya Larson and Christina Powell were located by the Gainesville Police Department. Christa was located that night because she was late for work for her midnight shift in the Records Bureau. Deputies Keith O'Hara and Gail Barber were sent to do a well-being check and made the fateful discovery that night. Sergeant Baxter and Lieutenant Nobles arrived soon after, followed by Gainesville Police Department's Chief Wayland Clifton. On Tuesday, August 28, 1990, the final two bodies were found. Manny Taboada and Tracy Paules were childhood friends who thought Tracy would be safer rooming with Manny, a 6'3" athlete who weighed over 200 pounds. Sadly, they were wrong. While evidence suggests Taboada fought hard for his life, the killer was not to be deterred.

The case was ultimately solved with the arrest of a homeless drifter from Louisiana, Daniel Harold Rolling. He was convicted for all five murders and sentenced to death. The execution was carried out Wednesday, October 25, 2006. Rolling offered no apologies for the lives he took before lethal injections ended his life at 6:13 p.m.



The Public Information Officer from the Gainesville Police Department who worked tirelessly with the families and the media during those trying hours, days and weeks in 1990, now wears the badge of Sheriff at the agency Christa Hoyt once called home.

## Sheriff Stephen M. Oelrich 1992– 2006



Sheriff Stephen M. Oelrich was born in Pensacola, Florida, on September 29, 1945. He was educated in the public school system in Brandon, Florida before obtaining an A.A. in Police Administration from St. Petersburg Junior College, and a B.S. in Criminology with a certificate in law enforcement from Florida State University. He also attended Pinellas County Police Academy, Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Special Agent's School, FDLE Homicide Investigation School, National Sheriffs' Institute, The 29th Session of the FBI National Academy Executive Development Program and the FDLE Chief Executive Institute. Prior to his election in 1992, he was employed by the St. Petersburg Police Department and as a Special Agent with FDLE.

### NSA Gift of Life Foundation

On Father's Day, 1995, his son, Nick Oelrich, was fatally injured in a fall from a balcony on a trip to Cancun, Mexico. The Oelrich family donated Nick's organs and, as a result, was able to contribute to saving or enriching the lives of over 100 people. Follow that, Sheriff Oelrich became deeply involved in organ and tissue donation and the "Gift of Life" defined his tenure perhaps more than anything else. He established the Nick Oelrich Foundation and Gift of Life Golf Classic to raise money for organ and tissue donation awareness. On May 27, 2004, Governor Jeb Bush signed SB 530, the Nick Oelrich Gift of Life Act, preventing the modification of a donor's wishes after death and authorizing specified persons to furnish a donor's medical records upon request.



### Early Accomplishments

Sheriff Oelrich's 14 year command at the Alachua County Sheriff's Office was filled with many accomplishments that brought the agency into the modern world of crime fighting. One of the things he did was to bring a grant writer onboard in the search for available monies that could be used to upgrade many of the agencies outdated systems. By the end of FY 98, the influx of grant monies totaled nearly \$2.5 million dollars. With it, he was able to completely upgrade the agency's computer systems, add a computerized "paperless" warrants management program, start the agency's website and Starlink bulletin board, implement community-based substations and expand the K-9 unit with the purchase of an explosives detecting K-9.

Sheriff Oelrich was also instrumental in the formation and organization of a statewide Hostage Negotiators Association and he participated locally in the implementation of "Partnerships for a Productive Community" FOCUS groups.

### North Central Florida's Most Wanted

Sheriff Oelrich expounded upon the idea of his predecessors using the media to catch criminals. The Most Wanted program took the program a little further by using the television instead of the radio. By partnering with WCJB TV20 and Crime Stoppers to run a weekly broadcast showing the fugitives' faces as well as their crimes, and with the local papers as well, the Most Wanted program was highly successful at removing criminals from the streets.

## **Job Development**

Sheriff Oelrich was interested in attracting and retaining quality leadership in the agency. To that end, he instituted a career development program for deputy sheriff employees, along with a new performance appraisal system to fairly evaluate employees for advancement. A professional job task analysis was performed for lieutenants and sergeants in order to come up with a competitive promotional testing process for them.

## **COMSTAT**

A COMSTAT Enforcement Management Program was initiated under Sheriff Oelrich. COMSTAT unites all components for data sharing, problem advisement, solution suggestions and activity results. Alachua County Sheriff's Office COMSTAT program is molded after the program in use by the New York City Police Department and which was also in use at the by the New Orleans P.D. and by the Orange County Sheriff's Office.

## **Joint Aviation Unit**

The Joint Aviation Unit was created in the early 1990's under Sheriff Oelrich's tenure. Later, they added infrared capabilities. Infrared allowed for better search and rescue capabilities in looking for missing persons and fugitives.



## **Acquisition of Jail, New Administration Building and the Combined Communications Center**

In January of 1998, Sheriff Oelrich took back the operation of the jail from the county commission. The employees then became Alachua County Sheriff's Office employees, nearly doubling the size of the agency. The jail was renamed the Alachua County Sheriff's Office Department of the Jail.



An old Winn Dixie building on Hawthorne Road, originally purchased by the county in 1996, became the new home for the Alachua County Sheriff's Office. The refurbished building was a giant step up from the employees' old home, the run down, abandoned jail was considered, according to a newspaper, "too filthy" and "too rundown" for prisoners and was left to Sheriff's Office employees - the "step-children" in late 1976. Employees moved in to their new home in May of 1999.

The Combined Communication Center, a new facility adjacent to the Main Administration Building on Hawthorne Road, opened on November 14, 2000. The CCC merged the staff of two separate communications centers into one single combined operation under the auspices of the Alachua County Sheriff's Office. The CCC was designed specifically to function as a Public Safety Communications Center. The building also houses the Alachua County Emergency Operations Center.

## **Accreditation**

One of the more arguably important achievements of Sheriff Oelrich's time in office is his pursuit of accreditation for the agency. Accreditation symbolizes professionalism, excellence, and competence; it represents that a standard of care and service has been reached that is comparable to the best agencies in the state and nation. Reaching accreditation standards, which are set by the experts in public safety, says that the Alachua County Sheriff's Office is among the best, is worthy of the public trust placed in its deputies, telecommunicators and detention officers—indeed in all of its employees. Under Sheriff Oelrich, The Alachua County Sheriff's Office achieved accreditation with three major accrediting bodies: the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation (CFA), the Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission (FCAC), and Public Safety Communications Accreditation (CALEA/PSCAP).

## Interim Sheriff Dale Wise – 2006



When Sheriff Oelrich left office to run for the Florida State Senate with more than two years left in his term, it left a hole in the office of Sheriff that required the Governor of Florida to fill. Wakulla Sheriff's Office Major Dale Wise was appointed as Interim Sheriff while a special election was held to fill the last two years of Sheriff Oelrich's term. Sheriff Wise graciously accepted the appointment and while no immediate crises were waiting for him to resolve, he was well-liked by the troops and missed when he returned to Wakulla County.

## Sheriff Sadie Darnell - 2006 to Present

Sheriff Sadie Darnell was sworn in as the first female Sheriff of Alachua County on November 14, 2006. She was re-elected to a second term in November 2008. She was born in Gainesville on December 23, 1951, and educated in the public school system before going on to receive an Associates degree from Santa Fe Community College, a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership, both from the University of Florida. Prior to running for elected office as the Sheriff, she worked for 30 years for the Gainesville Police Department, having been promoted through the ranks to Captain before retiring and ultimately returning as the agency's Community Relations Coordinator, working with special needs citizens and victims.



While our current agency website reflects Sheriff Darnell's tenure, accomplishments include:

- ★ A new agency Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives and a five-year Strategic Plan were created in 2007.
- ★ The agency website, [www.alachuasheriff.org](http://www.alachuasheriff.org), was revamped to be more interactive.
- ★ Implementation of a new automated reporting system with the installation of CTS Smart Cop. Patrol deputies went live with electronic reporting on laptops on November 5, 2007.
- ★ Jail expansion groundbreaking was held on September 25, 2007, and the jail lobby renovations were completed on December 2007.
- ★ In December 2007, a zone realignment project was completed. For the first time in decades, a review of the call load in each zone was done, which resulted in a realignment of boundaries and the addition of a zone to more equitably distribute the call load.
- ★ A Recruitment Team was formed comprised of agency representatives from all classifications.
- ★ The National Institute of Corrections recognized the Department of the Jail staff for outstanding achievement and an excellent classification system which serves as a model for jails nationally.
- ★ A new Code of Ethics was implemented in 2008 by the Sheriff and is administered to every current and every new hire employee during orientation and Oath of Office ceremonies.

★ A reorganization of law enforcement services, dividing responsibilities under two departments was effective November 9, 2008. This reorganization created the Department of Support Services and the Department of Operations and created two new Major positions. This reorganization was necessary for efficient span of control.

★ On March 24, 2008, the “Four Corner’s” Mutual Aid Agreement was signed by the Sheriffs of Alachua, Clay, Bradford and Putnam Counties. This cooperative plan allows deputies and detectives from all four agencies to better communicate, and track and arrest suspects across county lines, through expanded law enforcement authority.

★ Deputies were trained in the use of new emergency trauma kits, purchased through forfeiture funds. Within 24 hours of the training, one life was saved after a severe traffic crash severed a man’s leg.

★ At the Sheriff’s direction, civilian personnel were added to the Training Bureau’s monthly in-service training. Civilian staff received basic driving, community-oriented policing, blood borne pathogens and juvenile and crime scene procedures training.

★ The Human Resources Bureau completed automation of the on-line application process.