



HEAT

THE VOICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

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OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2025

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John Kazanjian
President
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At the PBA, taking care of our members is our highest priority! As first responders, we are often more concerned with taking care of others than we are with ourselves. I, personally, had a health scare that required surgery, and luckily, I'm doing well. The best part is that it was fully covered by workers' comp with benefits provided under the Heart and Lung Bill. Navigating a workers' comp claim can be difficult, which is why I want to introduce you to Injured Response Pharmacy (IRP). They can help you navigate any workers comp claim such as a physical injury, Heart and Lung, PTSD, or Cancer, and deliver your meds directly to your home or office, and it's all free. I use their service and never have to worry about getting my meds on time. Also, everyone has direct access to Alberto Gil, the CEO of IRP and a long-time supporter of the PBA across the state. You'll never receive a bill from Injured Response Pharmacy. Don't use your health insurance for something that should be covered for you 100% for the rest of your life! If you have high blood pressure, heart disease, or an existing claim that you are receiving medications for, contact IRP today.



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THE VOICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

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76 DOGS. ONE MISSION.

Photos by Beligoy Productions

Inside the Miami-Dade K-9 Unit — where loyalty, precision, and courage lead the way.

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Mauricio "Mo" Smith**

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THE PRES SAYS



STEADMAN
STAHL

As we move into another busy season, I want to take a moment to thank every one of you for the work you do each day. Whether you're on the road, in corrections, or supporting operations behind the scenes, your professionalism continues to define who we are as an organization. Every edition of this magazine gives us a chance to highlight a different side of that commitment — and this one is no exception.

Our cover story shines a light on the incredible work of our K-9 units. Over the years, these canines have evolved right alongside law enforcement. From tracking suspects and sniffing out drugs or currency, to now bringing comfort to students, seniors, and victims — their service reminds us what loyalty and dedication look like. Some come from specialized breeders, others from shelters, where they're given a new purpose and a second chance at life. Every one of them plays a role in keeping our communities safer and stronger.



On another point, when I was first elected president, one of my priorities was to strengthen transparency and accountability within our association. That's why we introduced term limits — something new for the PBA at the time, but an important step toward ensuring fairness and fresh leadership opportunities. It wasn't always easy, but it was the right thing to do. Our members wanted openness, and I'm proud to say we delivered on that promise; better pay, benefits, and working conditions across the board.

As we enter another election cycle, I'm honored and grateful for the trust members have placed in me. Whether your seat is contested or not, your participation matters. The strength of this association depends on active, engaged members who care about their fellow officers and about the future of this profession. Our board of directors, municipal representatives, and everyone who steps forward to serve — they're the lifeblood of the PBA.

Stability and shared purpose remain at the heart of the organization's success. Just as the K-9 partnerships featured in this issue rely on trust, discipline, and loyalty, so too does the teamwork that drives the PBA forward. Leadership, accountability, and the value of staying united through times of change — this progress depends on teamwork, consistency, and continued engagement from every member. With those principles at the core, the association remains strong, focused, and ready to face the challenges ahead ... together.

Steadman Stahl
South Florida PBA President
steadman@sflpba.org



SOUTH FLORIDA PBA

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STEADMAN STAHL
PBA PRESIDENT
A VOICE FOR ALL

Honored to Lead & Serve Our Heroes

THANK YOU!

THE THINNING OF THE *THIN BLUE LINE* CONTINUES



Police Officers don't just walk away from their careers without good reason. Nationwide retention struggles come from a mixture of workplace conditions, societal factors, and personal decisions. We need to understand why cops leave

to stop the thinning and fix the problem.

Police work has always been stressful and demanding, but morale is at an all-time low as a profession, with one nationwide study finding 56% of officers citing low morale as the main reason they left. Some departments are far better than others as are some police districts and bureaus. The bottom line is that cops tell me they are feeling unsupported by supervisors. Some feel that they are not respected by the community they serve and mistreated by local State Attorneys offices, for example, being charged for crimes they didn't commit, like one of the UPS shooters, Deputy Jose Mateo, who coincidentally was exonerated today as I was writing this article. The judge dismissed his charges from the 2019 UPS Truck shooting via the "Stand your Ground" statute. I would suspect the charges against the other three officers involved will be dismissed as well.

The fact that most departments find it very challenging to find high quality recruits creates additional problems. Although the job has always been stressful, current workload increases are pushing officers past their limits due to the shortage of officers. Those still employed must work longer shifts, respond to more calls and deal with rising violent crime rates (nationwide, not in South Florida),

all while being paid less than competitive salaries in many surrounding departments. This compounds the problems and leads to low morale, early burnout, and even deters new candidates from joining our beloved profession. Keep in mind, some that are leaving, aren't leaving law enforcement entirely. Many are moving to different departments with better pay, benefits, and working conditions.

One situation that created a very challenging and unfair environment toward our profession was the George Floyd case, which spawned the ACAB (All Cops Are Bad) movement, causing policing to come under intense public scrutiny and often times, false stories being reported by the media without all the facts. Since then, cops feel like they're constantly under a microscope, with every decision second-guessed, especially hard-working street cops fighting crime. This has created policy changes that have led some officers to feel that the risk of doing the job outweighs the reward. Departments that fail to support their officers through these challenges often see higher resignation rates and have a hard time recruiting new cops.

Most retirements are expected, but many officers are choosing to leave as soon as they're eligible rather than staying longer. I have personally attended numerous retirements these past 8 years and have seen my coworkers and friends leave great productive years on the table. The combination of stress caused by supervisors, workload, and department policies has led some officers to take their pensions early rather than maximize their pensions or DROP monies for the sake of their mental health. Additionally, in recent years, law enforcement departments have experienced a notable increase in voluntary resignations for the same reasons.

In closing, for those of you who, despite the challenges in our profession, continue to show up every day to serve and protect the good from the evil, please know that we applaud you, we respect you and we thank you for all that you do.

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KEEP OUR EXECUTIVE BOARD STRONG: **VOTE FOR SERGEANT-AT-ARMS KARLOS RAMOS!** HE IS *ISH* ENDORSED



I became involved in the PBA because it was unacceptable that four out of the seven Executive Board members prior to 2018 were fully retired. When you are retired, you are already collecting your pension or have your funds, and you are

not engaged in what our members endure every day on the job. Retirees cannot walk into any facilities, receive new training and updates, ride alongside active officers, or stay current on policies and procedures. Benefits and cost of living increases do not affect them the same way, because they are no longer working. The mere definition of a labor union (noun) is an organized association of workers, often in a trade or profession, formed to protect and further their rights and interests. That means active workers, not retirees. Retirees have done their time and should enjoy their new chapter in life, but they should not represent current PBA members on the Executive Board. Many of you know that I do not just talk about what I believe in; I act on it. In 2016, I stood up to the administration because I believed we should be able to wear beards. I made that happen, not just for me, but for all of us. This is just one of many meaningful improvements I have fought for and delivered to our profession.

In 2017, I ran for the Board of Directors and was overwhelmingly elected. I also served as Treasurer on the Executive Board, and for many years I have been honored to serve as your Vice President, unopposed for this upcoming term. I supported Steadman and his



VP ISH WITH SGT-AT-ARMS KARLOS RAMOS

vision for the PBA and will continue to work to improve the lives of our members. Together, we ensured that all seven Executive Board officers are full-time active law enforcement. Retirees no longer represent active working professionals.

Since our election in 2018, your PBA has delivered steady, measurable gains at the bargaining table, in Tallahassee, and on the street. We negotiated contracts that increased pay, preserved step plans, and protected overtime and specialty pay at every single agency that we represent. These agreements put money in your pocket and helped agencies recruit and retain officers during a time of staffing shortages. The PBA secured improvements to healthcare options, expanded family leave protections, safeguarded and expanded pensions and Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP)

benefits that officers count on after a career of service.

On wellness, the Association expanded peer support, ensured access to culturally competent mental health providers, and established training that encourages seeking help after critical incidents. Members now have stronger coverage and faster access to care for duty related trauma, and the PBA defends those rights in grievances and arbitration when needed.

In discipline and due process matters, the PBA has been your shield. Our legal team strengthened protections in internal affairs, defended Garrity and Weingarten rights, and won key arbitrations that now set fair standards across agencies. Those victories don't just help one officer; they set precedents that protect every member facing the stress of a complaint or critical incident review.

Legislatively, the PBA supported reforms to improve workers compensation, preserved heart and lung protections, secured COVID-19 bonus checks from the State, and backed measures to deter bullying and threats against officers and their families. Locally, we built strong relationships with city and county leaders to ensure our voices are heard on budgets, staffing, technology, and community initiatives.

Community trust remains a pillar. The PBA has invested in scholarships for the children of our members, youth sports, and continues to assist our members with the funds we raise from our PBA Love Fund in their time of need. We keep reminding our community and news media outlets in South Florida that behind the badge are neighbors who serve. During hurricanes and public-health emergencies like COVID-19 the Association mobilized logistics, secured PPE and kept communication flowing to members and their families.

One of our greatest achievements has been the 8-year DROP extension. For decades, DROP was capped at 5 years, limiting officers' ability to maximize benefits while still serving. The PBA led the charge to expand it, meeting with legislators, educating leaders, and mobilizing members. The result was a landmark victory that provides greater retirement security and helps agencies retain

experienced personnel. This was earned through years of persistence, negotiation, and advocacy.

WHY KEEP SERGEANT-AT-ARMS KARLOS RAMOS FOR FOUR MORE YEARS?

Because momentum and credibility matter. Bargaining strength is built over time; you do not start from scratch each contract cycle. Karlos and this Board have institutional knowledge of each agency and have earned a reputation for results while maintaining strong relationships. Their continuity keeps those channels open when it matters most. Karlos is a vital part of this team.

Karlos Ramos has many years of law enforcement experience and represents Corrections and our law enforcement family with dignity and respect. He is a man of faith and family values. He has been an outstanding



member of your Executive Board as Sergeant-at-Arms, and he is exactly who we need to keep this momentum going. He has a challenger in this election, but I humbly ask that if you have supported me in my efforts, you now take the time to mark Karlos Ramos on your ballot and return it. We need the best to represent the working professionals in this field. This job is not for everyone, and neither is serving on your Executive Board.

The current Executive Board has proven it can deliver safer working conditions, stronger contracts, and unwavering representation. Four more years means more stability, accountability, and growth so our members can focus on what matters most: serving and protecting the communities of South Florida. **VOTE FOR KARLOS RAMOS! He is ISH ENDORSED.** Please feel free to contact me at ish@sflpba.org or at (305) 593-0044.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING UP



Understanding the Power of Your Voice

In today's law enforcement and corrections environment, it is essential that every officer understands their rights and knows how to protect them.

One of the most powerful tools at your disposal as a member of the Police Benevolent Association (PBA) is your right to seek the support and guidance of your union representative or attorney. Staying silent when you believe your rights are being violated can lead to lasting consequences not just for your career, but also for your peace of mind.

Protecting Your Rights Starts With You

No one can advocate for your rights if they're unaware of what you're facing. If you believe your rights are being compromised whether during an internal investigation, disciplinary matter, or on-the-job incident it is your responsibility to speak up. The PBA provides experienced representatives and attorneys for exactly these situations. By contacting them early, you position yourself to ensure that due process is upheld and your voice is heard.

A Personal Perspective from the Hallways

As I walk through our jail facilities, I've heard a recurring concern: officers expressing frustration that the PBA "isn't helping." I understand these concerns. However, in many of these cases, the issues haven't been formally brought to the union's attention. The truth is, the union cannot respond to problems it doesn't know about. Complaints shared casually among colleagues may feel justified, but unless communicated directly to a PBA representative or attorney, they go unresolved. That conversation is the bridge between frustration and resolution.

Why Silence Can Hurt You

Hoping an issue will "blow over" can be a costly mistake. Unaddressed problems often escalate leading to disciplinary action, career setbacks, or even termination. What could have been managed with timely union involvement may become a permanent mark on your record. Your rights are most powerful when exercised not ignored.



At the academy with COT #150 OC Spray Day

Your Union Is Your Shield

The PBA exists to protect its members. Its representatives and attorneys are well-versed in the contracts, policies, and laws that govern your profession. They can advise you, represent you in hearings, and ensure your rights are defended at every step. Speaking up doesn't make you a problem it proves that you take your career and future seriously.

Creating a Culture of Accountability and Strength

When officers actively engage with their union, they foster a culture of accountability and collective strength. One voice can shine a light on issues affecting many. By speaking up, you not only safeguard your own rights but help build a fairer, stronger workplace for everyone.

Final Thoughts – A Commitment to Serve

I've addressed this topic before, and while I don't want to sound repetitive, it cannot be emphasized enough: raising your concerns directly to the PBA is essential to protecting your rights and strengthening our union. Silence weakens us. Communication empowers us to defend, represent, and advocate effectively.

Your PBA membership is more than just paying dues; it represents protection, advocacy, and solidarity, but that protection begins with you. If you ever feel your rights are being violated, don't stay silent. Reach out to your union representative immediately and remember speaking up is not just your right it's your responsibility to yourself, your career, and your fellow officers.

As I seek another term as Sergeant-at-Arms, I do so with a proven record of standing by our members during their most critical moments. I've offered guidance, representation, and unwavering support when challenges arose. My campaign is focused on strengthening our support system by ensuring every member feels heard, protected, and valued. Together, we can build a stronger union, one where every voice matters.

RE-ELECT KARLOS RAMOS FOR PBA SGT-AT-ARMS

Served our country,
community, fallen officers and their families.
Let me continue to serve you on the PBA Board.



- Man of Faith, Family and Country • 7 years – U.S. Army combat veteran (Operation Iraqi Freedom) • Dispatcher – North Miami Police Department • 23 years – Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department • 10 years – K-9 Narcotics Unit
 - 8 years – Training Advisor • Benefactor – PBA's The Love Fund, Inc.
- COMMITTED to the Members, LOYAL to the Mission, HONORED to Serve.**



Advertisement paid for and approved by Karlos Ramos for Sgt-at-Arms.

FROM CHAOS TO CONNECTION:

PRIORITIZING WHAT TRULY MATTERS



In the fast-paced rhythm of modern life, it's easy to become consumed by work, obligations, and distractions. Yet amidst the chaos, one truth remains constant: family is everything. Making time for family isn't just a sentimental idea, it's a powerful choice that

strengthens relationships, heals emotional wounds, and reminds us of what truly matters. Life is too short, and far too precious, to spread hate or to neglect the people we love most. Just in the last couple of months we have lost so many great people. One of which happens to be a good friend of mine, Robert Mera.

Every day, people around the world are reminded of life's fragility. Nowhere is that reminder more deeply

professions. Officers and first responders should ensure that their affairs are in order. It's not morbid; it's responsible. Reaching out to the PBA's legal team to update your will or legal documents is a step toward protecting your loved ones. It ensures that, should the unimaginable happen, your family is cared for and your wishes are respected.

Even law enforcement, the principle holds true: none of us are guaranteed tomorrow. Life's unpredictability makes it all the more essential to spend time with the people who matter. The news reminds us daily of tragic losses, accidents, illness, and violence. We can't control when our time will come, but we can control how we spend our time now.

Let's be clear: the world doesn't need more division.



In loving memory of my friend Robert Mera

felt than in law enforcement. Each time an officer puts on the uniform, they step into uncertainty. The sudden loss of a Police or Correctional officer doesn't just impact the department, they are a part of the community, the neighborhood, the local fabric. When they're gone, families are left grieving, and communities are left with an irreplaceable void.

That is why the message is urgent: connect with your loved ones. Don't let disagreements fester. Don't hold grudges. Say what you need to say. Whether you're a parent, a child, a sibling, or a friend, your presence and words carry weight. A simple dinner together, a phone call, or a heartfelt message can have lasting emotional value. These small moments often become cherished memories.

Beyond emotional connection, there's also a need for practical preparation, especially for those in high-risk

It needs more connections. Hate is easy, and it's contagious, but so is love. Making time for family, reconciling broken relationships, and expressing kindness, these are powerful acts that ripple outward, making communities stronger and more compassionate.

So today, take that step, make the call, share the meal, write the letter, and hug your kids a little tighter. Check in with your spouse or your parents. And if you're in law enforcement, don't wait to schedule that meeting with the PBA legal team. Updating your will isn't about fear; it's about love and responsibility, and it's a free service to our members.

In the end, when our time is up, it won't be the hours spent at the office or the arguments we won that define our legacy. It will be the love we gave and the relationships we nurtured. Make time for your family because life is too short to do anything less.



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Alex Alvarez

Former Metro Dade Detective,
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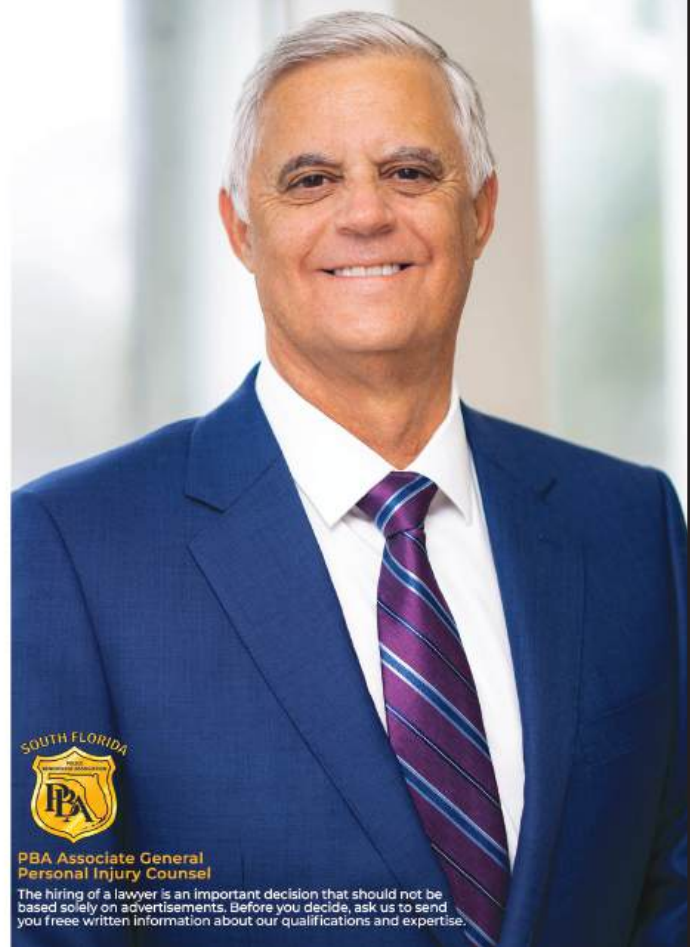
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In just 10 years’ time body-worn cameras (BWCs) have gone from being a pilot program in a handful of agencies to a daily reality for nearly every officer on the street. What started as a tool for transparency has now become a piece of evidence that defense attorneys and internal affairs investigators comb through frame by frame. One area of increased scrutiny is vehicle searches following an arrest, especially when questions arise about personal property and cash found inside. As you know, vehicle searches after an arrest can be lawful under several exceptions to the Fourth Amendment’s warrant. But what happens after the search is often just as important as how it begins.

No trend is more prevalent at IA than representing officers alleged to have stolen the magic \$4,000 in cash that apparently every subject has located in the glove compartment. These allegations surface later and are based merely on a defendant’s word. Ninety-nine percent of the time, the BWC footage tells the true story and shows no evidence of theft. Oftentimes, when a body camera is not activated, or if the recording begins late or gets cut early, the lack of video can suddenly become an issue in two different arenas. Criminal defense attorneys argue that the absence of complete video undermines the officer’s credibility. Internal affairs may open an investigation, not because there’s proof of misconduct, but because there’s no proof to the contrary.

This is a prime example of a Fourth Amendment issue bleeding into an employment issue. From a courtroom perspective, judges are unlikely to suppress evidence just because the BWC was not recording. But from a labor perspective, policy compliance matters. Departments are now consistently disciplining officers for failing to follow BWC procedures. What looks like a small mistake in the field can snowball into an IA case, a suspension, or worse.

If your department policy says activate, activate. Narrate what you are doing. If you find a wallet or currency, say so on camera. If you are impounding the car, explain why. If

you cannot hit record immediately because of officer safety or a sudden confrontation, document that in your report. Showing policy was followed strengthens your position if someone tries to make the missing video footage into the main issue instead of the crime committed by the subject. Remember, civilians are not well versed in the law. Complete, continuous video is your best protection against those claims. When the footage shows you handling property properly, those complaints usually end quickly.

BWCs were meant to protect you as much as the public. So long as you follow the law and policy, even if a search looks “ugly” to the untrained eye, your actions will be defensible. But if the camera is not recording, you lose your best witness and risk turning a lawful vehicle search into an unnecessary employment problem. Just last week I was representing an officer at IA based on a theft complaint. The officer was present as a backup. Because the camera was shut down before leaving the scene, the department added an allegation of theft since there was no proof of what happened during that gap.

As always, as a subject officer at IA you have the right to representation under Florida law, and our office is here to ensure that your actions are judged fairly, based on both the Constitution and your department’s policies. Stay safe out there and remember your camera is your ally if you use it correctly.

2025 PENDING GRIEVANCES

This list represents the pending grievances filed at the various departments represented by the South Florida Police Benevolent Association as of September 30, 2025. The PBA legal staff receives numerous other complaints that are resolved by other means.

DEPARTMENT/DISTRICT:	
AVENTURA PD	1
BAL HARBOUR VILLAGE PD	1
CITY OF MIAMI PD.....	3
MIAMI-DADE CORRECTIONS	
Association.....	1
Total.....	1
MIAMI-DADE SHERIFF'S	
Association.....	2
Aviation.....	1
Hammocks.....	1
Intracoastal.....	1
Total.....	5
MIAMI GARDENS PD	2
MIAMI GARDENS PD (CAPTAINS)	1
MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF'S (DEPUTY)	1
OPA-LOCKA PD	1
TOTAL GRIEVANCES.....	16

The Good Greek Way

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HONOR
STRENGTH
COURAGE

GOOD GREEK

MOVING STORAGE



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OF THE YEAR
NABCC

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Story by: Lyan Babilonia Photos by: Beligoy Productions

THE MIAMI-DADE K-9 UNIT

AT THE CRACK OF DAWN, BEFORE THE MIAMI HEAT BEGINS TO RISE, SERGEANT ORLANDO RAMOS OF THE SPECIAL PATROL BUREAU K-9 UNIT IS ALREADY PREPARING FOR ANOTHER DEMANDING DAY – NOT JUST FOR HIMSELF, BUT FOR THE CANINE OFFICER BY HIS SIDE. **“WE TRAIN LIKE IT’S REAL BECAUSE FOR US, IT IS,” RAMOS EXPLAINS. “THESE DOGS AREN’T JUST TOOLS. THEY’RE OUR PARTNERS, AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY 24/7.”**

Each day for Ramos and his K-9 partner, Sem, begins with physical fitness and ends with mission-ready precision. The day is split between patrol work, emergency responses, interagency collaboration, and tactical training. The dogs are involved every step of the way, whether backing up SWAT operations, tracking fugitives, or sweeping for explosives.

THE BOND BEHIND THE BADGE

For Ramos, this job is more than a post. It’s a calling. **“We don’t just work with these dogs; they’re our partners. You have to build a bond with them. That connection is everything.”**

Ramos supervises a team that handles some of the department’s most complex deployments. He manages suspect apprehensions, tactical support in high-risk situations, and more, but the real magic lies in the relationships between handlers and their dogs.

“Our dogs aren’t just trained to bite or detect,” Ramos says. **“They’re trained to listen, to respond, to trust us completely, and we trust them with our lives.”**

That relationship started early when they selected the dog from specialized vendors after a careful evaluation process. The Miami-Dade Sheriff’s Office looks for dogs with high play drives, a love for reward-based work that ensures motivation during detection or pursuit. Once paired, the dog and handler become nearly inseparable.

LIVING AND WORKING TOGETHER

Officers are responsible for their dogs’ housing, feeding, and monitoring their health. The county provides proper equipment, and most handlers also invest in cooling systems and shaded areas at home to ensure the dogs remain comfortable, especially in Florida’s heat.

“Sem. He’s not just a dog — he’s a partner and a family member.”

“He is affectionate with the entire family, but once he leaves the house, the mission begins.”

“It’s like a light switch. The moment he sees me in uniform, he knows it’s time to go and work,” Ramos explains.



76 DOGS, ONE MISSION

Miami-Dade canine program is one of the largest and most diverse in the state, made up of 76 specially trained dogs across various units. Ramos' K-9 Unit includes 20 dogs, trained primarily for patrol work such as apprehension and explosives detection. Beyond his unit, the department also includes 11 narcotics detection dogs, 29 dogs at the airport trained for explosives, five at the seaport, and six emotional

And it's not just about catching suspects. His unit's dogs have helped locate endangered missing persons, including individuals in crisis who were planning to harm themselves. **"This year alone, our dogs helped locate two endangered missing persons,"** Ramos noted.

"One woman had planned to drown herself. Without the K-9, she might not have been found in time."

They have also been instrumental in helping locate buried bodies or remains hidden in water, often at the



support canines assigned to Community Affairs.

Each dog is trained for a specific role. Together, these K-9s serve as vital extensions of the Police, helping to protect both the public and law enforcement.

HIGH STAKES AND HUMAN MOMENTS

The K-9 Unit has logged impressive results — not just in arrests, but in lives saved.

Recently, the unit responded to a case where a subject had been shot at but escaped.

"We used several tactics with the dog, even tried to get the dog up a tree. In the end, we had to go up there ourselves to bring the suspect down. But the dog helped us corner him," says Ramos with pride.

request of homicide units or even outside agencies.

"Our dogs have made a difference in ways people don't always see, they're preventing tragedies."

HOPE FOR A FACILITY FOR ALL

The training regimen is constant. Officers train individually with their dogs, focusing on obedience, detection, and scenario-based drills.

However, every Wednesday, the unit trains together, practicing tactics like building searches, tracking, and much more.

"Right now, we train in parks, behind the training bureau, or in abandoned buildings we try to seal off," Ramos said. **"We do what we can — but a secure,**

enclosed facility would transform how we train.”

That’s why the division dreams of a centralized facility to conduct training.

Lieutenant Carlos Alvarez from the K-9 Unit joined the conversation and highlighted how an enclosed location would allow more consistent and safer training. This would also help improve collaboration across all K-9 divisions.

“Each unit currently trains independently. A shared facility would unify training and improve cooperation between K-9 divisions,” says Alvarez.

For Ramos, a multi-use venue would be a huge step forward.

“It would allow every unit — from Special Patrol to Narcotics, Airport, Seaport, and even the support dogs — to train under one roof, with the space and resources tailored to their unique needs.”

While plans are still in development, initial funding has been secured, and discussions about future partnerships are ongoing. With strong backing from leadership and a clear understanding of the unit’s needs, Ramos and Alvarez remain hopeful.

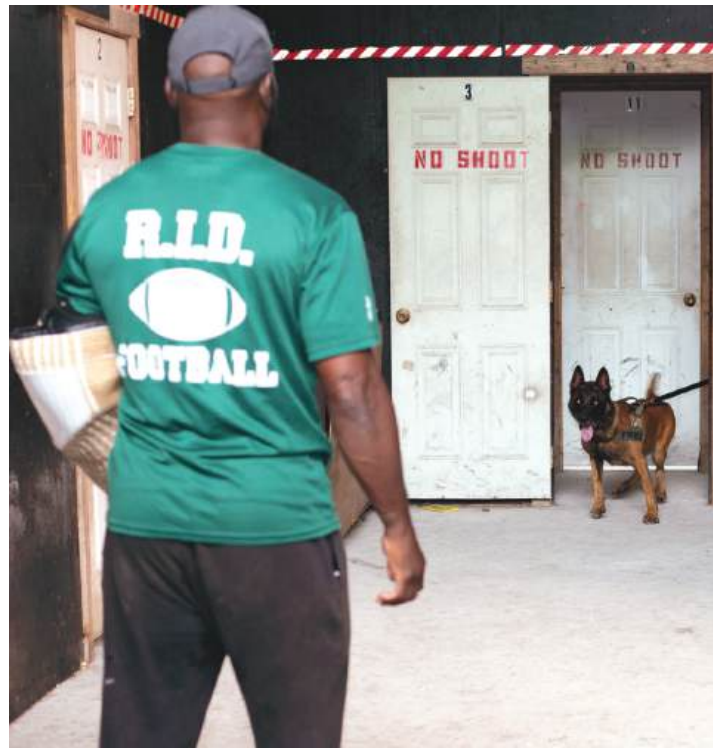
A LEGACY IN THE MAKING

For Ramos and his team, every training session is part of a larger mission, one built on loyalty, discipline, and public service. With the promise of a dedicated training facility on the horizon, the future of the Miami-Dade K-9 program looks strong.

“These dogs give everything they’ve got. The least we can do is make sure they have the tools and training they need to succeed,” Ramos insists.

“Our dogs are not to be pet. They’re not emotional support dogs — they’re patrol dogs trained to apprehend and detect. They’re there to protect officers and catch bad guys.”

The story of Miami-Dade’s K-9 Unit is one of loyalty, precision, and courage. Every day, these dogs and their handlers put themselves on the line not for recognition but to keep their community safe. As the unit looks toward the future, their bond and unwavering commitment serve as a reminder that the best policing is always rooted in teamwork and in the power of partnership between badge and paw.





THANK YOU!

DAVID GREENWELL
PBA EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

For allowing me to continue protecting your rights, wages and benefits while never forgetting our fallen officers and their families.

**I SUPPORT KARLOS RAMOS
FOR SGT. AT ARMS**

Humbled to serve, proud to stand with you!

For the past 8 years, I've had the privilege of serving our members — first as Board of Director, Treasurer, and Vice President, and continuing as your Vice President.



★ ★ ★ ★ ★
**VICE
PRESIDENT**
**Nizam
"Ish"
Ishmael**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
As I begin this new 4-year term, I am honored to have your trust and remain committed to representing you with dedication, protecting your rights, and strengthening the benefits we've achieved together.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
**I SUPPORT KARLOS RAMOS
FOR SGT. AT ARMS**



JENNIFER VALDES

As your PBA SECRETARY

**I SUPPORT
KARLOS RAMOS
FOR SGT. AT ARMS**



ALEJANDRO (ALEX) MUÑOZ
PBA TREASURER

Thanking you for your continued support.
"Leadership you can trust. Representation you deserve."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
**I SUPPORT KARLOS RAMOS
FOR SGT. AT ARMS**



VOTE

Angel Posada

For
Sergeant-At-Arms

"All Members' Needs
Are My Priority"

- *Leadership
- *Honesty
- *Respect



RE-ELECT
KARLOS RAMOS
FOR PBA SGT-AT-ARMS

Served our country,
community, fallen officers and their families.
Let me continue to serve you on the PBA Board.



2025
ELECTION

I SUPPORT Karlos Ramos For Sgt. At Arms

Chaplain
Robin Pinkard





DADE COUNTY
POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION
PBA

Re-Elect
**VICTOR
ABBONDANDOLO**
for South Florida PBA
Board of Directors

**YOUR "VOICE"
AT THE
COURTHOUSE**

VOTE FOR **Jorge Alvarez**

FOR
SOUTH FLORIDA PBA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS





ELECT
**SAMIR
AMADO**
FOR
SOUTH FLORIDA PBA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
"YOUR VOICE,
YOUR UNION,
YOUR FUTURE."



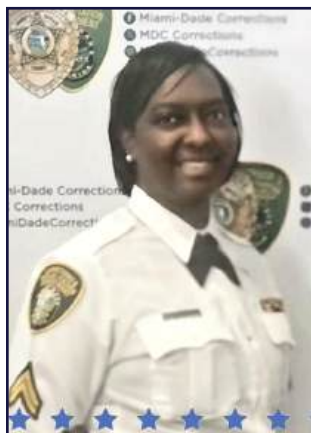
ELECT
**NUBIA
AZRAK**
FOR
SOUTH FLORIDA PBA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



 Elect
**JAMES
BOONE**
To Board of Directors



 VOTE
Lily Borges
For **PBA**
Board of Directors



RE-ELECT
**MITZIE
BROWN**
FOR
SOUTH FLORIDA PBA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
RELIABLE, EXPERIENCED, HONEST



RE-ELECT
**Angela
Carter**
FOR
SOUTH FLORIDA PBA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Honesty + Integrity + Experience

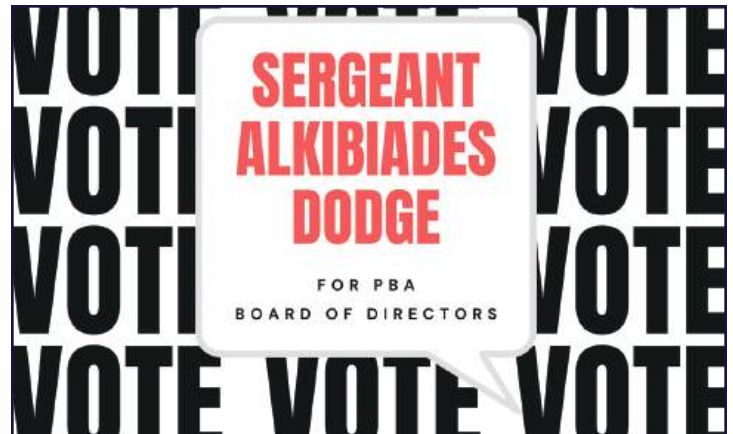
**VOTE
VOTE
VOTE**



Omar Chargui
for Board of Directors
A voice for all



VOTE
**John
Childress**
FOR
SOUTH FLORIDA PBA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



A portrait of Joe Kelly, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark shirt and a patterned tie. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background of the portrait is a light, textured wall.

RE-ELECT
JOE KELLY
FOR
SOUTH FLORIDA PBA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO
CONTINUE SERVING YOU.
MDSO LIEUTENANT WITH 24 YEARS
OF LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCE.

A campaign graphic for Jill Llinas. On the left, a dark blue vertical banner contains the text "VOTE VOTE VOTE" in red, light blue, and white, with a faint map of Arizona in the background. Below this, the name "Jill Llinas" is written in large white font, followed by "for Board of Directors" in a smaller white font. On the right, a photograph shows Jill Llinas, a woman with dark hair, smiling and wearing a tan police uniform. She is standing in front of an American flag.



VOTE
ADOLFO
(AL) LOPEZ

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

For
PBA
 Board of Directors

A campaign poster for Christine Marte. The poster is divided into three horizontal sections. The top section is white and contains the text "VOTE FOR" in large, bold, black capital letters. The middle section is dark blue and contains the name "Christine Marte" in large, bold, white capital letters. The bottom section is white and contains the text "FOR SOUTH FLORIDA PBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS" in black capital letters. On the right side of the poster is a photograph of Christine Marte, a Black woman with short dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a tan police uniform with a black tie and a gold star on her lapel. In the background of the photo, there is a sign that says "ISO Sheriff's Office" and another sign that says "VOTE VOTE VOTE" in red, blue, and white letters. At the bottom of the poster is a decorative border consisting of a row of white stars on a blue background.

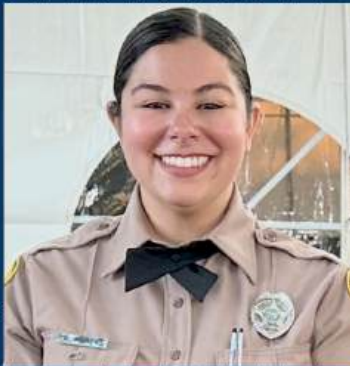
VOTE
Sean McVay
For PBA
Board of Directors



ELECT
DOUG MELENDEZ
FOR PBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



VOTE
Natalie Miraya
FOR
SOUTH FLORIDA PBA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



VOTE FOR
David Muñoz
FOR
SOUTH FLORIDA PBA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
•CORRECTIONS AND POLICE EXPERIENCE•
"Progress Starts with
Understanding Both Sides
of the Aisle"



**VOTE
VOTE
VOTE**
JOSE NADAL
for Board of Directors



Re-Elect
LISA NESBITT-BELL
To Board of Directors
L-LEADERSHIP
I-IMPACTFUL
S-SMART
A-ACCOUNTABLE



VOTE
Rafael "Ralph" Pagan
For PBA
Board of Directors
"Each of you should use whatever gift
you have received to serve others, as
faithful stewards of God's grace."
1 Peter 4:10



VOTE
DUKENS PIERRE
for PBA Board of Directors
Professionalism * Integrity * Compassion



Elect

**Julio
"JP"
Priede**

for South Florida PBA
Board of Directors



Re-Elect

**ORLANDO
RAMOS**

for South Florida PBA
Board of Directors



VOTE FOR

**Orlando
Reyes**

FOR
SOUTH FLORIDA PBA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



VOTE
VOTE
VOTE

**Anthony
Rodriguez**

for Board of Directors

Honesty • Integrity • Experience



**CHRISTOPHER
RODRIGUEZ**

for PBA Board of Directors

Clear communication. Consistent results.



VOTE FOR

**Eduardo
Rodriguez**

FOR
SOUTH FLORIDA PBA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



VOTE
VOTE
VOTE

**John
Saavedra**

for Board of Directors

Experience. Integrity. Commitment.



ELECT

**BOB
SAINTILLEN**

FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



VOTE FOR
Alberto Seda

FOR
SOUTH FLORIDA PBA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Honorably Retired
- Miami Dade Correction 20 yrs
- Miami Gardens Police Sergeant 16 year
- Always fighting for the Warriors



Elect
Orlando Sosa Jr.

To your
PBA Board of Directors

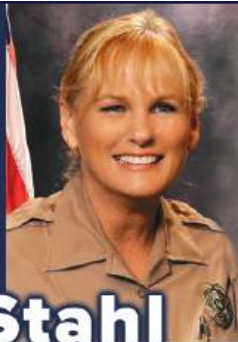
I served you in the military,
I serve you in the community,
Let me serve you now on the Board.



**VOTE
VOTE
VOTE**

Mary Ann Stahl
for Board of Directors

♦ Thank you for your continued support! ♦



VOTE FOR

Kevin Thelwell

FOR SOUTH FLORIDA PBA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Honesty, Integrity, Experience

★ ★



**VOTE
VOTE
VOTE**

BRETT UNDERHILL
for Board of Directors



Re-Elect



JOEL

VALDES

for South Florida PBA
Board of Directors

The right person,
at the right time
for the right reason!

ANTHONY VITALE

For South Florida Police Benevolent Association Board of Directors

Protecting Benefits

Member First Approach

Secure Our Future

Stronger Representation



Integrity, Respect, Service, and Fairness

DEPUTY BENGE J WHEELER

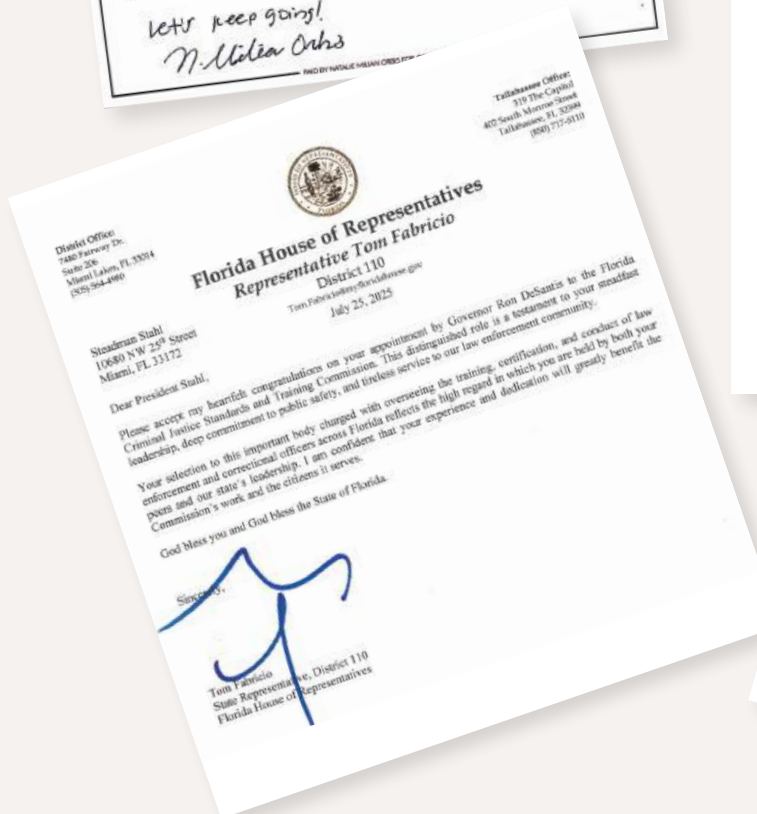
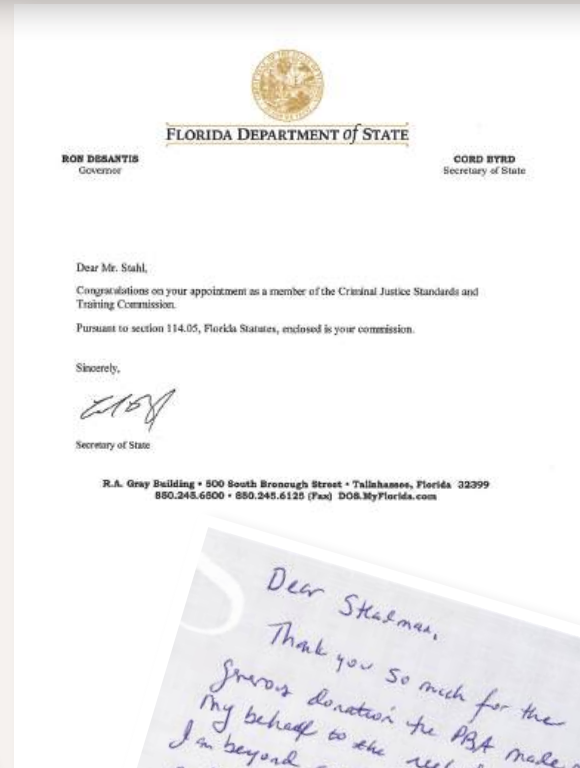
For South Florida Police Benevolent Association Board of Directors



Support for PBA Members
Transparency & Accountability
Protect Our Benefits



Thank You notes to **THE PBA**



FLORIDA FIRST RESPONDER LEGAL TEAM



Your Florida First Responder Legal Team is committed to educating and assisting First Responders, their friends, and families in pursuing all benefits available under the law to obtain the best outcome for injured workers and their families. As you know, many First Responders are afflicted with heart disease, hypertension, hepatitis, chronic back injuries, hearing loss, and more. These conditions can be work-related, as a matter of law, whether it occurred on or off duty. Although these conditions may be work-related legally, employers and insurance carriers often wrongfully deny claims. This is where we can step in to obtain the best care and the most benefits available for our clients. For First Responders, a work injury involves much more than a simple workers' compensation claim. There are employment, pension, PSOB, and Social Security issues that overlap and affect each other. Our years of experience enable us to work to ensure that every client receives the maximum benefits he or she is entitled to. We are centrally located to provide a variety of legal services to our First Responder community statewide.

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Florida First Responder Legal Team is proud to be the preferred practitioners of the Palm Beach County, South Florida, and the Florida PBAs.



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WHAT POLICE OFFICERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SECURE ACT 2.0 AND CATCH-UP CONTRIBUTIONS



Most officers know that retirement planning is important, but the rules can feel confusing. A new law, called **SECURE Act 2.0**, has changed some of the retirement rules starting in 2026.

One of the biggest changes affects

catch-up contributions. Here's what that means for you, explained in simple terms.

WHAT IS A CATCH-UP CONTRIBUTION?

When you turn **50 years old or older**, the government lets you put extra money into your retirement accounts beyond the normal yearly limits. This extra amount is called a **catch-up contribution**. The idea is that as you get closer to retirement, you may want to "catch up" by saving more.

For example:

- If the normal 457(b) contribution limit is \$23,000, you might be allowed to put in an extra \$7,500 once you're 50+.
- That means you could save a total of **\$30,500** in a year.

For police officers who often retire earlier than other workers, these catch-ups can make a huge difference in your financial future.

WHAT'S CHANGING UNDER SECURE ACT 2.0?

Starting **January 1, 2026**, the law changes the type of money you can use for catch-ups:

1. If you earned **\$145,000** or more in the prior year, all your catch-up contributions must go into a **Roth account** (after-tax money).
2. If you earn less than **\$145,000**, you can still choose between pre-tax or Roth for your catch-up.

That \$145,000 number will go up slightly each year with inflation, but the rule is clear: high earners can no longer do pre-tax catch-ups after 2025.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRE-TAX AND ROTH?

- **Pre-tax contributions:** Money goes in before taxes. It

lowers your taxable income now, but you'll pay taxes later when you withdraw it.

- **Roth contributions:** Money goes in after taxes. You don't get a tax break today, but your withdrawals in retirement are tax-free.

Example:

- If you make \$150,000 and put \$7,500 pre-tax into your 457(b), your taxable income drops to \$142,500 today.
- With Roth, you don't get that drop in income now, but when you retire and pull the money out, it's tax-free.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Catch-ups let you save extra once you turn 50.
- Starting in 2026, if you earn over \$145,000, those catch-ups must be Roth.
- Roth means no tax break today, but tax-free withdrawals later.
- Check with me now and start planning for the change.

BOTTOM LINE

The SECURE Act 2.0 isn't meant to hurt you—it's meant to push more people toward Roth savings. For officers, this could mean a shift in how you plan. The good news is Roth accounts grow tax-free, which can be powerful in retirement. The key is to be aware of the change and take action before 2026 so you don't get caught off guard.

Nicolás Valdés-Fauli is the founder and CEO of Thin Blue Line Financial (www.tblinefinancial.com). Call 305-798-1842 or email nvf@tblinefinancial.com. Nicolás has served the LEO community in South Florida for 20 years and is dedicated to helping his clients make sound decisions before and during retirement. He is an expert in all matters related to the FRS, deferred compensation and local municipal retirement plans. This material has been prepared for informational purposes only and is not intended to provide, and should not be relied upon, for tax, legal or accounting advice, nor is it intended to be a solicitation for business. Investment advisory services offered through Mai Street Financial Solutions LLC.

REFLECTIONS

Mauricio “MO” Smith

Retired MDPD Sergeant (1983–2019)

Specialties: Undercover Narcotics, SWAT, Bomb Squad, Underwater Recovery (Diver)



The Vitals

- 36 years in law enforcement
- Lynn University graduate
- Joined Metro-Dade Police, 1983
- Served in Narcotics, SWAT, Bomb Squad, Underwater Recovery Team
- Key role in paving the way to Pablo Escobar's downfall
- Pioneer in explosive breaching techniques
- Proud husband of Yasmina (Internal Affairs) & father of Angeline

Mauricio “MO” Smith has lived a life of service marked by courage, persistence, and moments that still move him decades later. Born in Colombia, he lost his mother at just two years old. His father brought him to Miami, where he grew up, went to Coral Park High, and discovered his calling in law enforcement.

That calling began in 1983, when he joined Metro-Dade Police. Over the next 36 and a half years, Mo built a career that touched nearly every corner of policing: from the streets of Cutler Ridge to undercover narcotics, from SWAT to the Bomb Squad.

By Christina Castrillon

THE FOUNDATIONS

Looking back, Mo credits two female officers, Carol Blair and Sgt. Eileen Decora, for shaping his early career.

“They took me under their wing and taught me how to really do police work: through logic and common sense,” he said. “Any successes I had, came from the foundation those two ladies built.”

Those lessons carried him into narcotics in the mid-80’s — the height of Miami’s cocaine wars. Assigned to the Crack Intervention Detail (CID), Mo worked cases tied to the Medellín Cartel, Pablo Escobar, and the Ochoas. Cocaine flooded the streets, cartels fought for control, and every call could turn deadly.

“They were the gods of that era,” he recalls. “The local names you heard about were just small players compared to

the power coming out of Colombia.”

A defining moment of his career was arresting Escobar’s personal right-hand man. “That arrest wasn’t about headlines—it was about dismantling part of a network that was poisoning our city and our country. He didn’t want to spend the rest of his life in prison, so we bartered. Each night, after lights out, he would teach me the business—how they moved drugs, their codes, their dress, their behavior. It gave me the tools to infiltrate the organization without raising suspicion.” The rest is history.

BREAKING NEW GROUND

After years in narcotics — including undercover assignments that put his life on the line — Mo transferred

to the Training Bureau before being recruited into SWAT and eventually the Bomb Squad. He became one of the few officers in Miami-Dade history to serve in BOTH elite units simultaneously.

One of his proudest achievements came while working with fellow officer Steve Cochran: pioneering explosive breaching techniques for high-risk operations.

"We trained, experimented, and developed the tactics in Arizona and Orlando, and finalized them here in Miami," he said. The first operation using their methods went flawlessly. "Instead of officers kicking in doors and facing gunfire, we could now open them with precision charges designed to protect lives." That technique became a lasting tool for law enforcement.

A DEFINING MOMENT

Despite decades of high-profile cases, Mo's favorite memory is a quiet one. Early in his career, he responded to a call about a baby wandering the streets at two in the morning. He and neighbors went door-to-door until they found the frantic parents, unaware their child had slipped out of the crib.



As he handed the baby back, a young boy teased that his uncle's City of Miami police uniform looked sharper than Mo's brown Metro-Dade one. Before Mo could react, the mother clutched her child and said, "Right about now, that's the most beautiful uniform I've ever seen in my life."

"That story," Mo says, "is my favorite because it shows what this job is about — making a difference in the moment someone needs you most. The undercover work is like something out of the movies, but that night defined what it means to be a police officer."

LIFE AFTER THE BADGE

Mo retired on January, 2020 — just months before the pandemic shut the world down. After more than three decades, he finally had time to pause, reflect, and appreciate both the danger and the humanity that shaped his career.

"I've never tried to compete with anyone but myself," he said. "My father taught me to always be better than yesterday. That's how I lived my career — to do the best I could, every day."

"Sacrifice was part of the job. During my seven years undercover, I missed holidays, birthdays, milestones. I drove evasive routes home to avoid being followed. I learned that courage isn't just facing danger, it's persistence, the unseen work, the moments you risk everything and nobody notices."

Through it all, he says, he was blessed with incredible partners and mentors. "They became family. That bond is built in blood, sweat, and trust — something outsiders will never fully understand."

"Looking back, I can say this career gave me purpose. It tested me in ways I couldn't imagine, and it gave me moments of grace I'll carry forever. I'm grateful for every lesson, every challenge, and every brother and sister I stood beside."

WORDS TO THE NEXT GENERATION

"To the next generation of officers, I say this: make things better. Every time you put on the uniform, ask yourself, 'Did I leave this better than I found it?' Sometimes that means dismantling a cartel. Sometimes it's inventing a tool that keeps your team safe. Sometimes it's simply returning

a lost child to her mother. That's the work that lasts. The adrenaline fades, but compassion and service endure."

Mo retires with gratitude, pride, and humility. Gratitude for his colleagues. Pride in what they accomplished together. Humility for the countless moments that revealed the true meaning of service.

"And yes, if I had the chance, I'd do it all over again: same city, same challenges, same uniforms. Most of all, I want to thank my brothers and sisters, because every day you step out to protect people you don't even know. That is a force to be reckoned with. Be proud!"

In the final stretch of his career, Mo joined the Underwater Recovery Team, diving to recover evidence, explosives, contraband — and, at times, the bodies of those lost. It was fitting; he had been drawn to the water since childhood. Today, in retirement, he returns to diving not as part of an investigation, but as a passion — a full-circle transition from duty to hobby, from service to serenity.

COMMEMORATING OUR OWN: REMEMBERING RPOC MEMBERS



As President of the Retired Police Officers Council (RPOC), I am honored to serve our community. It is with a sense of solemnity that I note the frequent news of our retired colleagues passing away. Some, such as Jon Propst—a fellow officer and friend for over fifty-three years—are individuals I have known personally. Elizner “Ace” Brown also passed this past

summer. I recently learned that Jon and Ace worked together in the ID section before Jon began his duties on the road in 1974, and their families maintained a close relationship.

George Gibson, another member who recently passed away, is remembered fondly. I attended his ninety-ninth birthday celebration. George was truly larger than life. I first met him and Harry Wright while assigned to the desk in Perrine during the spring of 1969, when I was new to the force and in the academy. Harry greeted me with humor, carrying me to the patrol car where I was told to observe and remain quiet.

In a recent conversation with the wife of retired Police Sergeant Ernest Pruitt, I learned of his passing. While I did not work directly with Sgt. Pruitt, he was highly regarded by colleagues and considered an asset to

the Department. Although not yet an RPOC member, he was in the process of joining when he received his cancer diagnosis. He will be greatly missed.

The loss of Frank Mussoline was particularly difficult for me; he was highly respected and served as a mentor to my sons during their time working together in Tampa.

I will always honor and remember all who wore the Brown Gown, regardless of membership status. Wearing the uniform deserves the highest respect.

I would like to address the decline in RPOC membership. Fewer newly retired officers are joining, and some current retirees are not renewing their memberships. Often, it requires one or two reminders. The annual renewal fee of thirty dollars is a small commitment to maintaining our connection—comparable to the cost of coffee and a donut at DD.

Collaborating with the Board of Directors has facilitated my responsibilities. Together, we strive to keep our members informed and provide consistent support.

Please visit our website at rpcpba.org to learn about upcoming events, including the IPA RPOC and PBA cruise scheduled for March and the RPOC reunion taking place in Lake Mary from April 30th through May 3rd, 2026.

NEWS FROM THE POLICE OFFICERS ASSISTANCE TRUST

POAT EVENTS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



Can't believe another year is quickly coming to an end, but we have a couple of events before it does. Please stay safe and look after each other. Know that the POAT will always be here when you need it. You can easily find us at www.poat.org and the office

number is 305-594-6662. You can also email us at poatoffice@msn.com.

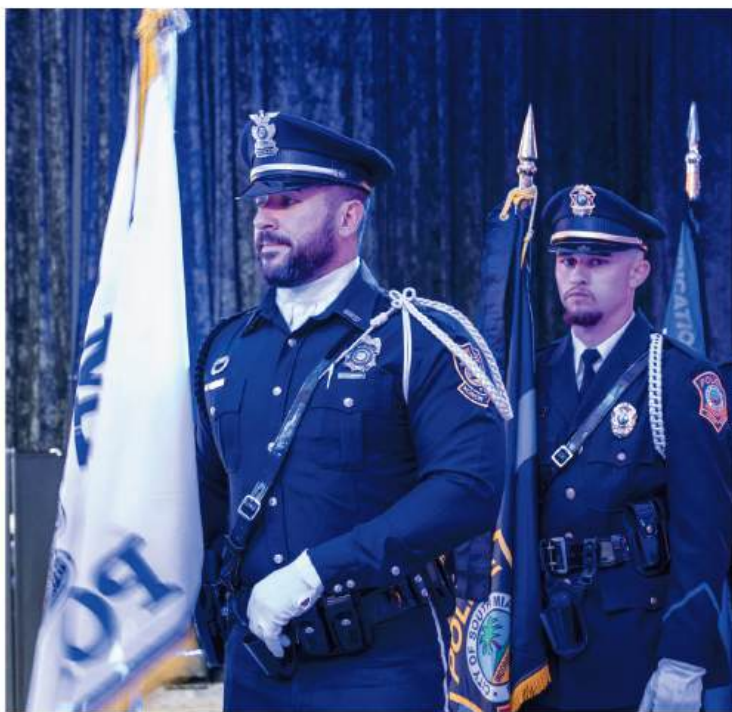
On November 6, 2025, the **Annual Appreciation Luncheon**, sponsored by the Milton Foundation will be held at the **Intercontinental Doral**, beginning at **11:30 a.m.** If you are a veteran and would like to join us, as we honor YOU, please contact **Annette McCully** at amccully@mdso.com.

One of our biggest annual events is quickly approaching. **The Cops Ride for Kids**, which aids in supporting our Holiday Gifts for Surviving Children. The Ride will be held on **Saturday, December 6, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.** The ride will begin at **Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office Headquarters**

Building, 9105 NW 25 Street. Registration for the event is \$20 per bike. Online registration will be available at www.poat.org beginning on October 20, 2025. Please contact **Rudy Gonzalez** at poatoffice@msn.com for details. This event assists POAT to ensure children of officers killed in the line of duty will always receive a gift from their law enforcement family. Also included in that Holiday list are the children of officers who lost their lives while they were still working. Our Holiday list currently has 67 children that know POAT will always be there. We look forward to seeing you there!

SAVE THE DATE ~ The Twelfth Annual “Homerun for Heroes” Kickball Tournament will be held at **Kendall Indian Hammocks Park** from **February 6 - 7, 2026.** The park is located at **11395 SW 79 Street.** If interested in forming a team, contact **Major Thamy Gonzalez** at **305-216-6605** for team registration. Team registration fee is \$400; team t-shirts are included. Deadline for team registration is November 28, 2025.

Thanks for your support and stay safe.



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Congrats to Retired Members

The South Florida PBA is proud to honor retired members who have put in long hours and outstanding service for their departments and communities. Join us in honoring these great members and exceptional public servants as they celebrate their retirement.



Aaron Mancha
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



Angelo Fusco
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



Douglas McCoy
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



Heath Genovar
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



Jacquelyn Williams
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



James Boone
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



Jorge Yohay
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



Latasha McIntosh
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



Laz Menoud
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



Lisa Law
Miami-Dade Corrections
& Rehabilitation



Melissa Johnson
Miami-Dade Corrections
& Rehabilitation



Monica Rios
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



Omarid Hernandez
Miami-Dade Corrections
& Rehabilitation



Patrick Munsch
Bay Harbor Islands PD



Stanley Williams
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