



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Catherine Childers

225-337-7513

catherinechilders@yahoo.com

ORGANIZATION RECOGNIZES ACTS OF KINDNESS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

(Baton Rouge, LA) – When law enforcement officers violate their oaths and the public trust, it ends up in the news. But what about the much more common scenario – when officers perform acts of kindness that go way beyond what they are professionally required to do?

To recognize those kindnesses by so many law enforcement officers in Louisiana, Baton Rouge resident Linda Hull created a non-profit organization, Beyond the Badge, Louisiana.

On March 18 Beyond the Badge presented thirteen law enforcement officers from across the state with a Heart of Law Enforcement Award at a ceremony and luncheon held in Baton Rouge, LA. One recipient, Captain Bobbie O’Bryan of the Houma Police Department, was presented with the Beyond the Badge Service Before Self award. The Service Before Self award is given to the officer whose act of kindness stands out in the field of nominees.

“At a time when there is so much negative attention directed toward law enforcement in general, I thought someone needed to honor all the officers who go beyond the call of duty. We need to let the public know about their acts of kindness and generosity,” Hull said.

The annual ceremony was attended by more than 200 guests, including state elected officials and area police chiefs and sheriffs. Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser was the keynote speaker for the event.

The officers were given an award packet that included a \$100 Visa gift card and a framed Louisiana state flag that had been flown over the Louisiana State Capitol for a day in his or her honor. The Service Before Self honoree received a \$500 Visa gift card in addition to the flag, and all officers received a tactical gear bag containing a Beyond the Badge challenge coin, charging cable, and t-shirt.

Officers receiving a Beyond the Badge Heart of Law Enforcement Award were:

Lieutenant Darlene Cooper	St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff’s Office
Deputy Dominique DeJernette	Lafayette Parish Sheriff’s Office
Staff Sergeant Joshua Folse	Lafayette Parish Sheriff’s Office
Lieutenant Brock Frisch	Plaquemines Parish Sheriff’s Office
Corporal Jacqueline Gabriel	St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff’s Office
Sergeant Darrian Guillory	Ville Platte Police Department
Deputy Nancy McDonald	Livingston Parish Sheriff’s Office
Chief Cary Mosby	French Settlement Police Department
Captain Bobbie O’Bryan	Houma Police Department

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Lieutenant Erick C. Taylor
Captain Varick C. Taylor, Jr.
Master Trooper Eric Thaxton
Lieutenant Billy Thomas

Assumption Parish Sheriff's Office
Thibodaux Police Department
Louisiana State Police
Livingston Parish Sheriff's Office

Beyond the Badge was incorporated in April of 2016 and is operated entirely by citizen volunteers and funded by corporate and private donations. "We have no paid staff and no office space, so every penny donated to Beyond the Badge goes directly into the project," Hull said.

Nominations of officers for Beyond the Badge's Heart of Law Enforcement award can be made throughout the year. Members of the general public or law enforcement agencies can submit nominations online at www.beyondthebadgelouisiana.org. Nominations are accepted until Jan. 31 for acts performed during the previous calendar year. Each year, Beyond the Badge will select law enforcement officers who have been nominated for acts of kindness during the prior year to receive a Heart of Law Enforcement Award during a special ceremony and luncheon honoring the recipients.

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Beyond the Badge
17415 West Lakeway Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70810
www.beyondthebadgelouisiana.org

2025 BEYOND THE BADGE AWARDS

Heart of Law Enforcement Award Recipients

LIEUTENANT DARLENE COOPER **ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Lt. Cooper is the commander for St. John Sheriff's Office's School Resource Officers. On Oct. 12, she received a call from a local school principal about a suspicious vehicle in the school's parking lot. When she arrived, Lt. Cooper found a young woman and an infant asleep in the car. She could have sent the woman on her way with an admonition, but instead, Lt. Cooper took time to find out more about young woman's predicament—then she took action. The woman was homeless. During the day she slept in her car in front of her child's school. At night, she slept at the lakefront in New Orleans.

Lt. Cooper bought the woman food and made calls to find her shelter. She connected with a local nonprofit and together they found the woman a house in a nearby parish where she could stay rent-free for 30 days so she could gather her resources. During that time, and for several weeks beyond, Lt. Cooper checked in with the family, bringing them food; helping with clothing and other necessities.

DEPUTY DOMINIQUE DEJERNETTE **LAFAYETTE PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Deputy Dominique "DJ" DeJernette of the Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office has managed to turn going beyond the badge into the status quo in her career. As a school resource officer, Deputy DeJernette never passes up an opportunity to change a student's life for the better. For one student at Deputy DeJernette's assigned school, Paul Breaux Middle School, homelessness and financial hardship led to relentless bullying about her appearance by her classmates. As soon as Deputy DeJernette learned of the bullying, she sprang into action. Deputy DeJernette arranged for a day at the salon for the student. Because of Deputy DeJernette's compassionate efforts, the student was able to get her hair done at no cost to the family.

Another student at the middle school was experiencing issues getting to and from school each day. Deputy DeJernette learned that the problem arose from the family all sharing

one bike for their transportation needs. On days when his loved ones were using the bicycle, the student was forced to walk to and from school, causing punctuality and attendance issues. Within a few weeks, Deputy DeJernette arranged to give the student a bicycle she owned personally. Deputy DeJernette's selfless actions and dedication to her students' well-being changed this student's circumstances drastically, affording him safe and reliable transportation for school.

In her spare time off-duty, Deputy DeJernette also volunteers as an assistant coach for the school's football team. She attends practices and games, further solidifying her bond with the students she's sworn to protect.

STAFF SERGEANT JOSHUA FOLSE
LAFAYETTE PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Staff Sergeant Joshua Folse is the School Resource Officer at Judice Middle School. He interacts well with the students and is always willing to help out students and staff beyond his job duties. Numerous times he has given money out of his own pocket to help students who couldn't cover the cost of their own student IDs. Sgt. Folse has also frequently done the same thing to cover the cost of field trips just to help students be able to participate who couldn't afford it or forgot to bring money. For the last two years, he has also stepped up and become the head coach of the school's baseball team so the kids could keep playing. Sgt. Folse's nominator said, "He is the best SRO ever and truly cares about the students."

LIEUTENANT BROCK FRISCH
PLAQUEMINES PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE

In late October of 2024, Lieutenant Brock Frisch, assigned to the District 1 Patrol Division, was working in the Belle Chasse Middle School zone. He became concerned about the lights on the school zone sign being inadequate. Due to the construction of the new LNG plant bringing a lot of out-of-state people into the community, many were not accustomed to the area and the poorly lit school zone lights. Lt. Frisch stated that he wanted to put extra lights on the school zone sign so it would get the attention of the motorists better. Ultimately, Plaquemine Parish Sheriff's Office reached out to the public school board members as well as the principal for Our Lady of Perpetual Help School and they all gave permission for the improvements to the lights. After shopping the cost of the additional lights as well as researching the laws governing school zones in Louisiana, the lights were purchased to be placed in the school zones on the north end of the parish due to the heavy traffic volume in the area.

Once Lt. Frisch received the lights, he spent a great deal of his own time installing the lights himself in the Belle Chasse Middle School and OLPH School zones. His nominator said, "We believe that Lt. Frisch thought about his community and the safety of the kids who attend the schools in our parish. We hope that his actions will be appreciated and recognized... for this

is the true meaning of going above and beyond for our citizens. Lt. Frisch's pride and commitment to our citizens are evident through this act to maintain the high level of public safety within our community. “

CORPORAL JACQUELINE GABRIEL
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Corporal Jacqueline Gabriel successfully organized a Christmas fundraiser to support a family in need. The family included four children. Through her efforts, Corporal Gabriel raised approximately \$1,000. These funds helped to provide the family with essential support and holiday cheer that would not have been possible without her efforts. Her dedication and generosity exemplify her commitment to community service and making a positive impact on the lives of others.

Jacqueline has worked extensively with juveniles in the school system, where her daily interactions were filled with encouragement and attentive listening. She is known for her unwavering positivity and her ability to provide constructive feedback in any situation. Her empathy and kindness extend beyond her professional life, as demonstrated by her selfless act of helping an elderly man transition from homelessness to stability. Jacqueline ensured he had a safe place to eat, sleep, and shower, eventually helping him find a more permanent living situation.

SERGEANT DARRIAN GUILLORY
VILLE PLATTE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Darrian currently works for the Ville Platte Police Department as a lead homicide detective, but tends to wear several different hats within her department. In her off time, she has organized and executed several events on her own for the community she serves. For the last two years Darrian has donated over 400 backpacks with school supplies to families in need and has put on Christmas events where families in need were able to see Santa and pick out a present of their own choosing. Darrian herself is the walking definition of the word kind and is constantly putting everyone and everything above herself.

DEPUTY NANCY MCDONALD
LIVINGSTON PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE

During the Livingston Parish Sheriff's Office breast cancer awareness campaign, Deputy Nancy McDonald exemplified dedication that exceeded her law enforcement duties. Driving the pink unit to community events, she became a beacon of hope for individuals affected by breast cancer. Her compassion allowed her to form deep connections with those battling the disease, survivors, and families who have lost loved ones. Through heartfelt prayers and conversations, she left a lasting impact on many lives.

Deputy McDonald actively raised awareness by sharing survivor stories and encouraging women to schedule annual mammograms. Her outreach efforts significantly increased mammogram requests at Lady of the Lake Livingston, with the facility crediting her for more than doubling their requests in October.

Additionally, she collaborated with the wife of an LPSO deputy to create a beautiful painting, donated to Our Lady of the Lake Livingston. This artwork now hangs outside their mammography room, symbolizing hope and resilience for many women.

Her nominator said Nancy, “embodies the spirit of going above and beyond in her service, touching countless lives in the fight against breast cancer.”

CHIEF CARY MOSBY
FRENCH SETTLEMENT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Our next honoree is described as an “old soul who believes in helping his community. He is always smiling...laughing and has a soft spot for people in need, especially children and the elderly.” Chief Cary Mosby is also well known in French Settlement for his fondness of chain saws. During a recent hurricane, Chief Mosby was out patrolling looking out for his neighbors. In the dead of night, he used his personal equipment including saws, truck, trailer and tractor, to remove seven large downed trees throughout the community. Knowing the older residents in the community rely on medical devices, and often have no one else looking out for their safety and needs, the chief used his expert skills to clear the way so that the utility companies and emergency medical services could reach these residents should they have a need after the storm. The Livingston Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness relies not only on Chief Mosby’s experience to not only advise on these matters, but to ensure access is open as well.

His concern extends far beyond the storm season, however. Elderly residents reach out to him anytime they have a concern about a dangerous tree. In addition to his full-time responsibility to the community, Chief Mosby makes time to help these residents by cutting down the trees so that they can rest assured that their homes and lives are safe. Chief Mosby does all the hard work using his personal equipment and does it all for free...just to help his community and ease his neighbors’ minds.

LIEUTENANT ERICK TAYLOR
ASSUMPTION PARISH SHERIFF’S OFFICE
AND
CAPTAIN VARICK TAYLOR, JR.
THIBODAUX POLICE DEPARTMENT

Our next honorees are quite the dynamic duo in their communities! Captain Varick Taylor with the Thibodaux Police Department and Lt. Erick Taylor with the Assumption Parish Sheriff’s Office partnered together for operation “Beat the Heat” which they personally funded.

They organized a snowball truck and distributed hundreds of snowballs, chips, drinks and candy to children in several neighborhoods, community centers and a church.

Captain Varick Taylor has also provided free pizza to kids in the community along with Easter baskets, candy and treats. Additionally, he has donated money to a local business to help provide free food and drinks to citizens in need of a meal in the aftermath of the hurricane. His generosity has also provided free pizza, jambalaya, fish and drinks at a National Night Out Against Crime event in his area. Captain Taylor has also purchased two after game meals for the local middle school football team.

Lt. Erick Taylor (not to be confused with "Varick") shares that generous spirit. After Hurricane Francine, he partnered with a local nonprofit to give away hundreds of hot meals to the community in the aftermath of the storm. He has also donated money, food, drinks and, yes, more snowballs, to several summer camps, churches and community events.

MASTER TROOPER ERIC THAXTON **LOUISIANA STATE POLICE**

On July 12, 2024, a cadet attending the Louisiana State Police Training Academy noticed a bulge under his skin near his throat, which was later diagnosed as oral cancer. While being in the Training Academy and dealing with his diagnosis, this cadet faced hardship at home with an injured wife and son as well as difficulty in the academy, suffering from a broken tailbone. Master Trooper Eric Thaxton worked alongside the cadet as he communicated his health issues to his wife and began attending doctor's appointments to create a plan to treat the cancer.

While working with the cadet, M/T Thaxton learned about the cadet's financial struggles and felt he could do something to help him through the tough times. M/T Thaxton contacted the Louisiana State Troopers Association and organized a benefit dinner for the cadet. He also partnered with another trooper to create a benefit T-shirt. The benefit dinner was a huge success, selling 400 food tickets and 310 shirts. M/T Thaxton's efforts caught the attention of Governor Jeff Landry who made a generous donation to the fundraiser for the cadet. Not including the governor's gift, the benefit raised between \$50,000 and 100,000 to assist the cadet and his family through this troubling time.

M/T Thaxton's efforts did not stop there. Due to the cadet's treatment appointments, M/T Thaxton spent late nights and early mornings training the cadet on topics such as a Taser, Use of Force, and Traffic Stops so that he could reach the requisite number of repetitions required by the academy. He also reached out to the medical staff treating the cadet about scheduling appointments and how important it was for him to have the appointments scheduled consecutively so he could fulfill his goal of being a Louisiana State Trooper. The conversation with the staff led to a more open line of communication between the doctors and the cadet which he said helped ease his mind about the entire situation and processes required to get the cancer resolved.

M/T Thaxton continued to give his primary job the required focus and worked diligently to **create time** to ensure the cadet was always taken care of. His selfless acts, including

organizing a successful fundraiser, providing critical training support, and facilitating medical care, went well beyond any requirement of his role at the training academy.

LIEUTENANT BILLY THOMAS
LIVINGSTON PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE

For the second consecutive year, Lieutenant Billy Thomas and his team took the initiative to gather their own funds to bring joy to 15 boys and girls and their families in need who attend Springfield Head Start. Demonstrating remarkable compassion, the B Shift worked together to purchase a variety of Christmas gifts and essentials, including new, wrapped toys, bikes, winter coats, and clothing. Their efforts not only provided material support but also infused the families with hope and holiday spirit during a challenging time. Lieutenant Thomas's leadership and dedication to his team and the community exemplify going above and beyond in law enforcement. By organizing this initiative and encouraging his colleagues to contribute, he fostered a culture of generosity within the department.

More recently, Lt. Thomas rallied his team to go to the aid of an elderly couple during the snow storm. The couple were in desperate need – not having food, heat and other resources for the impending storm. Using their own funds, Lt. Thomas and his team purchased essential items including a heater, food and water for the couple as well as gifting them with some cash to help the couple through their tough time.

Lt. Thomas's actions and leadership exemplify the extraordinary kindness Beyond the Badge is committed to recognizing.

Service Before Self Award Recipient

CAPTAIN BOBBIE O'BRYAN
HOUMA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Although working in law enforcement for 34 years and achieving rank of Police Administration Captain is a feat in itself, Bobbie has given so much more to his community. He has volunteered his time to train over 1,000 kids in the Young Marines Program. Through this program, children are taught discipline and respect.

Recently, Captain O'Bryan partnered with Pizza Hut and Chick-fil-A to provide food to low-income schools and DOC programs, feeding over 1,000 families weekly.

Another extraordinary act of kindness has been distributing food to the elderly and low-income families. Even though he stays busy doing all of these things, he still finds time to give advice when needed and lead you in the right direction in life. He is always a helping hand and a listening ear.

Captain O'Bryan founded the Terrebonne Parish Bunkhouse Shelter, which has provided at least 500,000 meals over 26 years. The shelter provides temporary housing, job search assistance and a pathway to self-sufficiency. His efforts ensure that residents have access to a hot meal every day.

Clearly, Captain O'Bryan has spent a lifetime spreading kindness in his community. One of his **NINE**, yes, I said **NINE**, nominators shared the following which we think is the very definition of the type of officers Beyond the Badge seeks to recognize – those that don't just respond to the call of duty, but who also go beyond the job to show compassion and aid:

Dale Toups, Jr. said: "I asked him one time why he started the shelter and he told me that when he was a young officer one of his duties was to get the homeless people out of the business doorways in the mornings. He would buy a bunch of Egg McMuffins in the morning and pass them out to the homeless. 'Hey wake up. Have some breakfast. You need to go somewhere else.' In that time he talked to the people and discovered that a lot of them just needed a place to clean up (take a shower) and a place to get mail to get their lives back on track. The idea of the Bunkhouse dawned on him and I don't know how he managed to do it but he was able to buy the building."

For an unending list of kindness and a lifetime of going "beyond the badge," Captain Bobbie O'Bryan is the *2025 Heart of Law Enforcement Service Before Self* award recipient.



2025 Heart of Law Enforcement Awards Ceremony Keynote Speaker Lieutenant Governor William "Billy" Nungesser

Mr. Nungesser has served as Chairman of the National Lieutenant Governors Association, a professional association which charts issues and work to be pursued by the second-highest ranking officials in all 50 states and U.S. territories. Under his administration, the state of Louisiana celebrated a fourth consecutive year of record-breaking visitation as Louisiana welcomed more than 53.2 million visitors, bringing in more than \$18.9 billion to the state.

Mr. Nungesser left a career as a successful businessman to begin his political career following Hurricane Katrina. In 2005, he rode out Hurricane Katrina at his ranch in southern Plaquemines Parish. In response to his own frustration over the slow response from government following Hurricane Katrina, Billy decided to run for Plaquemines Parish President in 2006. He was re-elected in 2010 with over 70% of the vote.

On April 20, 2010, Plaquemines Parish became ground zero for the nation's biggest environmental disaster. In the wake of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion in the Gulf, Billy became the voice of Louisiana's frustration. The New York Times named him the "hardest working man in Louisiana" and ABC named him Person of the Week during the same period. He continues to be the "hardest working man in Louisiana" to date on behalf of all of us.

Today Billy is second-in-command in the executive branch and Louisiana's ambassador as Commissioner of the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

As a successful businessman, former Parish President, and statewide elected official in his 3rd term as our state's culture and recreation ambassador, Mr. Nungesser has worked closely with many first responders and has earned the appreciation and respect of law enforcement across the state.



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Beyond the Badge
17415 West Lakeway Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70810
www.beyondthebadgelouisiana.org

WHAT IS BEYOND THE BADGE?

Beyond the Badge is a non-profit organization begun in 2016 by Baton Rouge resident Linda Hull to recognize law enforcement officers in her community who perform acts of kindness beyond that required by their oaths of service. *Beyond the Badge* is operated entirely by citizen volunteers and funded by corporate and private donations.

The mission of *Beyond the Badge* is to educate the public about ordinary law enforcement officers performing extraordinary acts of kindness in their communities. Each year, *Beyond the Badge* will select law enforcement officers, who have been nominated by their agencies or the public, to receive a Heart of Law Enforcement award in recognition of acts of kindness they performed during the previous calendar year. The nominee whose act of kindness stands out among the field of nominees will receive the Service Before Self award. Awards will be given during a special luncheon honoring the recipients.

Criteria for nomination:

- Nominations may be made by anyone – supervisors, fellow officers, citizens, family members, friends.
- Nominees must be employed in the state of Louisiana as police officers, sheriff's deputies or state troopers.
- Nominees must have performed acts of kindness that were not required of them in their regular duties as law enforcement officers.
- Nominees will be considered for acts performed while on duty or off, and whether or not they were in uniform at the time.

Nominations will be accepted until January 31 for acts performed during the previous calendar year.

To submit a nomination online, or to make a donation to *Beyond the Badge*, please visit our web site at www.beyondthebadgelouisiana.org, or find us on Facebook.