A Job Well Done

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TAKES TO THE ROAD AFTER 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

/Kelly Foreman, Public Information Officer / Photos by Jim Robertson

When Herb Bowling retired from the Kentucky State Police in 1988, he took a little time off, but it wasn’t long before law enforcement was calling him back again. After 20 years of service to the Department of Criminal Justice Training, though, Bowling said this time, it’s for real.

“I think it’s just time,” Bowling said of the retirement from his post as DOCJT’s first-ever deputy commissioner. His retirement was effective Aug. 1. “My life has kind of been divided into segments of 20 or so years. I spent 20 years growing up, going to school, all those kinds of things. About the next 25 I spent in active law enforcement. The past 20 have just kind of been a dream. So for the next 20, I am probably going to sit on the back porch and rock, look out over the lake, do a little traveling – just do whatever I want to do when I want to do it. This is retirement.”
The early years

In 1964, Bowling joined the military police and began basic training at Ft. Gordon, Ga. He later was stationed at Fort Knox, Ky. Where he served two years as a military policeman. By this time, the duties at Fort Knox were very similar to those of a small police department. Bowling said. At the time, Ft. Knox was an open base, which means that civilians and traffic could come and go as they chose. We worked traffic accidents, domestic calls, fights, drugs just normal policing duties for a police department.

When I got out of the service, I decided there were two things I was never going to do again, he added. I was never going to work at a job that didn’t pay good money and I was never going to a police officer.

But things didn’t work out quite like he planned. After leaving the service, Bowling accepted a part-time job with Sheriff’s office at Hancock County. He worked there for over 10 months and almost went nuts, “I couldn’t stand to be inside.

After applying for a job with the Kentucky State Police, a detective performing Bowling’s background investigation in Kentucky called and told him if he wanted to be a trooper, he ought to come back home to Kentucky.

“So that’s exactly what I did,” Bowling said. I joined the state police in July of 1967. My initial assignment was to be a police officer in the Morehead post as a detective sergeant. His service there was short, though, as he soon was transferred to KSP’s headquarters in Frankfort to be in charge of minority recruiting for the agency.

“I was very successful in the minority recruiting effort and was rewarded by having my choice of assignments when we shut the office down,” Bowling said. “So, I went back to Morehead as a detective. I worked there until 1978, when I was promoted to lieutenant and assigned to the Ashland post. I worked Ashland for six months and was able to get transferred back to the Morehead post as a detective lieutenant.

“I suppose I’m one of the few people in the state police who had a career that never had to stay away from home long or had to move due to promotions,” he continued. “Once I got back home as a lieutenant, I decided there were going to be more promotions because I knew I was going to have to be away from my family. So, I just settled in as a lieutenant. I retired in 1988 as a detective lieutenant out of the Morehead post.”

I was somewhat involved in the legislative issues that dealt with the construction of the facility we now are in. I was a police officer at the time. When I came here, we were using the old University Inn out on the bypass and it was the absolute pits. It was horrible. We required police officers to stay in that place. At the time, basic training was 10 weeks. We made a request that we have a new facility, and the facilities oversight committee out of Frankfort came down and inspected the University Inn, which is what they called the roach motel. They had been talking about getting a new building. When you put a prison inmate in a facility like that, you’ll be in federal court.

Following his graduation, Bowling and his wife, Bonnie, began to make their home in Morehead, Ky. Bowling served as a trooper working a variety of jobs, investigating everything from homicides and accidents to ensuring compliance and writing traffic citations.

“I developed very close working relationships with the local police departments in the Mason, Lewis and Fleming counties area, including the sheriff’s departments,” he said. “It was a very enjoyable time in my career.”

But in May of 1975, Bowling was promoted and assigned to the Pikeville post as a detective sergeant. His service there was short, though, as he soon was transferred to KSP’s headquarters in Frankfort to be in charge of minority recruiting for the agency.

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An ever-changing profession

A lot has changed in law enforcement since Bowling first donned that grey uniform in the late 60s. So much, in fact, that Bowling questions whether he would be able to handle the work today, if it were ‘officers faces daily.” I probably couldn’t be a police officer today,” he said. “It has changed so much, I would be completely lost. Law enforcement today really has a lot of challenges we didn’t have back in those days.”

“With the advent of computers, it became a lot easier,” Bowling said. “I worked in the early days when we had to manually fill out on the roadway, you had to call it in to the post, had to call Frankfort down at motor vehicle registration and manually check the license plate number to find out who it was. If it happened to be closed, you couldn’t get it until the next day because nobody worked at the transportation cabinet at night.

I think the communications and technology have really just a tremendous impact on law enforcement’s ability to do the job properly and correctly,” Bowling said. “The professional standards really have raised the bar on law enforcement. The quality now is much better than it was back in those days.”

Those professional standards, better known statewide as the Peace Officer Professional Standards, are in place today thanks in part to work Bowling did after joining DOCJT in 1990.

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Bowling’s work with POPS is just one piece of two decades worth of efforts to move policing forward. Here are some other ways his involvement has helped improve Kentucky law enforcement.

- Kentucky Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation. “It provides financial assistance to police officers and families when they are killed in the line of duty. The scholarship program is very beneficial to law enforcement throughout the state. It is something officers all can take pride in — something they can look forward to — knowing that if something happens to them, their family is going to get some immediate assistance.”
- Instructional methods. “We went from the traditional, lecture-style training to the facilitation training and adult-based learning process. There has been a tremendous improvement over what we had in the early years.”
- Equipment. “In our computers, our fleet vehicles — overall everything has improved.”
- Telecommunications. “We established telecommunication professional standards and the telecommunication academy. We have the absolute best telecommunication academy in the country. In fact, I don’t know of any other state that even has one.”
- DOCJT employee salaries. “We couldn’t hire and retain people because they didn’t make enough money,” he said. “We changed that. We established a system where there were three levels of instructors and gave them a chance for career advancement.”
- Background checks and character. “They all seem to be enjoying it, so I think they did the right thing of background checks and have the character to even get into the law enforcement profession.”
- KLEFPF stipends. “KLEFPF stipends were raised from $2,500 each year to $3,100 annually. That should go higher and eventually, it will.”
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- Even with a long list of accomplishments, programs and initiatives Bowling has been involved in, he still maintains a humble opinion of the role his service to DOCJT and the law enforcement community has played.

“It’s not that I’ll have any personal impact on anything that anybody does,” he said. “I think we have put some things in place here at the department — and when I say we, I’m talking about the entire department — that’s going to have a tremendous impact on law enforcement forever.”

“That attitude of humility carries over into Bowling’s personal life, too. Of his four sons, their spouses, a niece he considers like a daughter and 14 grandchildren, seven of his family members have followed in his law enforcement footsteps.

“About six or seven years ago, we had a cookout at our home and we had all of our kids, my niece and her husband and the grandkids,” Bowling said. “Three of them were state police officers, one was a deputy sheriff, one was a city police officer, one was an Alcoholic Beverage Control agent and one was a corrections officer, ... It’s been great having all the kids in law enforcement. I think it’s a real tribute to their mother; that she raised them where they could pass background checks and have the character to even get into the law enforcement profession.”

While insisting that his career in law enforcement had to have something to do with his family’s involvement, Bowling still declined to take any credit.

“She did a fantastic job,” Bowling said of his wife. “I think they just saw how much I enjoyed my job. The only piece of advice I gave those kids on careers was, I said, ‘Whatever you do, find something you like to do. Because you’re going to spend a third of your life earning a living. If you don’t enjoy it, you’ve wasted a third of your life.’

“They all seem to be enjoying it, so I think they did the right thing,” he continued.

Bowling may be humble about the impact his career has had on his family and Kentucky law enforcement, but even as he retires his post as deputy commissioner, his pride for the agency he has called home for 20 years is just as strong.

“I think this agency has the greatest impact on law enforcement of anything that could possibly be,” he said. “With our training programs, our police certification, all the things that we do — we are impacting every community in every county in this state in a very positive way.”

On July 28, retiring Dep. Commissioner Herb Bowling was honored in a surprise dinner and ceremony at the Arlington Country Club’s Mule Barn in Richmond. Bowling was joined by his family, friends, DOCJT current and retired co-workers, law enforcement officials from around the state and other special guests. During the ceremony, Bowling received the 2010 Governor’s Award for his service to Kentucky law enforcement. Kentucky Law Enforcement Council Honorary POPS certificate No. 00000 (technically, the first-issued certificate) DOCJT retirement wristwatch, a bronze plaque to be placed in the Funderburk lobby, Kentucky Peace Officers Association plaque, a spiderman fishing pole and a plaque from the Wilmore Police Department. He also received numerous cards and well wishes during the evening.
Don Pendleton was appointed July 16 to serve as the Department of Criminal Justice Training’s second-ever deputy commissioner, following the retirement of Herb Bowling.

Pendleton, who has served the agency as Training Support Division Director since Jan. 2004, has played a vital role in Kentucky law enforcement since he joined the Kentucky State Police in 1974.

“I was fortunate enough in the late 1960s, when I was still in high school, to get to know a Kentucky state trooper,” he said. “As I began to understand what that person represented and what he delivered in terms of service, it began to attract my interest. Although I didn’t intend at that time to pursue a career in law enforcement, I couldn’t put it out of my mind.”

That passion for service drove Pendleton to serve Kentucky in a more than 27-year career with the state police. Pendleton considers himself fortunate that during his career, he was able to visit most every facet of what Kentucky law enforcement offers. He served in a variety of roles, beginning with working the road as a trooper, serving as a first-line supervisor, being involved in criminal intelligence, serving as the operations lieutenant for the Frankfort post, serving as post commander for both Harlan and Richmond posts as well as being the commander of statewide drug enforcement, coordinating the marijuana eradication program and coordinating and directing the activities of the KSP forensic lab system.

He also was involved in public corruption investigations, organized crime group investigations and the development and implementation of a digital radio system for KSP. Pendleton developed the Kentucky Missing Child Information Center, which received national acclaim for its success. His KSP career culminated in the fall of 2001, when he retired from the state police as director of operations, where he directed the activities of more than 1,200 officers and civilian personnel.

In July 2002, Pendleton was hired as DOCJT’s director of the Kentucky Police Corps and served there until Sept. 2003 when he became acting director of the Training Support Division, where he has served DOCJT until his recent appointment.

DOCJT Commissioner John Bizzack, in his announcement about the appointment, said Pendleton has served the agency in many major policy and program developments during his tenure.

“Dep. Commissioner Pendleton brings to his appointment broad perspectives, skilled leadership and administrative experience, and a sound track record of even-handed and consistent approaches to policy and program issues, which will serve DOCJT, its personnel and the Kentucky law enforcement community exceptionally well,” Bizzack said. “He is only the second deputy commissioner ever appointed at DOCJT, and I look forward to his continuation on the executive staff in that role.”

With that wide base of knowledge and understanding of Kentucky law enforcement issues, concerns and needs, Pendleton said he has been able to facilitate trying to meet those through training initiatives and hopes to continue doing so.

“One of the greatest ways to impact advancements in law enforcement is through training,” Pendleton said. “To be able to help further the advancement of important initiatives to continue to enhance law enforcement’s delivery of service, to me, is a vitally important role to play. I am extremely grateful for the confidence displayed by Commissioner Bizzack, Sec. J. Michael Brown and Gov. Steve Beshear to place that kind of trust in me.”

"Pendleton Assumes Role as New DOCJT Deputy Commissioner"