



KENTUCKY LAW ENFORCEMENT

DEDICATED IN HONOR
THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO PROTECT
BLESSED BE THE PEACE



A WORTHY CAUSE

MEET HORACE JOHNSON,
NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
KENTUCKY LAW ENFORCEMENT MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

ABBIE DARST | PROGRAM COORDINATOR

PHOTO BY ELIZABETH THOMAS



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After nearly 35 years of service in and for Kentucky law enforcement, Horace Johnson has taken on a new role of service to law enforcement officers and their families across the commonwealth. In September, Johnson assumed the position of executive director for the Kentucky Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation.

Johnson has served as chief of police for the Glasgow Police Department for the past two years. From 1999 to 2007, Johnson was employed with the Department of Criminal Justice Training, where he served in various roles including Training Operations Division director, overseeing the Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training branches and the Kentucky Leadership Institute.

In his new position as KLEMF executive director, Johnson will serve as the face of the foundation as it launches a new fundraising campaign to grow the foundation and allow for more assistance to law enforcement officers and their families.

Johnson began his law enforcement career with the Western Kentucky University Police Department in 1976 and served as chief from 1991 to 1999. During his tenure, the Western Kentucky University Police Department became the fourth agency in the state to be accredited by the Kentucky Association of Chiefs of Police. He is also a U.S. Army and Kentucky National Guard veteran with 34 years military service. He is a retired lieutenant colonel with numerous awards.

What does the Kentucky Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation mean to you?

To me, it is a tribute to law enforcement officers across the commonwealth who have died in the line of duty and who have sacrificed their lives so that others could have a better way of life. I have been involved with the law enforcement memorial events since I was at the Department of Criminal Justice Training at the foundation's inception. I have always participated with it. I believe it is important that we pay tribute to those men and women who have given the ultimate sacrifice. I have some people I know personally whose names are engraved

on that monument. So, it is more than just a list of names to me. Some of those are people I worked with and knew throughout my life.

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How do you think the rest of the law enforcement community views the foundation?

I think the rest of the law enforcement community views the foundation and the memorial as an important piece of law enforcement. I think it was something that needed to be done when it was first started in early 2000. It is a distinct marker in the state representing all law enforcement. It is very inclusive. I think that all law enforcement feels that, and that is why it is important.

What is the history of your involvement with the Kentucky Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation?

I did not specifically work with the memorial itself while I was at DOCJT. I knew members of the original committee and the people that actually birthed the concept for the memorial and foundation and made it happen. But DOCJT was always there in a supportive role. I was at DOCJT when it was done, but there were many others who actually got it off the ground.

Why did you choose to accept the position of executive director?

When I was asked about it, I was told they thought I was the right person for the job. And I accepted it because law enforcement is my passion. In my career, it is all I have done, outside of the military. It is something that I believe in — we should honor the men and women who died in the line of duty. We should do something to help others, and this is a method through which we can help the families of the fallen. We also can help young people of the law enforcement profession who are working on an education. There are a number of things that the foundation stands for and the goals and objectives

that they have that I believe in. I have the time and I have the passion to work for the foundation in furthering these causes.

What do you see as your most important responsibility as the executive director for KLEMF?

As I understand, I am the first person to be charged with the responsibility of being an advocate to promote and market the license plates, which support the foundation, as well as to reach out to corporate contributors and solicit contributions on behalf of the Kentucky Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation. In the past, I think that has been done by volunteers, and the foundation board wanted to move forward and expand that reach. My coming on board enables KLEMF and the board to reach further than they have in the past. I am looking forward to being an advocate for that and to have the time to spend working with the foundation and its goals and objectives.

What are some of your short-term goals for the foundation?

Obviously, I have to read into the past workings of the foundation and the accomplishments up to this point. I want to get up to speed with that particular portion and get to know the board members. I want to try, early on, to promote from within the law enforcement ranks the sale of the license plate. It is important to inform those in the law enforcement community, whether it be recruits or chiefs, that this foundation is not just there for line-of-duty deaths, but it is there to provide scholarships for 25 young people each year. It is there in the event of any emergency or financial hardship that officers have. We are a resource that can be counted on. And if we can build the foundation, then we can reach out and help more people.

I also want to go out and talk to the recruits and to the chiefs. We have a marketing plan to reach out to specific counties and regions of the state. Those are the first things that we are going to do. I would describe it as a crawl, then walk, then run approach. >>



PHOTO BY ELIZABETH THOMAS
IN MAY OF EACH YEAR, FAMILIES OF THOSE LOST IN THE LINE OF DUTY ARE HONORED DURING AN ANNUAL CEREMONY.



PHOTO BY KELLY FOREMAN
FOUR RECIPIENTS OF THE MORE THAN 170 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED BY KLEMF.



KENTUCKY LAW ENFORCEMENT MEMORIAL FOUNDATION LICENSE PLATE.

>> Have you gotten far enough into it to set realistic long-term goals?

I have some objectives that are outlined for me that I have been given from the KLEMF board. I am going to look at, and obviously concentrate on, those. Carrying out our short-term goals will be in the crawl stage. Reaching out to major contributors is a long-term goal. We hope to secure reoccurring contributions. So, overall, I will just look at a method to expand contributions and promote the foundation.

Since KLEMF is geared toward supporting Kentucky officers and their families, what is your plan for financially growing the foundation?

The resource that primarily supports the foundation, currently, is the license plate. I think we currently have a very small percentage of license plates, compared to all those issued within the commonwealth — there is a lot of competition out there. But I think many people are unaware that they are able to purchase law enforcement memorial tags. Most think you have to be in law enforcement, for some reason. So, we are going to promote awareness to advocate more sales of the license plate. There also will be a redesign of the plate in a couple of years.

While there is competition with our plate among the 45 to 50 other available plates, if you are involved with law enforcement or from a law enforcement background or family, then you can help your own family by promoting the KLEMF plate. That is the first thing.

Then there are some partnerships that I believe can be developed in state and local government that can be of benefit to the foundation. We want to promote partnerships, and we want to target major corporations looking for ways they can, perhaps, relieve their tax burden. If anyone knows of those corporations, I would be glad to discuss or talk with any of them in the future about contributing to the foundation.

How can law enforcement across the state get involved with helping the foundation?

We talk with the officers in basic training. We do that when they first come in. I think we

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probably need to have some encouragement beyond the basic training level, maybe in some of the advanced courses, then make sure that they are informed about the things that the foundation is about.

There are a number of people who do not know that the foundation can help if an officer has a personal financial tragedy. For example, one deputy I know in my home county, his house burned and the foundation provided him immediate assistance — a \$1,000 check. Others have serious illness in the family where the parents are unable to work — if they have a child who is hospitalized, for example. Many officers do not know that the money they put into the foundation can come back in the form of assistance to help them.

Many of them also do not know about the tuition assistance available through 25 scholarships each year. With support, maybe we could expand that amount and actually provide more scholarships. There are a number of ways that the officers can be involved.

I think one is being informed and telling their family. They are all participants in their communities. An officer in a local community sees hundreds of people each day, and they can be spokesmen or salesmen as well.

What are you most looking forward to by stepping into this position?

What I am most looking forward to is seeing a lot of the officers that I have met and worked with over the years, as well as those whom I have trained while at DOCJT as the Training Operations Division director and the two agencies for which I have worked. The many friends I have met in Kentucky law enforcement over the course of my career — I can see those folks and just renew those friendships and ask them to work with me in being advocates for the memorial foundation.

I want it to be successful — but I do not know to what degree or how long it will take to increase these things or get these contributions, so it is all basically

something new to me. Most people will tell you that I love a challenge. If it is a challenge and it is something that I know that I can do, then I look forward to it.

What do you see as some of the challenges you may face in meeting established goals for the foundation?

Right off the top, the economic conditions that we are facing currently are tough. Families have different needs and different demands, and I think immediately that is the thing that is a challenge. Prior to giving, people have to think about where they are going to spend their money and if they have any extra, what they are going to do with it. And I would say to law enforcement, this is one way that you can ensure that it comes back to you or comes back to the law enforcement family.

Where do you plan to start? Will you be traveling across the state to visit agencies to promote KLEMF?

In the marketing plan, there was a list of counties that were at a lower level in regards to license plate sales, so I am going to start with those areas. I am going to speak to the recruit classes, hopefully in the beginning and again at their family event before graduation. I want to speak with them and their families together to inform them about the foundation and what it is about.

I want to let them know that we hope that we never have to put another name on the monument, but there are other things that this foundation does that are very supportive of law enforcement. The travel will not be extensive, but it will be driven by the data that we have in the marketing survey.

I am just very grateful for the opportunity to work with a lot of close friends and to serve a very worthwhile purpose. Law enforcement, like I said, has always been my passion, so I look forward to renewing old acquaintances, seeing folks and promoting my new cause. That is why I am here. J

Abbie Darst can be reached at abbie.darst@ky.gov or (859) 622-6453.