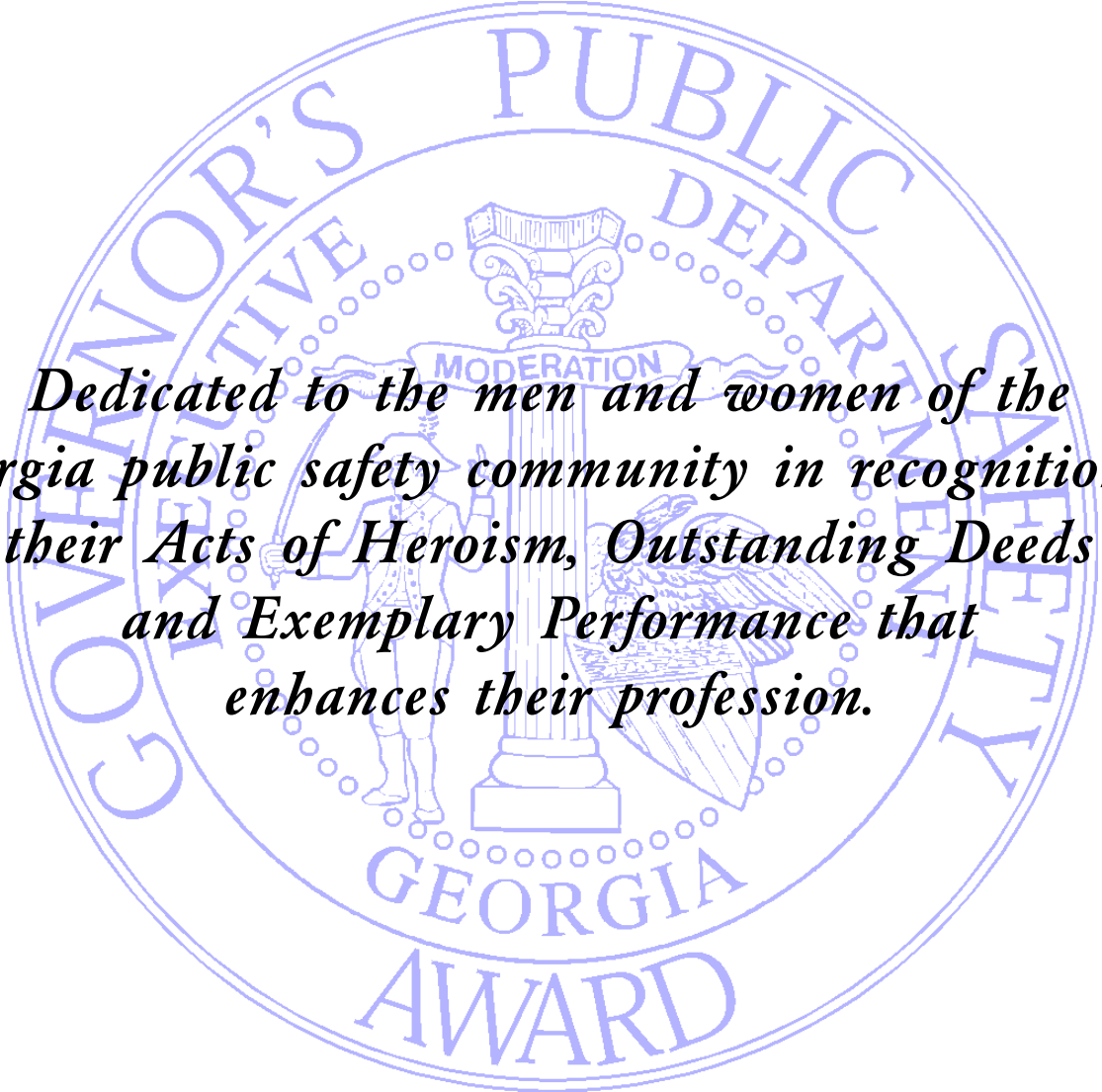


# 2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards

The seal is circular and features a central figure of a woman standing on a pedestal, holding a shield and a sword. Above her is a banner with the word "MODERATION". The outer ring of the seal contains the text "GOVERNOR'S PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT" at the top and "GEORGIA AWARD" at the bottom.

*Dedicated to the men and women of the  
Georgia public safety community in recognition of  
their Acts of Heroism, Outstanding Deeds  
and Exemplary Performance that  
enhances their profession.*

**Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Governor of the State of Georgia  
November 12, 2010  
10:00 AM**

**2010**  
**Governor's**  
**Public Safety Awards**  
**Ceremony**

**November 12, 2010**  
**10:00 AM**

**Prelude**

*Air National Guard Band of the South*

**Welcome**

*J. Dale Mann*  
*Director, Georgia Public Safety Training Center*

**National Anthem**

*Kelli Gilstrap*

**Invocation**

*Dr. Rick Lanford*  
*Senior Chaplain for Homeland Security*

**Introduction of the Governor**

*J. Dale Mann*

**Governor's Remarks**

*Honorable Sonny Perdue*  
*Governor of the State of Georgia*

**Award Honorees Presentation**

*Honorable Sonny Perdue*

*Narration - Randy Travis, Fox 5 News*

**Dedication Prayer**

*Dr. Rick Lanford*



**STATE OF GEORGIA**  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
ATLANTA 30334-0900

**Sonny Perdue**  
GOVERNOR



November 12, 2010

**GREETINGS:**

It is my great pleasure to extend a warm welcome for the 2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards.

Each year, this event has given us the opportunity to recognize the heroism and contributions of the public safety community in the protection of our citizens. They courageously step forward and lead in times of crisis. They guard against national and international terrorists, defend our children against sexual predators and protect our neighborhoods from fire, crime and chaos.

This year's award recipients reflect the commitment, sacrifice and bravery we have come to know from these outstanding professionals.

Today's event is my last official Public Safety Awards ceremony as Governor. It has been a privilege to honor each and everyone of you for your extraordinary service. You are among the finest in the country, and I salute you.

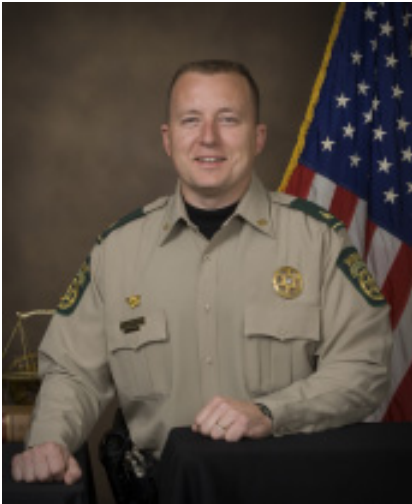
Sincerely,

Sonny Perdue

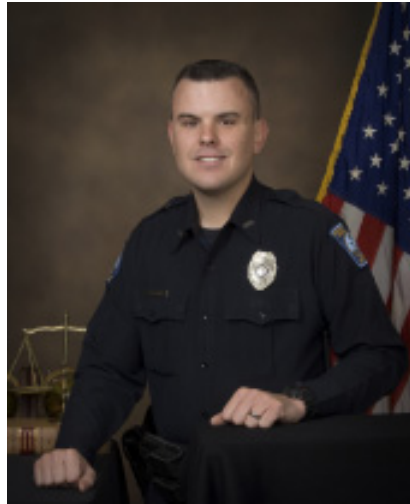
# ***2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees***

***Brett M. Dever, Douglas County Sheriff's Office  
Tully Yount and Billy Wallace, Douglasville Police Department***

## ***Act of Heroism***



***Brett M. Dever***



***Tully Yount***



***Billy Wallace***

On September 20, 2009, Officers Tully Yount and Billy Wallace were assigned to the area of I-20. Heavy rain throughout the night resulted in immense flooding.

Deputy Brett M. Dever was working a call at Annewakee Creek. Wallace and Yount had monitored radio traffic at the location and responded to assist Deputy Dever. Three persons, including a one-year-old child, had been washed from their vehicle and were now clinging to a tree. The Douglas County Fire Department was requested for the water rescue. A single engine responded with two fire fighters. DNR arrived and placed a boat in the water with a fire fighter and two DNR personnel. The boat capsized, causing the rescue personnel to become stranded too.

The situation now required the rescue of six persons. Wallace and Dever prepared to start working toward the victims with a rescue line. The rescue took over three hours and included Wallace and Yount venturing into the raging stream in the darkness four more times. All six persons were rescued. Yount and Wallace personally carried the one-year-old from the water. The intense weather claimed seven lives in Douglas County that night. Due to the quick and selfless actions of these three men, six lives were saved.

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# *2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees*

## ***David A. Bohannon and Gene Rankin University of Georgia Police Department***

### ***Act of Heroism***

On the morning of August 2, 2009, Corporal Gene Rankin was off-duty and on his way to work when he observed a tree lying in a parking lot and encircled by smoke. He stopped and discovered that a van had lost control and struck a tree. The vehicle was hidden by the tree and could not be seen from the roadway. The driver of the vehicle was semi-conscious, trapped, and was in danger of a fire that had started in the engine compartment.

Rankin did not have any emergency equipment in his personal vehicle and radioed the University of Georgia Police Department for assistance. He attempted to pull the driver from the vehicle but was unsuccessful. UGA Police Officer David A. Bohannon arrived on the scene with fire extinguishers and they prevented the flames from spreading further. After unsuccessful attempts in removing the driver from the side door, Rankin and Bohannon entered the van from the back doors and pulled him out.

Rankin could have assumed this was not a life-threatening incident and simply passed by, however, he took the initiative to ensure the public was not at risk and took immediate action. He and Bohannon risked their own safety and rescued a citizen who could have perished or been seriously injured.



***David A. Bohannon***



***Gene Rankin***

# *2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees*

## *Wayne Green and Greg Chastain Cornelia Police Department*

### *Act of Heroism*



*Wayne Green*



*Greg Chastain*

On the afternoon of August 8, 2009, a one-car accident occurred just outside of Cornelia. A vehicle had struck a telephone pole and then inverted into a pond. Habersham County, the agency receiving the call, requested Cornelia Police Department to be en route, as they would have a quicker response time.

Cornelia Police Officers Wayne Green and Greg Chastain responded. Arriving on the scene, they immediately rushed into the thick deep mud and water to assist. The passenger (the driver's mother) was in water up to her chin, and the driver was unconscious and entirely submerged. The pressure of the mud and water had the doors jammed closed and both were trapped inside. Both officers trekked through the mud to get to the vehicle and pried the door open, literally bending the door in half, and freed both victims. The daughter had no pulse or respirations, as she appeared to have drowned. Once they got both victims to shore, CPR was started on the daughter. Chastain was able to get her pulse and respirations reestablished. Both women were taken to medical facilities for serious and life threatening injuries.

Without consideration for their safety, Officers Green and Chastain rescued these ladies, knowing they could drown in the process.

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# *2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees*

## ***Mike Flowers Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services***

### ***Act of Heroism***

On September 21, 2009, Captain Mike Flowers was evaluating area flooding when he noticed a vehicle that had become stranded while attempting to cross a bridge. The water was rising and the vehicle was being pushed across the roadway. He positioned his truck near the water's edge and got a winch on the front of the truck to secure the vehicle. Firefighter Barry Lewis and Battalion Chief George Lehner were in the area, by chance, and responded to the scene.

Flowers reported that the driver and her two children, one of them an infant, were still in the vehicle. Using Lehner's personal equipment, they secured a rope to the back of Flowers' Personal Flotation Device (PFD) and he proceeded into the waters with the winch cable. They attempted to use the winch to pull the vehicle to safety. However, due to the force of the water, that was not possible.

Flowers took flotation devices to the vehicle, and helped the occupants put them on. After the children were secured, he went back for the mother. He was at extreme risk while making these extrications. Without immediate intervention and quick thinking on Captain Flowers' part, the vehicle would have certainly been swept downstream, along with the mother and two children.



***Mike Flowers***

# ***2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees***

## ***Jeremy Joseph DeJames and Anthony W. Helms Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services***

### ***Act of Heroism***



***Jeremy Joseph DeJames***



***Anthony W. Helms***

In the early morning of September 21, 2009, Truck 14 had just completed an assignment assisting Paulding County with a water rescue in Hiram, Georgia, when they received another call in Cobb County. Due to rising floodwaters, it took more than an hour to reach the scene. Upon arrival, the victim could be heard screaming for help, although they could not see her in the dark.

Engineer DeJames and Firefighter Helms launched an inflatable boat. As they neared the victim, the boat turned on its side. Helms was pinned against small trees, a barbed wire fence, and other debris. His head was underwater, he could not touch the bottom, and he was facing upstream into the current. Both of them working together got Helms unpinned and got the boat righted.

They then went downstream and reached the victim, who was hanging on to a tree. She was cold, exhausted, and terrified. She had reportedly been in the water for several hours. Due to DeJames and Helms' brave and selfless actions, the victim was rescued.

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# *2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees*

## **Scott Robertson Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Services**

### *Act of Heroism*

On the morning of September 21, 2009, a woman encountered flood waters rising quickly and escaped to the roof of her car for safety. She spent 30 minutes atop her vehicle before help arrived. A crew of firefighters arrived and began rescue efforts. Firefighter Scott Robertson was slowly making his way towards the woman when he noticed that she had lost hold of her vehicle and was being swept away. He immediately swam across the river, struggling with quick waters.

Just as Robertson secured the woman, he caught a rope thrown by a fellow crew member. Despite an injury to the hand, Robertson continued to hold on to the woman and the rope, even as they were forced underwater. Making quick decisions and smart judgments, Robertson and the woman were successfully retrieved from the water moments before the current swept them away.

Because of Robertson's brave actions, a life was spared that day. The words of the rescued victim best sum up the true spirit of Scott Robertson, his courage, and its impact on the lives of others: "I hope that Scott never has to put his life on the line again, but I know he will be willing to do so."



**Scott Robertson**

# *2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees*

## *Mark Bracewell Georgia State Patrol*

### *Act of Heroism*



*Mark Bracewell*

On October 11, 2009, Senior Trooper Mark Bracewell was notified of a serious traffic crash on an entrance ramp to Interstate 16. While en route to the scene, he heard an operator with the Laurens County 911 Center reporting that someone was trapped in a burning vehicle.

He arrived on the scene and found that the driver's foot was pinned beneath the brake pedal. He extinguished the flames then ran around to the passenger side and observed a young girl with serious injuries, who was also trapped. Due to the extent of her injuries and the entrapment, Bracewell quickly determined that he could not do anything to extricate the girl. Two Laurens County deputies arrived and he and the two deputies pulled the man from behind the wheel with his foot still trapped. When the fire department arrived, the driver was extricated and transported to medical facilities.

Unfortunately, the driver's young granddaughter perished in this tragic crash, but the quick and heroic actions of Trooper Bracewell and the Laurens County deputies prevented the driver of the burning vehicle from dying that day.

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# *2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees*

## ***Keith Canup Georgia State Patrol***

### ***Act of Heroism***

On Wednesday, November 25, 2009, Captain Keith Canup was on patrol in the Gainesville area. Captain Canup drove up on a motor vehicle crash on GA 11 in Hall County. A van was on fire and the driver was still inside the vehicle. The driver was revving the accelerator, and it was later learned that he was experiencing diabetic shock.

Captain Canup put the fire out twice with his extinguisher, but the van rolled approximately 800 feet, at which point the flames flared back up. Captain Canup broke a window out and he and Hall County Fire Lieutenant Casey Ramsey were able to pull the driver from the car while he struggled against them.

Both Captain Canup and Lt. Ramsey put their own lives at risk in order to prevent the driver from burning to death. As a direct result of their courageous actions, the driver survived and received the medical attention he needed.



***Keith Canup***

# *2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees*

## *Omar C. Sanders Macon Police Department*

### *Act of Heroism*



*Omar C. Sanders*

On November 29, 2009, Officer Omar C. Sanders responded to what was dispatched as a burglary call. Upon arrival at the scene, he noticed smoke and fire coming from an apartment.

Officer Sanders radioed the E-911 center that an apartment was on fire. He then entered the apartment, which had become fully engulfed in flames. Officer Sanders proceeded through the apartment and found three individuals suffering from smoke inhalation.

After escorting the residents to safety, Officer Sanders heard more screaming coming from another apartment. Officer Sanders tried to enter the apartment through the front door, but it was locked. He forced his way in and found another woman, who had been overcome by smoke and was unconscious. He carried her outside to safety, where he was met by arriving firefighters.

All four victims were treated for smoke inhalation and released from the hospital, able to return safely to their families. Officer Sanders displayed remarkable heroism as he made his way into a burning apartment building without any of the protective equipment and gear used by firefighters, saving four lives in the process.

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# *2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees*

## ***Billy Thurmond Dawson County Emergency Services***

### ***Contribution to Profession***

Billy Thurmond began his career with Dawson County EMS in 1980. He went on to achieve his Paramedic certification in 1985, and was appointed Director of Dawson County EMS in 1987.

Under his leadership, Dawson County EMS was awarded Georgia EMS Service of the Year in 2000. Thurmond was selected in 2002 to head the new Emergency Services Department for Dawson County, and was charged with merging the Volunteer Fire Services, Emergency Medical Services, and Emergency Management.

Thurmond was instrumental in the development of the original 911 Advisory Board for Dawson County on which he still serves. He also serves on the Lanier Technical College's EMS Advisory Board. He is a state certified firefighter and is recognized as a Master Certified Emergency Manager by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency.



***Billy Thurmond***

Thurmond was a founding member of Safe Kids Dawson County and has been a Certified Child Safety Seat Educator since 2001. He has served for over 20 years as a member of the Region II EMS Advisory Council and is the Chairman of the Region II EMS Directors Association. He is a member of GAMES, GA State Firefighters Association, Emergency Management Association of Georgia, and the GA Coroner's Association.

He has served as Interim County Manager for Dawson County and since 1997, has served as Deputy Coroner. Thurmond is Chairman of the Safety Committee and Health and Wellness Committee for the County, and represents Dawson County on the Public Safety and Judicial Committee for the SCCG.

Thurmond encourages his employees to be active in leadership roles and many employees are Board members and award winners because of his example and encouragement.

# *2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees*

## **Christopher A. Bish Georgia Bureau of Investigation**

### *Contribution to Profession*



*Christopher A. Bish*

Agent Christopher Bish has a distinguished career of 36 years in law enforcement, with 26 of those being with the GBI. He is a resident of Reynolds Plantation, and has served that area of Georgia with distinction for many years. He has been the lead agent on many criminal investigations, including the sting operation that led to the arrest and conviction of Greene County Police Chief Lawrence Briscoe on federal drug charges.

He served six years in the Illinois Army National Guard, and received an achievement award for excellence in training. He joined the Chicago Police Department in 1971, then the Barrington Hills, Illinois Police Department in 1973, and founded the Detective Unit in 1977. He joined the GBI in 1984, and is now Assistant Special Agent in Charge with the Athens Field Office.

Agent Bish has an extensive training record and holds numerous certifications, including Bomb Technician, POST Instructor, Haz-Mat Technician, Clandestine Laboratory Technician, SWAT Team Element Leader, Audio Enhancement Technician, Physical Security Specialist, and Countermeasures Specialist.

He has received numerous commendations for exemplary performance and an Award for Life Saving. He is a Member of the National Technical Investigator's Association and the International Association of Bomb Technicians and Investigators.

Agent Bish has greatly contributed to the training of younger agents. His integrity and unselfish commitment to sharing his knowledge is above and beyond the call of duty. Agent Bish is retiring this year, and will leave a remarkable contribution to law enforcement and the state of Georgia.

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# *2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees*

***Dennis J. Thayer***  
***Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services***

## ***Contribution to Profession***

Dennis J. Thayer has over 24 years of service with Cobb and Cherokee Counties. He is currently an Engineer for Cobb County, and was promoted to Lieutenant on September 5, 2010. He received the Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs Presidential Award in 2009. He also received the Department of Human Resources Region III Award of Excellence, along with other crew members, for the rescue of a Cobb Deputy Sheriff.

Thayer has worked with the Georgia Mutual Aid Group (GMAG) for 5 years, currently serving as Deputy Chief of Statewide Operations. He has had various jobs with GMAG, including Mutual Aid Duty Officer, and logistics for Fire Rescue International in 2007 (planned again for 2012), logistics for the management team for south Georgia Wildland fires, Atlanta deck collapse, and a statewide hurricane drill.

Thayer served as Local Assistance State Team coordinator for Georgia, Technical Advisor for RD3 mutual aid program for International Association of Fire Chiefs, and has spent numerous hours working with families filing applications for Line of Duty Death benefits. He has coordinated five of the last eight Line of Duty Death funerals in the state, and created the Joey Turner Memorial fund to assist families until benefits are paid. Thayer's public safety service, and his compassion towards families in difficult times, are truly an asset to the state of Georgia.



***Dennis J. Thayer***

# ***2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees***

## ***William "Bill" Hitchens, Jr. Georgia Department of Public Safety***

### ***Contribution to Profession***



***William "Bill" Hitchens, Jr.***

Colonel Bill Hitchens' career in government service spans more than 45 years. He served four years in the Marine Corps, and served 28 years with the Georgia State Patrol.

Throughout most of his career, he maintained a parallel career with the Coast Guard Reserve, including two tours as the Executive Officer of the Coast Guard Reserve Unit Air Station in Savannah.

During the 1996 Olympic Games, Hitchens was a Law Enforcement Shift Commander, responsible for all state law enforcement personnel at the many venues in Atlanta and across the state. After retiring from the Georgia State Patrol in 1997, he worked three

years as a law enforcement consultant, where his primary responsibility was working with the 30 federally funded multi-jurisdictional drug task forces in Georgia.

In 2003, Governor Perdue selected Col. Hitchens to be the first director of the Georgia Office of Homeland Security. In 2004, he was named Executive Commander of the Group of Eight (G-8) Public Safety Command, and was in charge of all state efforts to coordinate law enforcement and public safety operations for the Summit held on Sea Island.

Also in 2004, Col. Hitchens was appointed the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Safety, and the Colonel of the State Patrol.

A graduate of Georgia Southern University and the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia, Col. Hitchens has also accumulated hundreds of specialized training hours in the military, in law enforcement, and in homeland security.

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# *2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees*

Col. Hitchens served a year as the state president of the Georgia Chapter of the FBI National Academy Associates and two years as the state president of the Peace Officers' Association of Georgia. Additionally, he has served as a voting member of the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council, where he has previously served as one of the three elected members of the POST Executive Committee.

For his civic, military and law enforcement efforts throughout his career, Hitchens has received numerous awards. The Georgia Senate recognized his leadership, service, and accomplishments through a 2010 resolution that was published by the Secretary of the Senate. Colonel Hitchens has served the people of Georgia, and the nation's law enforcement community, with honor and dignity.

## ***David N. Bradley Forsyth County Fire Department***

### ***Contribution to Profession***

David N. Bradley is a retired fire lieutenant with the DeKalb County Fire/Rescue Department. Even in his well deserved retirement, he has continued with his passion of coordinating the Forsyth County Fire Department Honor Guard. In 2009, he personally organized and coordinated 71 honor guard details, many of which were multi-day public safety funerals. This effort accumulated 3,269 man-hours in a one-year period alone.

In addition to his busy schedule travelling the state with the honor guard, he is the Georgia Mutual Aid Group representative to the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, and represents Georgia each autumn as the point-of-contact for the annual memorial weekend in Emmitsburg, Maryland. He fills key leadership roles throughout this weekend, ensuring families of lost brothers and sisters receive the highest respect afforded.



***David N. Bradley***

# *2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees*

## *Vernon M. Keenan Georgia Bureau of Investigation*

### *Contribution to Profession*



*Vernon M. Keenan*

GBI Director Vernon M. Keenan has served the state of Georgia for over 38 years. He graduated from Valdosta State College in 1972, and joined the DeKalb County Police Department. In 1973, he graduated from the GBI Basic Agent Class and served as a Special Agent until 1981. He attended the FBI National Academy in 1979. From 1995 to 1997, Keenan participated in the first Georgia Law Enforcement Command College, through which he earned his Master of Public Administration degree.

Keenan was instrumental in the publication of “A Law Enforcement Officer’s Guide to Open Records in Georgia,” a handbook that has been distributed to hundreds of officers throughout the state.

Since its inception in 2004, Keenan has been instrumental in the formation of the Georgia Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program. The CIT program has provided training to over 2,000 Georgia law enforcement officers from 150 agencies.

Keenan has served as the Director of the GBI since January 9, 2003. During his tenure as Director, the GBI worked with local law enforcement agencies to investigate the disappearance of Ms. Meredith Hope Emerson. In an unprecedented criminal investigative effort involving many agencies, Gary Michael Hilton was arrested and pled guilty to the murder of Ms. Emerson within thirty days of her disappearance.

In 2004, during the G-8 Summit at Sea Island, Keenan served as a member of the State Homeland Security Central Command. The Summit was very successful, with no injuries or property damage, unlike previous G-8 Summits.

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# *2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Honorees*

Keenan has been the leader in the formation of the Georgia Terrorism Intelligence Project. In 2004, the GBI was given the funding to develop and implement a statewide, multi-agency, anti-terrorism program, the purpose of which was to significantly improve Georgia law enforcement's ability to protect citizens, property and infrastructure from threats of terrorism.

For his many contributions to local law enforcement, Director Keenan was awarded the prestigious award commonly referred to as the "Chief of the Year" by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police. Because of his outstanding service to the state, Georgia Trend Magazine named him one of the "100 Most Influential Georgians."

# 2010 Governor's Public Safety Awards Committee

**J. Dale Mann, Chairman**

Georgia Public Safety Training Center

**India S. Aycock**

Georgia Department of Corrections

**Woodrow Blue**

Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police

**Scott Carter**

Georgia State Firefighters' Association

**Bert Flewellen**

State Board of Pardons & Parole

**Mike Fordham**

Georgia Bureau of Investigations

**David Frazier**

Georgia Fraternal Order of Police

**David Kimbrell**

Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs

**Mark C. McLeod**

GDPS, Motor Carrier Compliance Division

**Lyn Pardue**

Georgia Firefighter Standards & Training Council

**Gene Pope**

Georgia Sheriffs' Association

**Walter Rabon**

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

**Joe Stiles**

Police Benevolent Association of Georgia

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Georgia Association of Emergency Medical Services

**Ken Vance**

Peace Officer Standards & Training Council

**Billy Watson**

DHR/Emergency Medical Services

**Gordy Wright**

Georgia Department of Public Safety