



April 3, 2018

Values in Action

These are the comments which I made to our Annual Department Awards Ceremony on 29 March 2018:

"We are here today to recognize and honor people who have especially distinguished themselves over the past year. People who serve in an agency full of people who regularly distinguish themselves. People in this Department, those who carry badges and those who do not, show a level of dedication which is recognized and respected throughout the state and the region. It is a level of dedication which tremendously benefits the residents of Pierce County.

Does this mean we are a perfect agency? No it does not. But I have worked for five different agencies. And I have worked among dozens of others throughout the United States. I have never worked with better, stronger, more dedicated people.

Today we acknowledge and honor the strength of character and resolution of action which makes the Pierce County Sheriff's Department what it is.

We are here today to recognize 48 people. Among them is Deputy Daniel McCartney who chose to intervene to stop perpetrators in a home invasion robbery. As well as those who assisted him after he had been critically wounded and a chaplain who guided the McCartney family through the terrible loss of a husband and father.

All of the 48 people receiving awards advanced our Department Mission which is "To protect life and property, to uphold rights and to build stronger, more civil and livable communities partnering with the people we serve." And, they moved us closer to our ultimate mission which is Doing Justice and Undoing Injustice.

They displayed our Core Values of Integrity, Responsibility, Respect, Courage and Compassion. Values. Now there is a term which seems almost old fashioned. In today's civic and business and political environment, we might ask "Where do we find real values in America?"

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If you want to see real values in action, then look at the people we acknowledge today. Because values of Integrity and Responsibility and Respect and Courage and Compassion are alive and well in the way they serve this community.

We know that this is a difficult time to carry-out our mission. This is a time when we face regular challenges to what we do and how we do it. This is a time when our demand is growing locally. We do not live in a sleepy little rural county. We serve in a large, complex urbanized county with more than its share of crime.

We have seen a spike in serious crime over the last 12 weeks. While I do not expect this spike to continue, our large volume of work is likely to grow as the population of the County grows. Through it all, some people tell us that we have a difficult, and thankless and heart-wrenching job. To be sure, we have all encountered hard and heart-wrenching incidents. We all have stories. But do not ever view us as victims. We do what we do because we have volunteered for and accepted a special level of responsibility.

We have all asked for the privilege of standing up for people in the communities we serve. We have asked for the difficult and complex and absolutely necessary work of making a moral difference in the community.

True, this involves exposing ourselves to risk. It involves sorting out the right thing to do often under chaotic, and, too often, under very dangerous circumstances. Is it a hard job? Oh yes it is. It is at once difficult and can be heart-wrenching. But first and foremost it is a deeply honorable privilege.

Today, you will hear about people who rise above challenges. People who, often, don't have time or resources or sufficient staffing but they stand up and make a difference anyway. They work long hours, they stretch themselves to the limit. They face all of this in order to avert crisis, to provide help and to save lives.

Today you will hear about people who have stepped up on behalf of others. People who, in the face of difficulty, do tremendous things. People who show tremendous dedication and heart on a regular basis; on the street and in the jail and at all points in between. Today you will hear about honor, and hope and how our people translate values into action.”