



# badge of leadership

by Audrey R. Browka

**J**ust like many young boys, Patrick M. Gallivan '82 grew up admiring his father. A 21-year veteran of the State Police, Richard Gallivan retired from the “force” a very-well-respected Captain. The father of seven children, Captain Gallivan worked long hours, but always managed to find time for his kids even if it meant taking them to the police academy to play in the gym with the children of other officers.

Witnessing his father’s commitment to family and community service, it is not surprising that Patrick would follow in his father’s footsteps. But the man who now carries the title “Sheriff” Patrick Gallivan did not always imagine himself in the position he holds today.

Patrick M. Gallivan '82

Pat came to Canisius in 1979 as a physical education major. In fact, he is quick to admit that his first passion is sports. Whether playing on a team, coaching players or teaching young athletes, Pat's love of sports naturally led him to pursue a career in physical education. However, his interest in law enforcement grew equally passionate during his college years

and compelled him to take the state police exam, during his junior year at Canisius.

"I thought if I scored high enough on the exam I would then be in the position to make the choice as to whether I wanted

to pursue a career in law enforcement or in phys-ed."

Not surprisingly, Pat scored extremely well on the state police exam and was then faced with a difficult decision. Knowing full well that a career in law enforcement would take his life in a completely different direction than phys-ed, Pat spent most of his senior year weighing his options.

"When you're young, you don't really know what you want to do with your life. When it ultimately came time to make a decision, the scales tipped in favor of the job with the state police – probably because I grew up with it."

And so began Pat Gallivan's well-noted career in law enforcement. Following graduation, he headed off to the state police academy in Albany for six months of intense physical and academic training, which was followed by six months of field training. After becoming a patrol trooper at the State Police barracks in Batavia, Pat earned a master's degree in criminal justice from SUNY Albany. His commitment to the force propelled him through the ranks. During his first 15 years, he served as an

undercover narcotics officer, sergeant, and lieutenant before being appointed captain of the Clarence barracks. Devoted to his work in law enforcement, Pat says he always envisioned spending his entire career with the state police, until someone suggested he consider an even higher-ranking position.



Sheriff Gallivan at a news conference discussing the new dress code at the Erie County Holding Center

"Several years back, a good friend of mine recommended that I run for sheriff of Erie County. I thought he was absolutely crazy! I never thought about leaving the state police. But he kept it up and in time, I started

to seriously consider the possibility."

Once again, Pat Gallivan would have to make a decision that could possibly change not only the direction of his life, but also the lives of his wife, Mary Pat, and their two children, Jenna and Conor. The decision seemed simple though, once Pat began to fully understand how the sheriff's position provided an extraordinary opportunity to enhance the safety and well-being of the community.

"When I started listing the pro's and con's of running for office, I found I could do more as sheriff than I could do in my position with the state police. That might sound a little selfish, but it was something that was very important to me. The benefits to our family and being able to have a direct impact on

the community where we raise our kids, were the reasons I decided to run for sheriff."

Of course, his 1997 campaign was a success and on December 31 of that same year, Patrick Gallivan became Sheriff Patrick Gallivan. He replaced the retiring Sheriff Tom Higgins. However, that first day on the job for the new Sheriff Gallivan was a real eye-opener.

"It was like 'Wow.' I can honestly say I had no real expectations going into the job. But, at the same time, I can tell you that if I had expectations going in, I could have never imagined how complex and how comprehensive the Sheriff's Department is and the role that it plays in the criminal justice system."

The Erie County Sheriff's Department employs more than 750 deputies in four areas of service; traditional law enforcement, civil law enforcement, courthouse security and security at the Erie County Holding Center. With so many specific areas of service, Sheriff Gallivan said it was critical for him to establish a vision for the Sheriff's Department – one that would give equal billing to crime prevention as well as enforcement.

"During my campaign, I went into just about every neighborhood in Erie County. I attended lawn fetes, rotary clubs and ethnic festivals and found the majority of people had the same

concerns I did, as a husband and a father. Essentially, people are concerned about drug and alcohol abuse, the violence that the proliferation of drugs has brought about, family violence, juvenile violence and highway safety."



Sheriff Gallivan swears in Junior Deputies

Working from that outline, Sheriff Gallivan enlisted a team of people to help him put his vision on paper. Together, they implemented SHIELD 2002 – a proactive



Sheriff Gallivan at Child Abuse Awareness Day, March 1998

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plan that incorporates a number of initiatives to actively address the primary concerns of the community.

In order to execute SHIELD 2002, Sheriff Gallivan realized he had to marshal the enthusiasm of his deputies and various community leaders. It was a relatively simple task, because he put forth a vision that people were excited about.

“Our goal is to tackle the concerns of the community in two different ways; through strict enforcement and prevention through education. The idea is not to throw hundreds of thousands of dollars at the problem, but to implement a community policing philosophy in which law enforcement works together with elected officials, the education community, the business community and the

religious community.”

With community leaders and sheriff’s deputies on board, a variety of new initiatives were created, each aimed at a different

**S** Stamping out Drug and Alcohol Abuse

**H** Highway Safety

**I** Integrated Community Policing

**E** Eliminating Family Violence

**L** Law and Order (Fighting Violence & Juvenile Crime)

**D** Departmental Reform

area of crime prevention. The Student Ambassador Program is one of the most successful. It teams sheriff’s deputies with middle and high school students to establish a drug and alcohol free environment. The Sheriff’s Department also partnered with a Boy Scouts Explorer Program to educate teenagers

on life skills such as honesty, integrity, discipline and responsibility. Although these programs have only been in place for one year, Sheriff Gallivan says the response has been tremendous.

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That then becomes infectious.”

Sheriff Gallivan credits his mother, Grace, for instilling in her family the core values, which he hopes to pass on to his own children. Pat says he also learned from his mother the importance of commitment to one’s community. It is a leadership trait that was enforced by his Canisius education and has been instrumental in his job as sheriff.

“I don’t, nor does any one person, have the market on ideas. The people doing the job on the front lines each and every day, the ones actually delivering the service to the community, they offer the best ideas on how we can accomplish our goal.”

By responding to the needs and concerns of his team and his community, Sheriff Gallivan has become a well respected leader throughout Erie County. Like his father before him, Sheriff Gallivan is continuing the tradition of keeping his community safe and educating others on the role they should play.

“I think if you have a strong sense of core values, you know the direction you want to go in. If you are always pursuing those things that are right, for the right reasons, then I don’t believe you can be wrong. Every good leader has that characteristic.” ■