

## **Sheriff's Lieutenant Recognized by Governor's Office**

November 7, 2012

The Hall County Sheriff's Office is proud to announce that Lieutenant Gene Joy, Commander of the School Based Services Unit, has been named by Governor Nathan Deal's office as the 2012 recipient of the "Outstanding Contribution to Profession" award.

Governor's Deal's accompanying letter reads:

We are here to recognize the courageous efforts of Georgia's public safety community who are committed to achieve our most basic expectation of government: to keep our neighborhoods and communities safe.

Georgia's public safety professionals protect us from fire, crime and chaos. They are leaders in our communities during times of crisis. They guard us against international and domestic terrorists. They defend our children from being victimized by sexual predators.

Where you find commitment, you will also find sacrifice. As you review the backgrounds and accounts of this year's award recipients, I hope you will note the dedication and courage each have exhibited through acts of heroism and outstanding contributions to their professions.

It is a privilege for me to pay tribute to these public safety professionals. Each of them is individually reflective of Georgia's most admirable virtues.

Sincerely,  
Nathan Deal

"Lieutenant Joy is an immeasurable asset to the Hall County Sheriff's Office," said Sheriff Steve Cronic. "He has an incredible desire to serve as a positive figure in the lives of our community's youth, as demonstrated through his leadership of the School Based Services Unit and the innovative educational campaigns he has implemented throughout our school system. He is well deserving of this award, and we congratulate him on his achievements."

The Governor's award citation reads as follows:

Lieutenant Gene Joy has repeatedly distinguished himself through his service to the citizens of Georgia since he began his career with the Hall County Sheriff's Office 25 years ago. Nowhere is his dedication to service more evident than in his work with the youth of his community. Joy became a Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) officer in 1992, facilitating the DARE curriculum on a full-time basis in schools throughout Hall County. By 2001, having been promoted through the ranks because of his significant contribution, Joy became the Lieutenant in charge of the DARE program. He went on to hold the office of president, as well as other positions, on the board of the DARE Officers' Association. During his tenure with the DARE program, Joy reached more than 40,000 children.

In 2001, with Sheriff Steve Cronic's assistance and support, Joy started the Hall County Sheriff's Office Summer Camp Program, which provides a safe environment for children to meet, have fun, and form special friendships before entering middle school, while also teaching them about gang awareness,

stranger danger, and other issues associated with personal safety. Nearly 3,000 children have participated in the program since its inception.

In 2004, in response to the growing need for lessons on internet safety and bullying, Joy played a key role in revising the DARE curriculum to establish the Hall County Sheriff's Office's ADVANCE (Avoiding Drugs Violence and Negative Choices Early) program. The ADVANCE program emphasized social competence and conflict resolution, along with a focus on positive alternatives to drugs, violence and gangs. Today, the ADVANCE program is taught to every fifth grade class in the Hall County School System.

In 2007, the School Resource Officer (SRO) program was established. The program assigns officers to various middle and high schools to serve as law enforcement officers, counselors and educators who provide guidance and information to students, their families, and the school staff while acting as links to support services both inside and outside the school environment. Together with ADVANCE, the two programs made up the School Based Programs Unit under the command of Joy.

In 2010, Joy developed the Fatal Vision program for delivery to Hall County junior and senior high school students. In addition to focusing on the deadly effects of drinking and driving, the Fatal Vision program uses a very emotional and powerful skit to illustrate the dangers inherent with texting while driving. Joy has honorably served the state of Georgia. His contributions to the Hall County Sheriff's Office and the youth of this community have been significant, extremely noteworthy and enduring.