

*Florida Law Enforcement Officers' Hall of Fame*

**2018 Inductees**



Robert Blackburn began his career in 1941 as a deputy with the Florida Highway Patrol before being elected Hillsborough County Sheriff in 1952, where he served 12 years. He was a member of the Florida Sheriffs Association serving as president from 1964-1965. Blackburn successfully lobbied for legislation creating the Florida Law Enforcement Academy, established professional standards for law enforcement and standardized the sheriff's badge and vehicles. He was instrumental in the creation of the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches. From 1968 to 1978, he was a member of the Florida House of Representatives, where he was considered "the voice of law enforcement." In 1979, he was appointed interim commissioner of FDLE where he showed strong leadership, even though his tenure only lasted only a few months. He died in 1997, and will be remembered as a pioneer in modern Florida law enforcement.



Donald Eslinger began his career as a radio dispatcher in 1978 before advancing through the ranks as a patrol deputy, investigator, watch commander and special weapons and tactics team leader with the Seminole County Sheriff's Office. He was appointed Seminole County Sheriff on January 1, 1991, and elected in 1992. He was subsequently reelected until his retirement in 2017. He served 38 years with the Seminole County Sheriff's Office, and is the longest serving sheriff in Seminole County history. His tenure as sheriff was marked with drastic reductions in crime along with advocacy for mental health and youth programs. Contributions to youth include founding Kids House, starting the annual "Shop with the Sheriff" and "Christmas Village" events, assuming responsibility for child protective services from the state and creating a successful civil citation diversion program. Under his leadership, the agency grew from 539 positions with a \$25.8 million budget to 1,343 positions with a \$123.5 million budget.



Ernest George served his entire career with the West Palm Beach Police Department from 1975 to 2005. He was a D.A.R.E. officer educating elementary school children on the dangers of drugs in the late 1980s and was promoted to sergeant in January 1996. He also served as president of the Palm Beach County Police Benevolent Association (PBA) from 1987 to 2006 and president of the Florida PBA from 1996 to 2006. As PBA president, he achieved numerous legislative enhancements creating uniform guidelines for the use of dart-firing stun guns, creating the FRS Deferred Retirement Option Program and enhancing law enforcement officer death benefits. His passion to raise the standards for law enforcement led him to be appointed to the Criminal Justice and Standards Training Commission in 2001, serving as Commission chairman from 2010 to 2013.

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Frederick Maas is a 43-year veteran of law enforcement, who continues to serve his community today. He began his career with the Miami-Dade Police Department in 1975 and served in multiple roles until he retired in 1998. Later that year, he was hired by Sunny Isles Beach Police Department and promoted to chief in October 1999. He was appointed by Governor Jeb Bush to the Violent Crime and Drug Control Council in 2000. After years of receiving the “Outstanding Law Enforcement Leadership Award” from the Dade County Police Benevolent Association, they named the award in his honor. “The Fred Maas Law Enforcement Leadership Award” honors individuals who embody leadership, inspire those around them and make a difference in the lives of those they serve. In 2008, he received the highest law enforcement award from the Vatican being named a Knight of St. Sylvester by Pope Benedict XVI.



James Smith began his career in 1964 as the first African-American police officer at the Miami Beach Police Department. At the age of 34, he was one of the oldest rookies in his class. He earned the reputation of being professional, sincere and empathetic towards others. He was promoted to sergeant in 1971 and rose through the ranks. In 1989, he was promoted to Major, the position he held until he retired in September 1990. He worked in or supervised every major unit at the department throughout his career and helped create a youth group for at-risk boys in the Liberty City area. In his honor, the Miami Beach Police Department named their community room the Major James W. Smith Community Room. Smith, who died in 2017, overcame the racial divide in America to inspire others with his fair but firm leadership.