

The Lt. John F. Finn Scholarship Fund in Criminal Justice



When his former colleagues in the Albany Police Department speak of the late Lt. John F. Finn, they recall a man dedicated to his community and to his family. They remember the commitment to public service, the integrity,

the kindness and the sense of humor exemplified by this highly respected 13-year APD veteran, who died in February 2004, seven weeks after sustaining gunshot wounds in the line of duty.

A native of Smithtown, N.Y., Lt. Finn attended the University at Albany prior to joining the APD in 1991. Two years later, he became a detective in the department's juvenile unit; he was promoted to sergeant in 1996 and to lieutenant in 2001. Lt. Finn commanded the force's Civil Disturbance Unit and served on the Emergency Services Team. He also played a key role in forming the Albany Police Department's Children and Family Services Unit.

In 1998 then-Sergeant Finn reached out to the School of Criminal Justice and formed a collaborative relationship that continues today. Professor Rob Worden recalls that John Finn brought to the collaboration "a keen aptitude for data analysis, an abiding faith in the capacity of police officers to make a positive difference, and a vision of policing that included proactive, data-driven, and unconventional strategies to address problems of public safety." Professor Worden adds: "John understood the potential of systematic analysis to enrich the jobs of police officers and to enhance the value of the services that they provide. He intuitively understood what more than three decades of experi-

mentation in police agencies reveals: that policing is more effective when it is strategically focused, and that individual officers are both more effective and more satisfied with their jobs when their departments are structured to nurture and capitalize on these human assets."

Policing, observes Lt. Finn's widow, Maura McNulty-Finn, is a profession of stories. After her husband's death, she was particularly moved by one story told to her by one of her husband's colleagues—about how John first encountered 'Jim,' a homeless man, in a local park. Jim was sitting on a curb next to a bicycle loaded with what seemed to be all his worldly possessions when John pulled up in a police car, got out, and came and sat down beside him. Relaxing, Jim handed John a bottle in a bag and invited him to help himself. John sniffed it and laughed. 'No thanks,' he replied. 'I'm working.' Then John invited Jim to get in the car. He put Jim's bike carefully in the trunk, along with the various bags that held his things, and then held the door for him. "The front door,' Jim emphasized, 'as if I were a friend.'

Lt. Finn drove to a downtown shelter, chatting all the while and pulled up in front of a shelter. Jim felt safe enough to stay in the car while John went in. 'Lt. Finn trusted me,' he said. When John came back to the car, he asked Jim to come inside for awhile. Jim agreed. John carefully unloaded Jim's bike and his other belongings and brought them inside. The two men talked a bit longer and then John left. 'I never saw him again,' Jim went on, 'but after that, I was never as afraid. I'm not as afraid anymore.'

Because of the many exemplary contributions that Lt. John F. Finn made to the community during his years with the Albany Police Department, the University at Albany's School of Criminal Justice and Sigma Lambda Sigma fraternity seek to establish a scholarship fund in his name to benefit graduate students.

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Scholarship Fund in
Criminal Justice:
A University at Albany
School of Criminal Justice
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MAIL THIS CARD TO:

The University at Albany Foundation
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