



## 2008 "George Almond" Officer of the Year Named Detective George Daniels is the Recipient of 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Award



*Retired Detective George Almond and 2008 Winner  
George Daniels*

The PBA has long held a reputation for educating the public about the daily work of law enforcement officers and the sacrifices they make to keep their communities safe. The PBA has also worked tirelessly to develop relationships with elected officials to affect positive change for our members and the law enforcement profession. The Cary chapter continues to take these core principles of the PBA to a different level. Every year the Cary chapter brings together elected officials, officers, and the community to showcase the talents of police officers. The Cary chapter Board, in their first year chose to sponsor an Officer of the Year award in honor of retired Detective George Almond. Almond, a PBA member, was shot in the line of duty in October of 2001. He survived the shooting and returned to duty as a detective in juvenile investigations before retiring in August of 2004. The award recognizes outstanding achievement in the areas of leadership, community service, mentoring, excellence in performance, and valor.

On February 21, 2009, Detective George Daniels was named the recipient of the 2008 George Almond Officer of the Year award in festivities at the Embassy Suites in Cary, N.C. Daniels was selected from a group of five finalists by the Cary chapter board. The other finalists were Myron Guthrie, Robin Edwards, Donna Pell, and Lynne Brawn.

Detective Daniels was nominated by Sgt. Randy Byrd. In his nomination, Sgt. Byrd mentioned the many years of experience and the solid reputation that Detective Daniels has

throughout the department, the law enforcement community as a whole, and the district attorney's office. The nomination also highlighted his informal leadership, mentoring, and community service. In 2008, Detective Daniels served as the lead detective on three homicide investigations. These homicides occurred over an eight month period and required numerous man hours and investigative work. Although many detectives and officers worked on these cases, two detectives (Jim Young and Adam Dismukes) worked with Detective Daniels extensively. According to Sgt. Byrd, "Detective Daniels not only provided tremendous leadership and direction with these cases, but served these detectives as a mentor and an informal leader. Both of these detectives have grown professionally because of working with Detective Daniels and have developed a deep and profound respect for him that words alone can't measure. This is due in part to his unassuming approach to individuals. His approach works because he doesn't seek credit or recognition for himself but because he is always focused on the greater good. He has always been willing to sacrifice for this greater good and lead by quiet example. This is the true test of leadership and one that George has mastered." In continuing his nomination Sgt. Byrd noted that Detective Daniel's commitment to service doesn't end with the Cary Police department. According to Byrd, "Detective Daniels has been involved with the Raleigh Parks and Recreation department as a coach of various youth league teams for many years. In 2008, he was nominated for the Fletcher Award for his volunteerism." Nikki Spear the Director of the Millbrook Exchange Center offered comments about Detective Daniels in her nomination for that award and Sgt. Byrd included them in his comments. Spear wrote, "It's often difficult to find volunteer coaches who care and are committed to working



*George Almond and Award Winners (L-R) Lynne Brawn, Robin Edwards, George Almond, George Daniels, Donna Pell, and Myron Guthrie*



with youth in the leagues. As I began thinking about the many coaches who work with our leagues, one specific coach came to mind. George Daniels has become a staple and invaluable asset to District B athletics.” Speer added the following about him in her nomination, “George has always worked hard to follow our Code of Conduct by teaching and displaying positive sportsmanship while giving all players the opportunity to succeed. It is the dedication of volunteer coaches like George that make the difference in the lives of their players and the quality of our youth athletic leagues.” Sgt. Byrd offered these final thoughts in submitting George’s name for nomination. “The George Almond Officer of the Year award was created to recognize the sacrifice that George Almond made for the community he served. As part of George Almond’s sacrifice, he and Detective Daniel’s lives became forever intertwined. In 2001, George Daniels also demonstrated his informal leadership and selfless commitment to duty, as the lead detective in the investigation that sought, captured, and prosecuted George Almond’s shooter.”

Detective Daniels, upon realizing his nomination for this award had these thoughts about George Almond and what the award means to him. He said, “I have a special connection with George that started when we worked together on patrol. I later went to Investigations, and George later went to SBI, where we stayed in contact with each other. When he came back to the department and worked on patrol, I was in contact with him all the time, which later included investigating the crime that eventually ended his career. The thing that stuck with me is that through all the pain and agony that he went through he never seemed to give up on who he was. His character has always been what has made him a special person. I watched him use this internal character to make it back to what many thought would never happen. I see the award as a way of honoring a special person in a special way.”

Detective Daniels was raised in Newark, N.J. and graduated from Union High school in that same city. He served in the United States army for a number of years and was assigned to the criminal investigations division where he worked numerous cases and special assignments. This included assignment to the personal security detail for the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His military service also included assignments in Central America, Korea, and Japan. Detective Daniels taught English as a second language while stationed in Korea and Panama. He joined the Cary Police department in 1991 and his investigative skills were soon put to use when he transferred to investigations. Throughout his career with the Cary Police Department, Detective Daniels has served as the lead detective on some of the most difficult cases the town has known. He is a past recipient of the Knights of Columbus and the American Legion officer of the year awards and holds a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from St. Leo College. He is married to Marsha and they have three children and grandchildren.

Before the awards ceremony Crime Stoppers of Cary held a silent and live auction as part of the evening’s festivities. Ben Farrell, a police officer with the Morrisville Police Department and a professional auctioneer, led the live auction. His lighthearted interaction with those in attendance was one of the most memorable parts of the evening. A portion of the proceeds

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*Attorney General Roy Cooper*



*Master of Ceremonies Gerald Owens*



*Auctioneer Ben Farrell and Assistant Reed Jones*



*George Almond and Keynote Speaker Janet Cowell*

it home...how much officers are sacrificing on a personal and professional level every day.” Owens then introduced state treasurer Janet Cowell as the keynote speaker.

Cowell has been a friend of the PBA since her days as a Raleigh city council member. She moved on to the state senate where she continued to be an advocate for the PBA. Cowell was elected as the state treasurer in 2008 and is the state’s 27th popularly-elected treasurer. In her remarks, she took time to thank the officers for the work that they do on a daily basis and for the support of the PBA that she has received through the years. She also expressed how honored she was to be at an event honoring George Almond and the finalists. Cowell is the sole fiduciary of more than \$68 billion in public assets and oversees the retirement system for 820,000 public employees, including teachers, firefighters and law enforcement officers. In her speech, she focused on the critical time that the retirement system is going through and the challenges that are ahead. She also asked for support in defending the retirement system of public employees and creating a level of understanding about the binding nature of an employee’s pension. According to Cowell, “This is a contract and is something that we need to keep whole and sound.”

Gerald Owens continued with the program by recognizing the achievements of the five finalists as Almond presented each of them an awards plaque. Almond was joined on stage by Jim Young (2007 winner) to present the final award to Detective Daniels.

In closing the banquet, Byrd offered a few words about the Police Benevolent Foundation before turning the podium over to Steve Wilkins who offered the benediction to a truly remarkable evening.

were donated to the Police Benevolent Foundation.

The Cary Police Honor Guard presented the colors and Katherine Fritsch returned for the third straight year to sing the national anthem to start the awards program. Rep. Paul “Skip” Stam the Minority Leader in the NC House of Representatives gave the invocation. Cary chapter President Randy Byrd welcomed those in attendance before introducing Attorney General Roy Cooper to give the opening remarks. In his remarks, Cooper thanked George Almond for his friendship and inspiration and for the example that he had set for others to follow. Cooper said of Almond, “You had this terrible event happen to you and you bounced back and you continue to do good things.” Cooper continued with his opening remarks by thanking the PBA for their work and recognizing the officers that work to keep Cary safe. “There is a reason that Cary is a safe place...the people in this room right here.” Cooper also offered insight into the needs of law enforcement and his commitment to keep the public safe.

Byrd returned to the podium to recognize the hosts and sponsors of the event along with the special guests in attendance. He also introduced Gerald Owens, who was returning for the second time as the Master of Ceremonies. Owens is the anchor for the 10 o’clock news on Fox 50 and the anchor of the 11 o’clock news on WRAL-TV 5. He is also the Host of NC Wanted on Fox 50 a show dedicated to solving unsolved cases and capturing wanted fugitives. Owens mentioned how honored he was to be in attendance and how awe-inspiring the nominations are that he gets to read. He said, “It really brings

*\*the photographs in this article were taken by Dean Smith.*



*Katherine Fritsch Singing the National Anthem as members of the Cary Police Department Honor Guard present the colors. (L-R) Wyatt Crabtree, Steve Wilkins, Matt Pearson, and Robert Parker*

**For more info on the George Almond Officer of the Year Award visit the Cary Chapter web-page on the NCPBA web-site at [www.ncpba.org](http://www.ncpba.org)**