

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 29, 2013

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AG HOLDS 14th ANNUAL LAW ENFORCEMENT SUMMIT

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Luther Strange today presented the 14th annual Attorney General’s Law Enforcement Summit, carrying on a tradition that was begun in 2000 by former Attorney General Bill Pryor. This year’s theme was “Dealing with the Mentally Ill and Emotionally Disturbed: A Law Enforcement Perspective.” More than 650 law enforcement officers from throughout Alabama were registered to attend, receiving practical information and professional training with a primary focus how to properly handle encounters and conflicts involving people of diminished capacity due to emotional or mental disturbances. The 2013 summit was held in Montgomery at Frazer United Methodist Church.

Attorney General Strange welcomed law enforcement officers and discussed the event’s theme. “Every community can expect its law enforcement officers to encounter persons with diminished capacities, whether from intoxication, drug abuse, emotional distress or mental illness,” he said. “For any number of reasons, law enforcement officers are increasingly the ones responding to people who are in crisis. Unfortunately, the outcome of these incidents is often frustrating and tragic.” Through the specialized training and sharing of experiences provided by instructors at the conference, he added, “it is my hope that you will have a greater understanding of the challenges law enforcement is facing and gain practical information for determination the best course of action to deal with these incidents.”

This year’s conference featured a series of presentations from experts that included the following: “Dealing with the Mentally Ill and Emotionally Disturbed,” from Lt. Jon Garlick, Calhoun County Sheriff’s Office; “Lessons Learned: Baldwin County Line-of-Death Duty,” from Baldwin County Sheriff Huey “Hoss” Mack; “Firearms and the Mentally Ill,” from Alabama Office of Prosecution Services General Counsel Beau Brown; “Lessons Learned: Midland City Hostage Crisis,” from Dale County Sheriff Wally Olson, and a general overview of related legal issues from James H. Pike, an attorney with Shealy, Crum & Pike. Attorney General Strange thanked those who provided valuable information in these presentations, as well as his Law Enforcement Coordinator, Louis Zook, and all staff members of the Attorney General’s Office who provided valuable assistance.

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A somber highlight of the day came with the commemoration of fallen officers who lost their lives in the line of duty during the past year. The Attorney General recognized the sacrifices of the following officers with the presentation of memorial flags and certificates of honor:

Investigator Michael Dale Stockwell, 45, of the Orange Beach Police Department, died on September 17, 2013. "Investigator Mike Stockwell was killed in a two-vehicle crash... His unmarked department vehicle collided with another vehicle in the intersection. He succumbed to his injuries at the scene. The driver of the other vehicle was uninjured. Investigator Stockwell had served in law enforcement for 20 years."*

Deputy Sheriff Scott Jeffrey Ward, 47, of the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office, died on November 23, 2012. "Deputy Sheriff Scott Ward was shot and killed after he and two other deputies responded to a domestic disturbance call involving an emotionally disturbed person....The deputies were speaking to the subject on the front porch when he suddenly produced a handgun and opened fire. Deputy Ward and one other deputy were shot before the subject was killed by return fire.... Deputy Ward was a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve. He had served with the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office for 15 years and had previously served with the Prichard Police Department."*

Attorney General Strange thanked the officers in attendance today, and expressed appreciation to their fellow officers in communities throughout Alabama. "I am grateful and proud of the bravery and unselfish dedication that law enforcement officers give to people of Alabama in their service to us each day," he said. "It is my hope that this summit has provided valuable instruction and shared information that you will take back to your communities and that it may be of assistance as you carry out your noble task of protecting the people of Alabama."

**Note: Information about the deaths of Investigator Stockwell and Deputy Ward is from the Officer Down Memorial Page at <http://www.odmp.org/>.*