

Sheriff Anthony Dennis

Sumter County Top Cop Keeps Community Confidence

By Perdita Spriggs

Lifelong Sumter native Anthony Dennis attributes his deep community roots to his success as the county's chief law enforcer. From narcotics and homeland security to domestic disputes, missing children, and dignitary visits, he's done it all. "When you've lived in a town all of your life, you know a lot of people," says the 32-year department veteran. "It often helps that people know and trust you to get the job done."

Sheriff Dennis provides leadership to more than 160 personnel, including 126 sworn deputies. He prides himself on being uniquely prepared to lead every aspect of his law enforcement team. "I have worked every rank within the sheriff's office," shares Dennis, who holds bachelor and master's degrees in criminology from St. Leo University and Troy State University, respectively, and adds the FBI National Academy to his several executive leadership certifications. "Experience is my greatest asset."

Elected three times to an office based on citizen confidence, Dennis takes his role very seriously. "I work for the people of Sumter County," emphasizes the county's first African-American sheriff. "I know a precedent has been



Sheriff Dennis is active with several professional and community organizations, including:

- FBI National Academy
- Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
- National and SC Sheriff Associations
- Sumter County Children's Advocacy Center Board
- Catchall Masonic Lodge #425
- The Good Fellows Club
- Tuomey Fellows
- S.C. Countywide Elected Officials Association

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set, but that was not my only goal. While I am the first African-American sheriff, I also want to pave the way for others." Seventy percent of the county's 104,000 residents, 46 percent of those African American, believe in Dennis' abilities, handing him a 70 percent victory at the ballot box each time.

When not in uniform, Dennis shares his experiences as an adjunct professor at Morris College and Central Carolina Technical College in the criminal justice programs. "My

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passion is teaching law enforcement,” reveals Dennis, “right next to performing law enforcement duties.”

The married former athlete runs/walks 20 miles a week, eats healthy, and gets his physicals on time. “If you’re not fit, you can’t perform your duties,” notes Dennis, a trustee at Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church in Rembert, S.C., who enjoys golfing and fishing with his 14-year-old son.

Dennis has created several countywide enhancement programs, including a Community Action Team (CAT) and the Boys to Men Conference. “God has given me the ability to make the community a better place,” he says. “Being healthy allows me to enjoy quality time with my family, positively influence my community, and leave a legacy of innovative leadership in the sheriff’s office.” ■



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