

Police Forum

From the Editor

Dear ACJS Police Section Readers,

As **Memorial Day weekend 2026** begins, we pause to honor all service members who have served and are currently serving to protect our freedoms. This weekend carries profound weight as we remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice, while simultaneously standing in solidarity with the dedicated men and women of our law enforcement community who nobly protect our streets every day. It is my privilege to announce the **Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS)** Police Section's first editorial for 2026, pivoting our focus toward **police management and generational shifting**

Bridging the Generational Shift in Policing

As colleges, universities, and schools prepare for upcoming terms for the Fall 2026 semesters and taking much-needed time to reflect on the past academic year, local communities continue to experience internal turmoil surrounding policing trends, tactics, and constant "Monday Morning Quarterbacking." Navigating this modern climate requires a deep understanding of how internal department dynamics are evolving. Specifically, we must look at the theme of generational policing and how the foundational mindset of current officers has fundamentally shifted.

To understand these internal shifts, this edition addresses **Chief Joseph Garrett's** insightful work, *The Generational Divide in Law Enforcement*. Modern law enforcement organizations are currently managing a multi-generational workforce—stretching from veteran command staff to incoming Generation Z recruits. Chief Garrett highlights how traditional, rigid military-style structures are colliding with a new generation of officers who prioritize:

- **Enhanced digital literacy** and data-driven, evidence-based policing.
- **Collaborative workflows** over strictly top-down, authoritarian mandates.
- **Transparent accountability** and a deep focus on mental wellness and work-life balance.

Just as a flourishing tree sheds its old leaves to inspire healthier, stronger growth, police leadership must adapt to this changing workforce. Departments can no longer rely on ambiguous leadership styles or political agendas designed purely for self-preservation. Public organizations demand servant, accountable leadership that builds a bridge across this generational divide rather than widening it.

Featured Authors and Articles

This editorial highlights a practitioner voice to tackle these management hurdles and provide a road map for sustainable organizational change:

- **Joseph Garrett** (Deputy Chief of Police – Hometown Police Department, Illinois)

Connect and Submit Your Work

Your contributions, feedback, and active participation are what make the *Police Forum* a thriving platform for knowledge exchange and professional growth. We are actively inviting additional law enforcement leaders, practitioners, and researchers to submit their work for future editorials. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of this interactive community by submitting your articles, book reviews, academic announcements, and law enforcement job openings. Please email your submissions directly to acjpoliceforum@gmail.com or agoulos@stfrancis.edu.

Have a safe, reflective, and meaningful Memorial Day weekend.

Dr. Anastasios Goulos
Editor, *Police Forum*
ACJS Police Section



From the Chair

Dear ACJS Police Section members,

Thank you to everyone who attended the Police Section Meeting at the 2026 ACJS conference. I'm very appreciative of the hard work that Eric Dlugolenksi has done in his various roles serving the Police Section over the past several years. During my time as Chair, I hope to expand opportunities to better serve Police Section members throughout the year, in addition to our ACJS meetings. The Executive Board is working on organizing virtual workshops on various topics to serve our members, tentatively starting this Fall. There will also be a Qualtrics Survey sent by email to gauge members' preferences for the section and their willingness to help serve it in various ways. We welcome your thoughts and ideas on how the Police Section can better serve its members; please email me at agvito@bsu.edu.

Warm Regards,

Anthony Vito

Chair — ACJS Police Section

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Feature Articles

The Generational Divide in Law Enforcement: A Leadership Perspective

By Joseph Garrett, M.A.

The 19th-century French journalist Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr observed that “the more things change, the more they remain the same” (Karr, 1849). As a Generation X law enforcement professional and long-serving supervisor, I have often considered how best to respond to the needs and expectations of Millennial and Generation Z officers entering the field. Like many Baby Boomer and Generation X supervisors, I have periodically experienced frustration—and, at times, genuine uncertainty—when faced with frequent questions about policy, expressed interest in professional fulfillment, and requests for specialized assignments (although typically not for overtime). In such moments, the perceived distance between cohorts can appear difficult to bridge. My responses were often reductive: “The job is what it is,” “This is government—we move slowly, if at all,” “Bid the third watch if you are bored,” or, “When I entered policing, you did not approach senior supervisors—or even make yourself visible.” Although usually delivered in a light tone, these remarks provided little practical guidance. In retrospect, these exchanges suggest that my supervision was shaped by an incomplete understanding of generational differences and, perhaps, by my own apprehension about organizational change and the need to recalibrate my leadership approach. Officers from the Baby Boomer generation are often characterized as emphasizing a strong work ethic, loyalty to the department, and respect for hierarchy—attributes consistent with a traditional, chain-of-command model of policing. Generation X officers are frequently described as more independent and adaptable, valuing practical problem-solving and efficiency while balancing skepticism of authority with professional norms. Millennials, who comprise an increasing share of the workforce, often prioritize collaboration, transparency, and a sense of purpose; they also tend to be more comfortable with technology and with community-oriented policing strategies. The newest cohort, Generation Z, is commonly associated with digital-first orientation, adaptability, and greater emphasis on inclusivity and mental health awareness.

Law enforcement is not merely a trade; it is an evolving profession that demands resilience, skill, and adaptability (Greenberg, 2024). Perceived generational differences in attitudes, work ethic, and motivation among the four cohorts currently serving in law enforcement may be overstated and overanalyzed. It is worth considering whether certain foundational elements of the profession routinely bridge these differences. Adherence to the tenets of the departmental Code of Conduct, structured training and supervision, and deliberate mentoring—coupled with the application of resilience skills to manage stress and support career development—can help move a young officer beyond the distinctive traits often attributed to a given generation and toward a shared professional identity. The Code of Ethics contributes to that professional identity.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) adopted the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics at its 64th Annual IACP Conference and Exposition in October 1957 and updated the document in 2024 to reflect the responsibilities of contemporary policing. The Code of Ethics serves as a preface to the mission and public commitment that law enforcement agencies undertake (International Association of

Chiefs of Police, n.d.). The Code of Ethics may be understood as a form of normative and institutional infrastructure within policing, one that promotes organizational cohesion by socializing officers from different generational cohorts into a common professional identity. Although Baby Boomer, Generation X, Millennial, and Generation Z officers may differ in communication styles, orientations toward authority, technological competencies, and expectations regarding supervision or career progression, the Code provides a durable set of occupational norms centered on legality, procedural restraint, accountability, service, and stewardship of the public trust. From a criminological perspective, this shared ethical framework supports the professional socialization process through which recruits internalize the values, role expectations, and behavioral standards of the occupation. From a public administration perspective, it also functions as a governance mechanism that aligns individual discretion with institutional legitimacy, policy compliance, and mission execution. In this sense, the Code does more than symbolize professional ideals; it helps agencies manage intergenerational differences by reorienting officers away from cohort-based assumptions and toward a common set of obligations grounded in constitutional policing and organizational responsibility. When embedded in training, supervision, and mentoring, the Code thereby converts generational diversity from a potential source of fragmentation into a source of complementary institutional capacity.

Additional factors may also contribute to shared professional beliefs across generations in law enforcement. First, the core challenges of policing—responding to deviance, enforcing laws, and managing the recurring social conditions that produce crime—remain relatively constant, even as scholars continue to debate the underlying causes of unlawful behavior. Second, constitutional protections, statutory law, and evolving case law—developed largely outside law enforcement—regularly shape officer decision-making and departmental practice. Landmark rulings such as *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966), *Terry v. Ohio* (1968), and *Graham v. Connor* (1989), for example, established enduring standards for interrogations, searches, and use of force. Third, catalytic events (e.g., the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis), changes in immigration enforcement partnerships, and rapid shifts in technology and social media can compel officers of different ages and perspectives to adopt similar operational behaviors in the interest of mission execution and officer safety. Finally, empirical research suggests that while generational differences in workplace attitudes may be statistically detectable, their practical significance is often limited (Cucina et al., 2018).

This discussion ultimately raises two questions: how can leaders bridge generational differences in attitudes, practices, and communication within law enforcement, and why does doing so matter? I suggest that the “how” is grounded in the deliberate use of internal communication channels within our organizations, including mentoring relationships and routine supervisory dialogue. The “why” is rooted in the enduring professional obligations articulated in the IACP Code of Ethics, first adopted in 1957. I will elaborate on both how and why below.

How can generational differences within the law enforcement workforce be deemphasized from a leadership perspective? What one cohort experiences as routine may represent a developmental opportunity for another. For example, a Generation Z officer may provide timely insights into emerging digital tools, whereas a Baby Boomer officer may contribute historical context that strengthens strategic planning (DiChiara, 2025). Similarly, a Generation X supervisor can model direct, independent verbal communication—an essential skill set for interviews and interrogations—for technology-oriented Millennial and Generation Z officers. In this context, open communication and intentional mentoring are

central to success: expectations are moderated through the transfer of experience, and learning can also flow in the opposite direction through reverse mentoring. For instance, a Generation Z officer may alert a supervisor to real-time information moving through applications such as Signal or Slack, or through social media platforms, that may have tactical or investigative value. Although it is important to understand differences in how cohorts learn and interpret the workplace, it is equally important to treat officers as individuals rather than as products of a generational label (Scism, 2017). At the same time, the enduring requirements of the department's mission can further reduce generational differences by creating shared priorities, shared risk, and shared standards of performance. This provides a practical example of how the perceived gap can be bridged.

Why this is important is found within the law enforcement Code of Ethics, which begins with direct and consequential language:

“As a sworn officer, my fundamental duty is to serve the community by safeguarding lives and property against threats that could take advantage of or harm members of my community or otherwise impact peace and order. I will uphold the Constitution and honor the rights of all to life, liberty, equality, and justice. I will never employ unnecessary force. I will respect the privacy of people and communities that I serve, and I will fully obey the laws that I am sworn to enforce.” (International Association of Chiefs of Police, n.d.)

The importance of bridging generational differences—the “why”—is embedded in the shared obligations of the mission we voluntarily accept when we take the oath: protecting the safety, property, and rights of the public. Although officers may enter the profession with differing attitudes, expectations, and work styles, the oath creates a common standard of conduct that must be carried out through teamwork, adherence to policy, and standardized training. In this sense, Karr's (1849) observation that “the more things change, the more they remain the same” is instructive: officers begin as individuals shaped by their formative experiences, yet professional socialization gradually cultivates a shared identity focused on addressing the persistent problems that harm communities. Current research supports this premise, suggesting that perceived generational differences in occupational resilience may be more perception than reality. In particular, the experiences of generational cohorts may be more similar in their impact than previously assumed, thereby shaping professional narratives in comparable ways (Switzer, 2025).

It is possible, then, that the recurring “why” questions posed by younger officers—met at times with “it is what it is” responses from supervisors—are best addressed through more deliberate mentoring and reverse mentoring. Doing so allows systemic knowledge to be transferred from prior generations and then refined by newer officers to meet future operational demands. Although laws, training mandates, politics, media, culture, policy, and technology continue to evolve, every generation of officers and supervisors must adapt to these changes while upholding the oath to protect life, property, and rights. Viewed through this lens, the IACP Code of Ethics provides a stable professional anchor, while intentional internal communication serves as the mechanism by which shared expectations are taught, reinforced, and renewed across cohorts.

Accordingly, supervisors can reduce the practical impact of generational differences by grounding expectations in a shared ethical framework and by using routine communication, mentoring, and reverse mentoring to translate that framework into everyday practice. This approach supports both organizational effectiveness and the sustained professional development of officers across the career span.

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About the Author

Joseph Garrett, M.A.
Deputy Chief, Hometown Police Department, Illinois
Commander, Oak Lawn Police Department (ret.), Illinois



Joseph Garrett has dedicated more than 35 years to law enforcement and currently serves as the Deputy Chief of the Hometown Police Department, where he oversees general operations. He began his civilian law enforcement career with the Chicago Housing Authority Police Department before joining the Oak Lawn Police Department, where he developed a primary specialty in forensics. During his tenure at Oak Lawn, he rose to the rank of Commander and led both the Investigation Division and the 3rd Watch Patrol groups until his retirement in 2024.

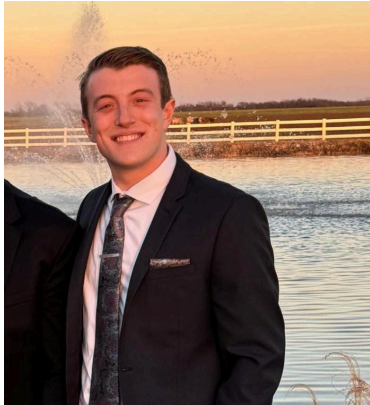
In 2005, while serving with the Oak Lawn Police Department, Joseph deployed with ILEAS to support search and rescue efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. During this mission, he collected evidence and documented disaster conditions, an experience he credits as a pivotal moment in his personal and professional life. He has since spoken to school and community groups about the operation and maintains a large collection of previously unpublished photographs capturing the devastation. Joseph has also completed advanced Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training and is committed to enhancing officers' skills in communicating with and supporting individuals experiencing mental illness. In addition, he prioritizes promoting officer wellness throughout the department.

Joseph served ten years in the U.S. Army National Guard as a commissioned Military Police officer. He deployed during Operation Desert Storm and achieved the rank of Captain.

He holds a Bachelor's degree from Illinois Benedictine University, a Master's degree from Chicago State University, and completed the Northwestern School of Staff and Command while serving with the Oak Lawn Police Department.

Award Recipients

Section Awards



Promising Student in Policing Award: [Beau Holladay](#)

The Promising Student in Policing Award recognizes an undergraduate or graduate student who shows exceptional promise and dedication to the study and advancement of policing. This award aims to encourage and support the next generation of scholars and practitioners in the field.

Beau Holladay is a Senior Research Analyst at the Finn Institute. He holds a B.S. in Psychology from Washington State University and an M.A. in Criminal Justice from the University at Albany. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice at the University at Albany.



Outstanding Service Award: [Jeff Bumgarner, Ph.D.](#)

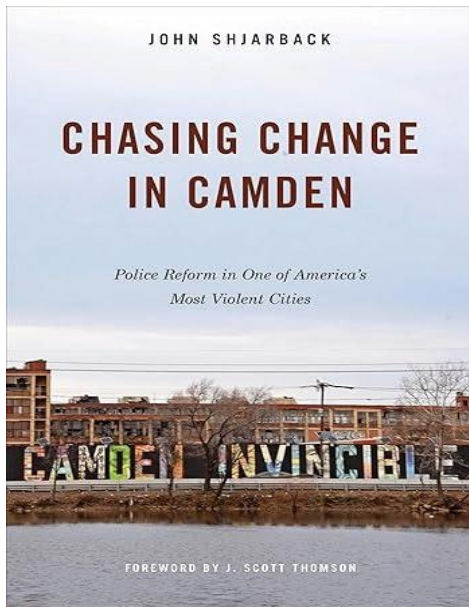
The Outstanding Service Award is given to individuals who are deemed deserving of special recognition for their outstanding contribution to the Police Section. This award was established to honor those who have provided significant service to the Police Section.

Jeff Bumgarner, Ph.D., is a professor and director of the School of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Texas State University. He holds a BA in political science from the University of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign, an MA in public administration and policy from Northern Illinois University, and a Ph.D. in organization development from the University of Minnesota, the focus of which was on criminal justice organizational contexts. He is the author, coauthor, or editor of 10 different books and many articles and book chapters. His scholarly interests include federal law enforcement, homeland security, and federal crime policy. In addition to his academic experience, Dr Bumgarner has several years of experience in local and federal law enforcement.



Best Policing Book of Year: *Chasing Camden* by [John Shjarback](#)

The Best Policing Book of the Year Award recognizes a significant book publication that has substantially contributed to the understanding, development, or practice of policing. This award celebrates authors who have provided fresh insights, rigorous research, and innovative perspectives on law enforcement.



John Shjarback is an Associate Professor in the Department of Law and Justice Studies at Rowan University. He earned his B.S. from Penn State University, M.A. from Monmouth University, and Ph.D. in Criminology and Criminal Justice from Arizona State University.

Dr. Shjarback has published more than 40 peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and technical reports focused on police-citizen interactions, race and ethnicity, use of force, and accountability. A strong advocate of public criminology, he has written op-eds for outlets including The Washington Post, New York Daily News, and The Dallas Morning News. He actively collaborates with law enforcement agencies on research and evaluation projects, and his work has informed policy discussions and legislative efforts across multiple states. He is a member of the American Society of Criminology and the American Society of Evidence-Based Policing, and he received the ASC Division of Policing's Early Career Award in 2021.



Pracademic Excellence Award: [Lt. Jennifer Hall, Ph.D., Louisville Metro Police Department](#)

The Emerging Police Pracademic Excellence Award recognizes a police practitioner who champions evidence-based practice and research in policing. This award celebrates those who bridge the gap between academia and practical law enforcement, applying scientific research to real-world policing strategies. It aims to recognize recent achievements in the field and is not a lifetime achievement award.

Lieutenant Jennifer Hall has served the citizens of Louisville for 20 years with the Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) in a variety of roles. She is currently assigned to the Career Development Unit and serves as the Police Training Officer Coordinator within the LMPD Training Division. Previously, she served as a detective in the Crimes Against Children Unit.

Lt. Hall holds a B.S. in Criminal Justice from Eastern Kentucky University, an M.A. in Sociology, and a Ph.D. in Applied Sociology from the University of Louisville. Her doctoral research examined the effectiveness of a community policing initiative within LMPD, focusing on the relationship between public perceptions of law enforcement and officers' perceptions of community opinion. Her professional and scholarly interests center on police training and curriculum reform, particularly in shaping new officers' communication, decision-making, intervention skills, and organizational mindset to positively influence police culture.

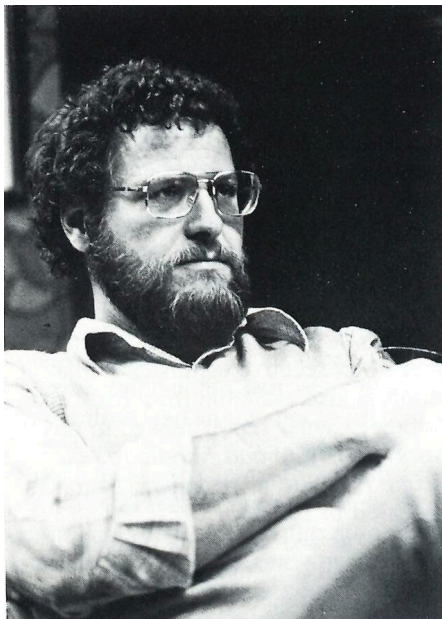


Emerging Policing Scholar: Ian Adams, Ph.D.

The Emerging Policing Scholar Achievement Award recognizes an outstanding early career scholar who has shown remarkable potential and achievement in producing quality research in the field of policing. This award is intended to celebrate the future leaders in policing scholarship, encouraging continued excellence and innovation.

Ian T. Adams is a leading scholar of policing. He is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice at the University of South Carolina. His applied

research focuses on the practical concerns of police practitioners, with a specific interest in technology, policy, behavior, and use-of-force in law enforcement.



O.W. Wilson Award: Wesley Skogan, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor, Northwestern University

The O.W. Wilson is the section's most prestigious and flagship award. Given to recognize outstanding contributions to police education, research, and practice.

A practitioner, policy maker, researcher, or educator who, over many years, has exemplified and supported the following ideals:

1. Quality higher education for the police field.
2. A distinguished record of rigorous and applied police research.
3. Cooperation and collaboration among police educators, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners.
4. Evidence supporting effective, equitable, and accountable policing.
5. A strong record of mentorship to junior scholars or practitioners

Wesley G. Skogan holds a joint appointment in Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research. His most recent books on policing are: *Police and Community in Chicago*, and *Community Policing: Can It Work?* Prof. Skogan was co-editor of a policy-

oriented report from the National Research Council, *Fairness and Effectiveness in Policing: The Evidence*, and he chaired the committee that produced it. Another line of his research includes crime prevention; this led to his book *Coping with Crime*, and a number of articles on community responses to crime. Prof. Skogan has also been involved in research on criminal victimization and the evaluation of service programs for victims. He received the 2015 Distinguished Achievement Award in Evidence-Based Crime Policy from the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy. This award is the center's highest honor and recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution and commitment to advance the integration of science with criminal justice practice. This award celebrates CEBCP's core values of doing rigorous science and translating research into practice. The award was presented at the Annual Symposium of the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University.

ACJS Lifetime Membership

Please remember that you still must pay the Police Section dues annually to remain a member of the Police Section. Membership is \$37 per year and includes a subscription to *Police Quarterly*. Payment of dues is made to ACJS.

Call for Papers, Authors, Applicants

If you are working on a project and need authors for book chapters or encyclopedia entries, let us know. We'll include that call in *Police Forum* for free.

Or, if you are hosting a conference or seminar and need participants, let us know that too. We'll be happy to help spread the word for free.

Or, if you have a job opportunity—particularly of interest to those teaching or researching in areas related to policing—we'd love to help you announce that position. Send any announcements that you would like to have included in the next issue of *Police Forum* to acjspoliceforum@gmail.com or agoulos@stfrancis.edu

Submission Guidelines for *Police Forum*

Format Criteria

The format criteria for all submissions are as follows: reasonable length (less than 30 pages), double-spaced, and in a font similar to 12 pt Times New Roman. All submissions should be in Word format. All charts, graphs, pictures, etc. must be one page or smaller and contained within standard margins. Please attach these at the end of the submission as appendices. Due to formatting limitations, all appendices must be in a Word, Excel, or similar format - PDFs cannot be used.

Feature Articles

Feature Articles can be quantitative or qualitative. Tables, figures, and charts should be kept to a minimum and should be inserted at the end of the document with an appropriate reference to placement location within the text. The page limits are flexible; however, the editors reserve the right to edit excessively long manuscripts.

Practitioners Corner

Articles written from the perspective of persons currently or formerly working in the field, expressing personal observations or experiences concerning a particular area or issue. Page limits are flexible, however long articles may be edited for length.

Academic Pontification

Articles for this area should focus on making an argument, presenting a line of thought, or formulating a new conceptual idea in policing.

Research Notes

Research notes should describe a work in progress, a thumbnail outline of a research project, a conceptual methodological piece, or any other article relating to research methods or research findings in policing.

Submission Guidelines Cont.

Reviews

Book reviews on any work relating to policing. Reviews of Internet sites or subjects concerning policing on the Internet are also welcome.

Policing in the News

News items of interest to the police section are welcomed in any form.

Legal News in Policing

Reviews of court cases, legal issues, lawsuits, and legal liability in policing are welcomed submissions.

Letters to the Editor

Questions, comments, or suggestions about a given Criminal Justice topic, article, or research.

This Date in History

Submissions on prior hot topics, research, or research methods in Criminal Justice from the past.

Good News

Submissions relating to professional and personal good news for our members - promotions, new jobs, marriages, etc.

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Police Section

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