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# A Message From Your President

*Ernest "Ernie" W. George*

On June 17, 2006, I chaired my last Executive Board meeting as the President of the Florida PBA. The meeting was a normal business meeting which was recessed at times in order for the Board to hear from statewide political candidates and choose the candidates the Florida PBA would endorse. The meeting went well and the Board endorsed some excellent candidates and then it came time to end my final meeting as President. As some wonderful words were said about me, I started to think about the outstanding accomplishments we have had for our members over the last ten (10) years. We were able to lobby the legislature and pass major pieces of legislation other unions only dream about such as:

1. Legislation which stated all Chapter 185 monies had to be used for extra pension benefits for law enforcement officers;
2. Legislation which placed the DROP Plan in the Florida Retirement System, when no one else in Florida even knew what the DROP Plan was, except for the union leaders of police and firefighters;
3. Legislation obtaining a buy-back of the 3% multiplier for special risk employees in the Florida Retirement System including those who had already retired;
4. Workers' Compensation coverage Portal to Portal for officers driving police vehicles to and from work;
5. Legislation which passed the "Heart Bill" giving law enforcement officers the coverage firefighters had for years concerning heart problems being employment-related;
6. Bill of Rights legislation giving the officer the right to review witness statements immediately prior to interrogation and being questioned by only one (1) interrogator;
7. Legislation allowing correctional/probation officers to be members of the special risk class of the Florida Retirement System;
8. Legislation expanding the law enforcement officers positions on the Criminal Justice Commission;

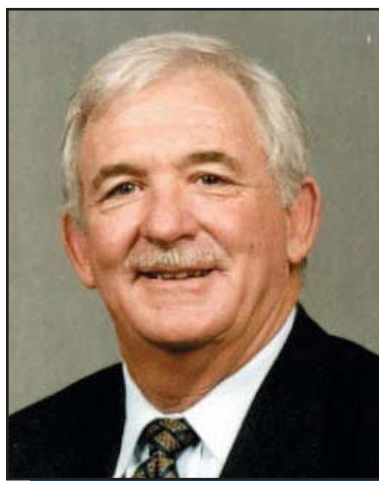
9. Legislation which allows law enforcement union leaders to choose the names of officers to be submitted to the Governor to serve on the CJSTC Commission;
10. Legislation more than doubling death benefits going to the survivors of officers killed in the line of duty; and
11. Legislation limiting the powers of the Criminal Justice Commission to review officers cases when they are found not guilty of a crime.

All of the above accomplishments were major battles and we were able to secure passage, while constantly lobbying the legislature for fair pay raises for the law enforcement, corrections and correctional probation officers we represent. (Of course, the task of getting good pay raises gets even more challenging as we welcome FHP and SLEO officers back into the PBA family.) And I would be remiss if I didn't point out the great support that we have had from **Governor Bush** and outstanding legislative leaders such as **Speaker Bense** and **Senator Pruitt**. PBA and its members have done exceedingly well under the watch of such great political friends.

Although many leaders of the PBA, attorneys, and lobbyists worked for the passage of the legislation, there are three individuals in particular who deserve credit for working so diligently on all these accomplishments. They are **David Murrell**, **Dick Brickman** and **John Rivera**. Without their ideas, hard work, and individual abilities, we could never have been successful in passing half of the above legislation. Working with them during the past twenty (20) years has been the most gratifying time of my life.

As I leave the Presidency, I look forward to a less active role as a leader of the Florida PBA, but believe under **President-elect John Rivera's** leadership, the PBA members can look forward to even more benefits which will improve the lives of law enforcement and correctional officers.

Thanking all of you for allowing me to serve! ●



# A Message From Your Senior Vice President

*Dick Brickman*

At the June, 2006 meeting of the Florida Police Benevolent Association Board of Directors, the nominations were held for the Board of Directors Executive Committee at which time our **President Ernie George** decided to step down and make way for the next generation of leaders to take over.

The Board voted to elect **John Rivera** (Dade County PBA President) as our next leader of the Florida PBA, although Ernie agreed to stay involved by accepting the role as our Treasurer. I want to take a moment to express to Ernie what gratitude we all have towards the remarkable job he has done since taking over as President of the Association.

Let us go back a few years when many of us believed the organization was stagnant and run by a control freak who would not let the organization move forward due to his personal use of the PBA. Ernie, through his leadership, took over the reins of the PBA and accomplished more in the last eight years with **Governor Bush** and the Republican-led Legislature than what the PBA had done in its entire previous history. The PBA has become a force in Tallahassee when

dealing with the Legislature. There is not one elected official who does not know and respect the PBA. The accomplishments and benefits for law enforcement in the last eight years should be a testament to this statement.

Ernie's personal involvement with the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC) as an appointed Commissioner has changed the entire outlook of how the Commission looks at discipline when dealing with law enforcement officers. As one of the observers recently commented, "It seems the Commission has a heart." This was not the case before Ernie was part of the Commission. Of course, Ernie did not stop there, he went to the Legislators to change not only the make up of the Commission, by adding more rank and file positions, but he also got the Governor to appoint people recommended by the PBA and other police organizations.

Ernie, I would like to say to you **THANKS** for not only being a great friend, but from all the members of the Florida Police Benevolent Association, "Thanks for being a **LEADER** who has changed the PBA." I am sure that John Rivera will take the torch you have passed and do you proud. ●