



St. Petersburg Police Department News Release



For Immediate Release

February 4, 2010

Media Relations Office

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Media Relations Office

Bill Proffitt

George Kajtsa

The St. Petersburg Police Department and the St. Petersburg Rotary Club announce 2009 Recipients of the E. L. Ned March/Bud Purdy Award.

The St. Petersburg Police Department and the St. Petersburg Rotary Club are pleased to announce the 2009 Recipients of the E. L. Ned March/Bud Purdy Award.

Every year since 1952, this award has been given to two outstanding police officers for their exemplary service to our Department and to the community.

The recipients this year are Sergeant Gary L. Dukeman, Jr. and Officer Johnny E. Harris.

Chief of Police Charles "Chuck" Harmon will present the awards at a luncheon held on Friday, February 5, 2010 at 11:45 a.m. at the Orange Blossom Cafeteria, 220 4th Street North.

Here are brief bios for both recipients:

Sergeant Gary L. Dukeman, Jr. joined the St. Petersburg Police Department as a twenty year old on May 15, 1989 and was promoted to Sergeant on February 8, 1999. As a police officer, he served in Patrol, the DUI Unit and as a Community Police Officer. After his promotion to Sergeant, he served in Patrol as a Community Policing Sergeant and a Field Training Sergeant before transferring to the Investigative Services Bureau where he supervised detectives in the Burglary Unit.

Under his supervision, the Burglary Unit won the Department's "Unit of the Year" award in 2006, because of the high number of cases solved by his detectives during that year. In January, 2008, Sergeant Dukeman was placed in charge of the Special Events Unit, an extremely challenging position made more difficult by the unexpected retirement of the person who previously held this position. He quickly acclimated to his new position and tackled a "mountain" of challenges while learning his new job.

Sergeant Dukeman's on-the-job training included a number of tough assignments in 2008. He was assigned to providing police security for several large events that year, including the Honda Grand Prix, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. parade, the Mainsail Art Festival and the Tampa Bay Rays regular season games, as well as their two Division Series Playoff games, four American League Championship Series games and two World Series games - a first in the city of St. Petersburg.

Sergeant Dukeman possesses a quiet confidence, humble attitude and tireless work ethic. He never hesitates to roll up his sleeves to get the job done, and never complains when he must work incredibly long hours to ensure a smooth and successful operation.

Sergeant Dukeman is well recognized as a strong and capable leader in the Department, a true professional who is most deserving of this prestigious award.

Officer Johnny Harris became a St. Petersburg police officer on August 18, 1984, just a few months before his 20th birthday. Since then, Officer Harris has served in a variety of positions during his 25 year career, including Patrol, the Vice and Narcotics Division and the Special Operations Section.

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Officer Harris is a certified Florida Crime Prevention Practitioner and currently serves as the Neighborhood Crime Watch Coordinator for District I, the southern most policing district in the city.

For the past decade, Officer Harris has shouldered the responsibility for the Department's Neighborhood Crime Watch programs throughout the city.

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Officer Harris makes frequent public presentations at neighborhood crime prevention meetings, crime prevention seminars and weekly auto theft rallies. He has coordinated the annual National Night Out program every year since 2004. Most of his presentations take place after normal work hours or on the weekends, but he has never complained about the long hours or their effect on his personal life.

In 2009, Chief of Police Charles "Chuck" Harmon added two more officers to the Neighborhood Crime Watch program. Officer Harris became the "Field Training Officer" for the new officers, and has spent the past six months teaching them the many facets of their new job.

Officer Harris has also produced and participated in the weekly WRXB radio entitled "Police and Community Perspective" for over 12 years, serving as an integral means of communication to and from the African American community.

Officer Harris has served as the department's liaison with the Pinellas County Urban League for many years and has coordinated our department's participation with their Annual Crime Prevention Run and Festival in the Park.

Officer Harris brings a "can do" attitude to all of his assignments and possesses a sincere dedication to the St. Petersburg Police Department, the Neighborhood Crime Watch program and the community. He is well known and respected in the department and the community.

Officer Johnny Harris is a consummate professional with a distinguished career and he is most deserving of this prestigious award.

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