

Law & Order

Alumni protect and serve in law enforcement

By Daniel Murphy '97

Daniel Murphy '97 is a contributing editor to Rowan Magazine. He lives in Mt. Laurel with his wife Susan Murphy '96.

Crime in the United States is down an average of seven percent, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Helping to drive that downward trend are more than 350 Rowan alumni who have chosen careers in law enforcement. Graduates across the country serve as police officers, FBI agents, state troopers and sheriffs. Others work for specialized organizations including the Drug Enforcement Agency, Immigration and Naturalization Services and correctional facilities. Although their battlefields are different and not all of them carry a badge, each one is committed to serving and protecting the public in the war against crime. Here are four alums who are fighting on the front lines.

Top Cop

Robert E. Allenbach '95, Camden's chief of police, is laying down the law in one of the country's most crime-ridden cities. Since Allenbach took command in 1998, Camden's homicide rate has dropped from a high of 64 in one year to seven for the first six months of this year. In addition, the average police response time has dropped from 33 minutes to eight. Allenbach has also increased police presence on the streets and reinstated many crime prevention programs like the Multi-Agency Life Line project which identifies and helps troubled youths

before they become career criminals.

The former detective and undercover officer has no regrets about accepting the challenge of revitalizing Camden's police department. "I've enjoyed every minute of it so far," said Allenbach. "I get to attend community meetings, work with community leaders, and in my opinion, lead the best police department in the nation."

Allenbach started his college career at Rowan in 1966 but put it on hold to join the military. After joining the Camden police force in 1974 he returned to school—only to be placed on undercover assignment for seven years. He then put his educational plans on hold again to raise a family with his wife, Mary. He resumed his studies part time in the late eighties and completed a degree in law and justice studies in 1995.

Although Allenbach reviews major investigations and cases, his responsibilities don't include investigative work. He mostly focuses on managing the day-to-day operations, personnel and budgetary needs of the department. Evening hours usually include meetings with civilian organizations, neighborhood watch groups and community leaders.

He considers the redeployment of his officers into staggered shifts the most successful and important change he's made. Now more than 100 officers are on the streets at the times the city receives the most calls for assistance. "Overlapping the shifts gives our officers a higher profile on the street and more time to do proactive and community-oriented police work," said Allenbach. "Instead of just reacting to problems they can now work to prevent them."

Allenbach is also combating crime with a multi-agency initiative funded by the federal government. "We've joined forces with the FBI, the prosecutor's office, the sheriff's

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Allenbach '95 is cleaning up the mean streets of Camden.

department, the state police and the county police,” said Allenbach. “Pooling our manpower, resources and equipment allows us to better target Camden’s drug sects and enables the government to prosecute a vast majority of the criminals with stricter federal charges.”

In addition to his initiatives on the street, Allenbach’s making changes in the department. He recently completed a \$1.5 million state-of-the-art upgrade to the department’s communications center, replaced older patrol cars with new ones and replaced the old typewriters on his detectives’ desks with new computers—all of which has boosted his department’s morale, brought praise from politicians and won the support and confidence of Camden’s residents.

While Allenbach is pleased with his department’s progress, he hopes the city will make a complete comeback. Until then, he continues to work with City Hall and county officials to rebuild and modernize the Police Department. “I get a lot of compliments from both civilians and politicians,” said Allenbach. “I can’t go anywhere in Camden without someone coming up to me, shaking my hand and saying, ‘Thanks, Chief—we can see a difference.’”

Document Detective

Darlene Morin ’90 patrols the United State’s borders every day—without ever leaving her desk. Morin, a forensic document examiner with the Immigration and Naturalization Service, verifies the authenticity of travel and identification documents of immigrants who apply for entry into the United States or for political asylum. Whenever an individual’s papers are in question, INS special agents or attorneys send the documents to Morin for analysis and examination at the agency’s Forensic Document Laboratory in McLean, Virginia.

“The first thing I do is determine whether the document is genuine or counterfeit,” said Morin. “This involves examining it for any alterations, including type additions or deletions, photo-



Morin ’90 has the “write stuff” to fight fraud.

graph substitutions, page replacements, altered signatures, unusual stamp impressions and disguised or forged handwriting.”

While working toward her degree in law and justice studies, Morin became interested in forensics during a forensic law class at Rowan. Knowing she would need special training and an advanced degree to work in the field, she worked the night shift as a security guard and attended George Washington University during the day to earn a master’s degree in forensic science. Then Morin accepted a position with the INS because of its excellent training program. “Proper training is an essential part of forensic document analysis,” said Morin. “It can take up to 2 1/2 years of on-the-job training in a resident training program.”

Since many countries around the world don’t use consistent or strong security features in their identification documents, Morin sometimes chooses to examine a document using handwriting analysis. “This is a real science,” said Morin. “Handwriting analysis is based on the unique traits and characteristics inherent in an individual’s writing. Each time you sign your name or write a short note, you are subconsciously leaving clues to your identity in the shapes, strokes and patterns of the letters and words.”

Morin does point out that there are limitations to handwriting analysis. “There are certain things I can’t determine from a sample,” she said. “But these are characteristics that no one could determine. They include personality, age, ethnicity, sex, profession and

where a person is from. But using the scientific principles behind handwriting analysis, I can identify or eliminate a person from a handwriting sample with almost 100 percent confidence.”

For Morin, the most challenging part of her job is not in the lab but in the courtroom. It’s not unusual for an agent’s case to hang on the results of her tests. “If the individual contests the lab report, I’ll be asked to testify to my findings as an expert witness,” said Morin. “But it’s all worth it when I get that call from an agent or attorney, thanking me because the evidence I detected helped win the case.”

Morin, who lives in Woodbridge, Virginia with her husband Mark, does most of her detective work from her desk—but finds she must stay current with world news and events. “Natural disasters, political unrest, border conflicts, economic conditions and other turmoil affects the types and amount of cases I get,” said Morin. “With the way the world is today, it’s hard to predict what’s going to happen next on the job.”

Super Trooper

Christopher DeMaise ’97, one of New Jersey’s newest state troopers, is at the top of his class. DeMaise, a member of the 118th graduating class of the New Jersey State Police Academy, received the Commandant’s Award for the most outstanding recruit at the Academy. The award is based on a recruit’s test scores, physical exams, uniform and personal appearance and speaking ability. “I was fortunate to win the award,” said DeMaise. “There were a lot of very good recruits in my class who deserved the award as much as myself.”

Being selected the top recruit in his graduating class doesn’t mean as much to DeMaise as being selected one of New Jersey’s finest. “I pursued a career with the State Police because of the organization’s excellent reputation for public service,” said DeMaise. “I knew I would have the best opportunity to help people in need by being a trooper.”

Stationed at the Buena Vista barracks,

DeMaise typically works a 10- to 12-hour day, 3 to 4 days a week, rotating between day, afternoon and midnight shifts. He patrols the highways searching for motorists in need of assistance, traffic violators and general road hazards. He likes the long hours and the alternating time schedule. "The State Police never closes—we're open 24-hours a day, seven days a week," said DeMaise. "The bad guys don't take a day off, so neither can we."

DeMaise believes it's important to leave each person he meets with a positive image of the State Police. "Sometimes people get the impression that troopers are strictly business," said DeMaise. "That's just not true. If it wasn't for a trooper who took the time to speak to me about his job when I was in high school,



DeMaise '97 commands attention to New Jersey's rules of the road.

I might not be in this position today."

After graduating from high school DeMaise entered the Marine Reserves. He then worked his way through Rowan, where he met his wife, Christine Shultes DeMaise '96, and graduated summa

cum laude with a degree in law and justice studies. He credits his military experience with giving him the discipline to succeed at Rowan and the Academy. "The organization teaches attention to detail and that if you take care of the little things, the big things will fall into place," said DeMaise.

DeMaise's greatest job satisfaction comes from helping people. "I'm not there just to issue speeding tickets," he said. "When it's possible, I'll change a tire, give directions or anything else I can to help a motorist get to his or her destination."

Despite DeMaise's love for his job, he's also realistic about the degree of danger associated with his position. "It can be a dangerous world," he said. "I've

seen a lot of bad things happen to good people. But you learn to accept that there are some things you can't change and you move on."

Although he's still in his rookie year, DeMaise can't imagine doing anything else. "I love being out on the road," he said. "No matter what risks there are, this is what I want to be and what I want to do. I can't think of a better job."

Most Wanted Agent

Carson Dunbar '73, '76, one of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's top agents at the New York field office, never thought about carrying a badge when he was growing up.

Dunbar's original career goal was to be a teacher, but during his freshman year at Rowan he had his first experience with law enforcement as a student guard when Dr. Philip Tumminia '69 suggested he join Campus Security—and that was all he needed. He switched majors and graduated with a degree in secondary social sciences and a master's degree in student personnel services. He served as a police officer with Westampton Township and the N.J. State Police before joining the FBI in 1977.

Quickly moving through the ranks, Dunbar rose to supervise some of the FBI's most elite units including those specializing in terrorism, foreign counterintelligence, and foreign and criminal surveillance. The terrorism unit was especially tough, because "when you're working the terrorism unit," he said, "there is no allowance for failure. While we can solve a terrorist bombing, we really only win if we prevent a terrorist strike in the first place."

Dunbar has headed some of the FBI's most infamous cases throughout his career, including investigations of the TWA Flight 800 explosion, the PanAm Flight 103 bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, and the World Trade Center bombing in New York City. He was also involved with FBI investigation of the bombing of the U.S. embassy in Kenya. "When you work for the Bureau you never really know what the day is going

to bring," said Dunbar. "A major crisis can hit at anytime."

Dunbar believes his current position, special agent in charge (administrative division), is his most challenging. He runs the day-to-day operations of the New York Office—a field office so large it comprises ten percent of the FBI's total resources. "This is the most complex FBI field operation there is," said Dunbar. "It's twice the size of the next largest field office in Los Angeles."

Dunbar's responsibilities include managing a \$100 million budget and personnel issues. "As a manager, I have to look for ways to say yes," said Dunbar. "I have agents come to me in need of equipment that without it, their lives may be endangered. I have to find a way to get them that equipment."

While Dunbar doesn't get as much hands-on time with the agents as he would like in his current position, one of his greatest pleasures is speaking to new police recruits and FBI agents about the realities of being in law enforcement. He warns them not to develop a skewed view of society. "Law enforcement officers generally end up dealing with a segment of society that's not necessarily indicative of what society is as a whole," said Dunbar. "And if they're not careful, they may find themselves drawing a conclusion that everyone is like that two or three percent."

It seems fitting that Dunbar, who lives with his wife Carol Nelke Dunbar '75 and their two sons in Ramsey, works for an organization whose motto is "Fidelity, Bravery and Integrity." It's these principles that motivate him to help others every day. "I am an idealist," said Dunbar. "I may not be able to save the world—but I can do something about the corner I live in." ■



Dunbar '73, '76 has crisis control under command.