



It is More than a Badge!

The Rankin County School District, the Rankin County Sheriff's Department, the Brandon Police Department, and the Florence Police Department share an interlocal agreement providing law enforcement which are staffed at each of the 28 campuses to protect students, staff, and families. The Rankin County School District is fortunate to have the very best in our buildings. It is much more than a badge to these officers. It is about building relationships, showing the students that they matter, and at the end of the day, just being part of a family, a team, and a community. This is one story of how these individuals are making a difference in our schools and how one act of kindness has multiplied.

Deputy Sheriff, Michael Gober is the school resource officer for McLaurin High School. Deputy Gober has over thirty years in law enforcement.

His career has taken him from Court Services to Campus Police at a university, Deputy Director of a County Emergency Management Agency, Emergency Response Coordinator with another state agency to becoming the Law Enforcement Director of a State Park agency. He always said he would give up his law enforcement administrator position if given an opportunity to be a school resource officer. Mike started his career in law enforcement in 1992. His wife of twenty-eight years has more than thirty years in education as an elementary school teacher. Their daughter is a sophomore at Mississippi State University.



Deputy Gober with MHS Tiger Mascot - MAC

When asked what got him into law enforcement, he stated that he had family members who were in Law Enforcement and worked in the Court Systems.

A day in the life of a school resource officer looks a little different for everyone, but for Deputy Gober he says that his primary duty is the safety and protection of students and staff at our assigned school. That consists of checking the building's door security, school traffic duties, keeping watch on all who enter and exit the campus, and finally being visible and available to all that come to the campus. However, for Deputy Gober it goes beyond that. Building relationships with school administration, teachers, students, and parents is what makes the real difference.

"The interactions and relationships that we build with staff who are here to educate and help our students grow into future leaders is one of the most rewarding aspects of the job. Building those same relationships with students is also an incredible opportunity for those of us who get to do this. Honestly, I think I learn more from the students than I could ever give back to them."

After being in the schools, Deputy Gober's perspective on law enforcement has changed since he started many years ago. In the school setting, an officer has the opportunity to show a positive side of law enforcement. Some students may not have had the opportunity to see an officer in a positive light. This can only be done by consistent positive interactions with students. By modeling through your actions, you can show them that they matter and that you believe in them.

One way that he has accomplished building those relationships and trust throughout his career is to keep a box of stuffed animals in his patrol vehicle to give out if the situation arises. "It's amazing to see a child's face light up with that small gesture. In some cases, the situation they are in is out of their control. Just a small act of kindness may be all it takes to completely change their outlook" stated Deputy Gober.



Deputy Guber has proven to be a true TIGER in every sense of the word. In the fall of 2021, his first semester at McLaurin High School, he had his first opportunity to travel with and attend the MHS Girls Volleyball Team. Deputy Guber said, "We are the McLaurin Tigers and it just seemed natural for me to change my box of stuffed animals to stuffed tigers." One of the away volleyball games, he spoke with the coaches and asked if they ever named an MVP of the game.

believing in them....

School Law Enforcement Officer's primary duty is protection and safety of the campus, staff, and students during the school day. In a High School setting, some students spend more time after school for athletics, band, and clubs than the actual hours in a school day. When asked about how he ended up traveling with extracurricular organizations this is what Deputy Guber had to say. "I asked and was given the opportunity by my supervisors at the Sheriff's Department to ride along with the MHS Girls Volleyball team to events last fall.

That grew into football games home and away, traveling to band competitions the opening ceremony of the MS State Fair, basketball games, homecoming dances, and prom. I have been given the opportunity by my department to be with our students whenever they might need and request me. If the Tigers are going, I'm there if they want me, and grateful for the opportunity to be part of the Tiger Family."



Deputy Guber, McLaurin High School Resource Officer along with MHS Volleyball player, Gabbie Taylor.

After talking it over with Deputy Guber, they decided it was a good idea to and the stuffed tiger became the MVP Trophy of sorts. It's just another way of showing the students through actions that they matter. "They matter greatly to Veteran Law Enforcement Officers also." Says Deputy Guber. Boxes of stuffed tigers from Amazon are a regular delivery at the home of the Guber's and they are always excited to see them at their door. Since Deputy Guber has been sharing his stuffed tigers, the trend has caught on across the district among our resource officers. Deputy Ruthie Harrington at Northshore Elementary has her own stash of stuffed animals. COUGARS!



Deputy Ruthie Harrington, Northshore Elementary School Resource Officer along with Northshore Elementary student, Blaine Pambianchi.

After almost three decades in Law Enforcement, Deputy Guber is so thankful for the opportunity from the Rankin County Sheriff's Department and the Rankin County School District to serve as a school resource officer for McLaurin High School. Deputy Guber said, "It's places like McLaurin High School that remind you what really matters in life."

GO TIGERS !!



Deputy Guber, McLaurin High School Resource Officer along with MHS Volleyball player, Erica Russell.

