

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 7, 2017

LaGrange Police Department Taking Part in UGA Study

LaGrange, Ga. August 7, 2017 – The LaGrange Police Department is a part of a research study with the University of Georgia.

The purpose of the study is to better understand how law enforcement employees experience work-related trauma. The goal of the study is to help police departments support employees who experience this type of trauma.

The LaGrange Police Department is one of three departments in the state to be a part of a study looking into secondary trauma with first responders. The two other departments involved in this study include the Athens-Clarke County Police Department and the Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department.

UGA Researcher Dr. Brian N. Williams says he's been following the career of Police Chief Lou Dekmar including his recent apology for his department's role in a 1940 lynching of Austin Callaway.



“This is a once in a lifetime opportunity,” said Williams. “They see things we can’t even imagine. I’m humbled to be able to talk to these police officers.”

Fellow researcher Dr. Anthony Silard from California State University- San Bernardino was inspired by Williams’ research on this topic and is also working on this research.

“There have been studies on secondary trauma but what hasn’t been done is research on how to manage it. That’s what we want to look at.”



Ten people from the department including eight officers and two detectives were interviewed. In addition to the police department, several people from the community were interviewed including Troup County NAACP President Ernest H. Ward.

According to Ward, “We need this for continued healing. It gives a voice to the voiceless. To feel that you’ve been heard, that’s powerful.”

Dr. Williams, Dr. Silard, and UGA Ph.D. student Lindsay Brown will continue their research in California, Texas, and Kansas. It’s expected to take at least a year until they plan to release the findings from their research.

Contact: LaGrange Police Sgt. Robert Kirby, rkirby@lagrangega.org or (706) 883-2614 or Dr. Brian Williams, University of Georgia researcher bnwillia@uga.edu

###