Florida Supreme Court Marshal’s Office wins rare law enforcement accreditation

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Supreme Court Marshal’s Office has won a rare honor. It now is Florida’s first and only accredited law enforcement agency housed completely within a court.

The Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation awarded the Marshal’s Office accredited status at its June 2017 meeting. It said that the Marshal’s Office “is the first law enforcement agency within a judicial function in Florida to seek accreditation. Additionally, they are the only agency located within a judiciary anywhere in the nation to seek any type of accredited status.”

“Being accredited,” said Florida Supreme Court Marshal Silvester Dawson, “means this agency employs professional standards that are considered best practices in the law enforcement profession. This recognition not only reflects positively upon the Supreme Court of Florida. But it also communicates to citizens our commitment to excellence and to providing the same level of professionalism expected of any law enforcement agency anywhere in Florida.”

Prior to this award, Commission assessors examined all aspects of the Marshal’s policies and procedures, management, operations and support services on May 9, 2017. They met or exceeded about 130 standards in order to receive accredited status – with many of these standards critical to life, health and safety issues.

Once the Commission’s assessors completed their review, they reported back to the full Commission. It then reviewed all findings and awarded the agency accredited status, with the first accreditation period lasting the next three years.
Verification by the team that the Office meets the Commission’s standards is part of a voluntary process to gain or maintain accreditation – a highly prized recognition of law enforcement professional excellence, Dawson said.

“The accreditation program manager for the Office of the Marshal is Vicki Cutcliffe,” said Dawson. “She and all employees have done an outstanding job.”

###
June 21, 2017

Marshal Silvester Dawson
Florida Supreme Court
Office of the Marshal
500 South Duval Street
Tallahassee, Florida  32399

Dear Marshal Silvester Dawson,

Congratulations!

We are pleased to inform you the Florida Supreme Court, Office of the Marshal has met the required standards to become accredited by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation.

Your accredited status is official as of this date and will remain in effect for a period of three years. Compliance with any future standards approved by the Commission that may be applicable to your department is part of maintaining your accredited status.

You and your agency are to be commended for your continued diligence, professionalism, and commitment in maintaining this highest recognition among Florida’s law enforcement community.

We look forward to working with you and your agency in your continuous pursuit of excellence. On behalf of the Commission, we extend our thanks for your participation and congratulations on a job well done!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Lori Mizell
Executive Director
June 7, 2017

Marshal Sylvester Dawson
FL Supreme Court, Office of the Marshal
500 South Duval Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Marshal Dawson,

Enclosed you will find a copy of the team leader’s final report from your accreditation assessment. The Commission’s next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 21, 2017 at the Omni Orlando Resort at Championsgate, 1500 Masters Boulevard, Championsgate, FL 32092, and telephone (407) 390-6664. The Commission meeting agenda is enclosed for your review.

Your agency will be reviewed by a panel of Commissioners prior to the regular business meeting. You have been assigned for review by Panel A. Reviews will begin at 8:00am, followed by the general business meeting at 9:30am. At the beginning of your agency’s review, you will be given the opportunity to give a brief description of your agency size and service community. Please keep your comments to no more than two minutes. You will also be given the opportunity to make additional remarks after the panel vote is taken. At the general business meeting, your agency’s accreditation will be voted on by the full Commission.

The Commission expects the agency Chief Executive Officer will attend the Commission meeting. In the event the Chief Executive Officer is unavailable to attend, a high ranking agency official should be present to represent the agency. The very nature of the Panel Review and Commission Review processes may require a level of expertise and institutional knowledge commensurate with this level of authority.

If you have any questions, or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We look forward to seeing you in Championsgate!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Lori Mizell
Executive Director

Enclosures
To: Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc.
From: Captain David Pate, Team Leader
Date: May 19, 2017
Re: Full Compliance Assessment Report
Florida Supreme Court Office of the Marshal
Standards Manual Version: 5.03

A. Dates of On-site Assessment: May 9, 2017

Key Agency Personnel
Chief Executive Officer: Marshall Silvester Dawson
Accreditation Manager: Reserve Deputy Marshal Vicki Cutcliffe

B. Assessment Team

Team Leader –
Captain David Pate (DP)
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
620 S. Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600
Office: (850) 717-2114
Cellular: (850) 519-7008
David.pate@myfwc.com

Team Member -
Ms. Debbie Fecht
Mount Dora Police Department
1300 North Donnelly Street
Mount Dora, FL 32757
Office: (352) 735-7194
fecht@cityofmountdora.com

C. Standards Summary Tally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Mandatory Standards</th>
<th>% of Applicable Standards</th>
<th>Other-than-mandatory Standards</th>
<th>% of Applicable Other-than-mandatory Standards</th>
<th>Total Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In compliance</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in compliance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>96.8%</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected 20%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Set</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>240</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. Agency Profile

The Florida Supreme Court Office of the Marshal (FSCOM) was created in 1927 when the Florida legislature granted the Supreme Court the authority to appoint a Marshal to be custodian of the Supreme Court building and keep the Court "free of trespassers and marauders." In 1972 Article V of the Constitution of Florida was amended to authorize the Supreme Court of Florida to appoint a marshal with the power to execute the process of the Supreme Court throughout the state, and in any county may deputize the sheriff for such purpose.

The Office of the Marshal was first given limited law enforcement authority while on the Supreme Court grounds only in 1980 by the Florida legislature. In 2011, the Supreme Court granted its marshal authority to create a fully functional law enforcement agency. At that time, it transitioned from suits and ties to a traditional law enforcement uniform.

On May 30, 2013, the Governor of Florida signed HB571 into law designating the Florida Supreme Court Marshal and his deputies as law enforcement officers of the State of Florida with the power to bear arms and make arrests.

The Office of the Marshal employs both sworn and non-sworn officers: 13 full-time law enforcement officers; seven part-time law enforcement officers, three non-sworn armed security officers. Additionally, the Office employs two administrative support personnel, six facility engineer personnel, and eight part-time custodians.

Judicial Protective Operations

Ensuring the safe conduct of judicial proceedings and protecting the Justices and other members of the judicial family are principal functions of the Office of the Marshal. In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of threats against members of the judiciary, attorneys and other court officers. Explicit threats against the judiciary are assessed by the Office of the Marshal to determine the level of danger. On average, about 100 threats/inappropriate communications against judicial members are logged each year. Building on operational study of U.S. assassins, attackers, and near-lethal approaches of public officials, the Office of the Marshal develops a threat assessment and determines an appropriate protective operation in response to each threat. The marshal and his deputies ensure the safety and security of justices during court, meetings, and conferences statewide.

Court Security

The Office of the Marshal provides the latest in state-of-the-art protective techniques and equipment in all phases of court proceedings, threat situations, and judicial conferences, thus ensuring quick and safe responses in emergency situations as well as unobtrusive surveillance and protection during routine operations. In fulfilling its primary responsibility of providing security services to the Supreme Court, the Office of
the Marshal deploys and coordinates the installation of complex electronic security systems to protect the Justices, courthouse staff members, visitors, and physical court facilities. This includes perimeter security, access control, closed circuit television surveillance, and alarm reporting systems.

Central Courthouse Management

The Marshal is the custodian of the building and grounds of the Supreme Court including custodianship of all property, building and grounds maintenance, and administration of the building facilities. Through its administrative staff, the Office of the Marshal prepares and manages the budget and inventory of the Supreme Court.

The Facilities and Engineering Division performs building and grounds maintenance, construction management of capital improvement projects, and mail center management. Built in 1948 the current Supreme Court Building is one of the most historically significant buildings in the state capital, with architecture inspired by Thomas Jefferson. The Facilities and Engineering staff provide a program of modern upgrades to systems while preserving the historic majesty and dignity of the building.

This is the agency’s initial accreditation.

E. Assessment Summary

Approximately three weeks prior to the assessment, team members received a pre-assessment package which included all necessary materials. Accreditation Manager (AM) Vicki Cutcliffe and Team Leader Pate conferred via telephone prior to the assessment. On May 8, 2017, a meeting was held with the assessment team. Commission philosophy and protocol was discussed and Team Leader Pate made chapter assignments and set goals for the team.

On the morning of May 9, 2017, AM Cutcliffe met the assessment team at their hotel and escorted them to the Supreme Court. Upon arrival, assessors were checked into the building and issued visitors credentials. The entrance used by the assessors was manned by uniformed Deputy Marshals (DM) and is primarily utilized for employee access to the building. All personnel assigned to the building must scan in and Deputy Marshals in the Control Room and at other posts can see in real time the identification photo of the person checking in. At the same time, they have a live video feed of the person at their point of entry so they may compare and verify the identity of the person seeking access.

AM Cutcliffe escorted the team to their work area, which was clean, neat and well organized. The area was sufficiently appointed and equipped to allow for a successful assessment.
Having already observed one entrance area to the Court, AM Cutcliffe escorted the team to the main entrance of the building where several key employee interviews were conducted and multiple observable standards were verified.

DM Aaron Griffith was on post at the main entrance and he provided assessors with very detailed and accurate answers regarding his policies on equipment, exposure control, limits of authority, as well as how he performs his daily functions. Assessors confirmed numerous observable standards in this first, yet brief encounter. DM Griffith showed assessors their video system and how they monitor employees entering and exiting the building.

DM Griffith also provided an overview of equipment available to sworn members to include first aid kits and blood borne pathogen protective gear. Assessors also observed high visibility reflective garments available to members should the need to direct traffic or pedestrians in or around the building.

Assessors then participated in an entrance interview with Marshal Silvester Dawson. Present for the interview was AM Cutcliffe and the assessment team members. Marshal Dawson expressed his appreciation for the team’s flexibility and professionalism. He said he was looking forward to this initial review and thanked AM Cutcliffe for her hard work in preparing for the assessment, adding the employees were equally ready for the review process.

After the entrance interview, team members were escorted back to their work area by AM Cutcliffe and file review and interviews continued throughout the day.

Key employee interviews:

- Marshal Silvester Dawson
- AM Vicki Cutcliffe
- DM Robert Smith
- DM Gary Dawson
- DM Marvin McMillon
- Administrative Secretary II Heather McKeenan
- Lieutenant Matthew Vickery
- DM James Austin
- DM Ferman Richardson
- DM Aaron Griffin
- Administrative Assistant III Odis Henry

Assessors were provided with a tour and access to the control room. This room is a secure area where video and other electronic controls are administered. DM James Austin provided an impressive overview of his job functions and he remained eager to answer all questions from assessors. During this interview, DM Austin described processes related to evidence and property, towing of vehicles, procedures inside the control room and issues relative to his equipment and training. His quick and thoughtful responses were certainly indicative of his understanding of the policies and procedures of his agency.

Members have continuous communication via radio with the control room, but are not subject to dispatched calls. The agency has no incoming 911 capability and do not
receive calls for service outside of their area, but if requested, may respond as needed to assist other agencies within the Capitol Complex.

Assessors interviewed DM Robert Smith at the agency’s armory. DM Smith confirmed practices for issuance and tracking of weapons and equipment as well as protocols for firearms and less lethal weapons qualifications. Adjacent to the armory, Lieutenant Matthew Vickery showed assessors how other equipment, such as computers, are tracked and accounted for.

Lieutenant Vickery also confirmed there are no assigned vehicles within the agency. Any time one is needed for out of the area travel, the agency rents vehicles suitable to the need. He confirmed no other vehicles such as golf carts or other non-traditional patrol vehicles are utilized. Deputy Marshals patrol the Supreme Court property on foot.

Lieutenant Vickery continued by showing assessors their evidence and property storage. While this area is compact and confined to one secured room, they meet or exceed all standards relative to these processes. Access is controlled effectively while allowing members the ability to package materials appropriately for submission or storage. Evidence custodians are specifically designated as the only persons with access and policies, interviews and physical security measures confirmed their processes are consistent.

Lieutenant Vickery showed assessors their secure method and storage of employee training records. Selected files were reviewed and found to be in good order, with consistency in format from the oldest employee to the newest. The files can be searched by paper or electronically. Access is limited and all exempt data is marked and or stored appropriately.

Administrative Secretary II Heather McKeehan showed assessors the agency’s report system. She demonstrated how individual officer’s reports are generated, approved and stored. The access for electronic and paper copies of reports meets standards and allows for approvals and retrieval of documents as needed. She also discussed security of personnel files to include proper protocols for separation of medical records and was knowledgeable regarding exempt information pertaining to these files. Finally, she demonstrated secure storage and separation of files containing juvenile information.

Deputy Marshals are also responsible for a unique process for ensuring the safety of Justices who may be travelling outside of the court. Interviews were conducted with both Marshal Dawson and Lieutenant Vickery, who outlined their practices and procedures. Their policy for dignitary protection both inside and outside of the Supreme Court property is clear and consistent with standards. Members who are assigned to this duty have received training in dignitary protective operations and follow accepted protocols to include advance assessments, transportation and assistance from other agencies while Justices are in travel status.
The Deputy Marshal’s level of pride in their duties of not only protecting the property, but also the members of the Supreme Court is evident. When out in public conducting dignitary protection operations for the Justices, the Deputy Marshals are also charged with protecting the integrity and decorum of the court. This is a function each member takes seriously whether on post at the court, or in the field with one or more of the Justices.

During the assessment, the team reviewed all files, interviewed multiple agency members, and found no non-compliance issues. All individuals interviewed were knowledgeable in the accreditation process and with the policy and procedures of the agency.

The assessment was completed in one day. An exit interview was held on the afternoon of May 9, 2017. Marshal Dawson, AM Cutcliffe, Lieutenant Vickery and the assessment team were in attendance.

During the exit interview, assessors discussed their assigned chapters and any comments or issues related to those topics and standards. The assessors told Marshal Dawson the assessment was considered flawless and he expressed his sincere gratitude for the team’s hard work. He re-stated his intention to maintain accredited status and he welcomes the constant review which accompanies this status.

F. Standards Noncompliance Discussion: None.

G. Corrective Action Discussion: None.

H. Waiver Concurrence/Nonconcurrence Discussion and Recommendation: None.

I. 20 Percent Standards Election Standards Elected for Exemption:

8.02 23.08

J. Standards Verified by the Team as “Not Applicable” to the Agency:

| 1.04 | 2.09M | 2.11M | 3.02M |
| 5.02M | 5.03M | 5.05M | 5.06M |
| 6.01M | 6.02 | 6.03 | 7.06 |
| 8.01M | 9.03 | 9.04 | 9.07 |
| 10.11M | 11.03 | 11.04 | 12.06 |
| 13.01M | 13.02 | 14.02 | 14.05M |
| 14.13M | 14.14M | 15.02 | 15.03M |
| 15.05 | 15.07 | 15.11M | 15.12M |
| 17.02M | 17.04M | 17.05M | 17.08M |
| 17.09 | 17.10M | 18.01 | 18.02M |
K. **Standards, the Status of Which, Were Changed by Assessors:** None.

L. **Public Information Activities:** None.

   L-1. **Correspondence and Media Interest:** None.
   L-2. **Follow-up by Assessment Team:** None.

M. **Exemplary Policies/Projects/Procedures:**

The Florida Supreme Court Office of the Marshal is not just a unique law enforcement organization; the Supreme Court Marshal provides a unique service to managers, administrators, and judges of Florida’s courts statewide. It is not uncommon to hear of violence occurring in courts throughout the country. Court operations involve an inherent threat due to the fact that court officials interact daily with citizens who may already be in an agitated or upset mindset.

In 2012, Marshal Silvester Dawson was requested to present court safety and security training to an annual conference of circuit court administrators. From the success of this lecture, the Chief Justice of Florida encouraged Marshal Dawson to develop a Court and Personal Safety Program that has now been delivered from the 15th Circuit (West Palm Beach) to the 1st Circuit (Pensacola). This program ensures judges, administrators, and managers are aware of such matters as:

- Court Safety and Security,
- Geo tags on photos posted on Facebook/internet accounts,
- Personal safety practices,
- Mail/package handling, and
- Active Shooter Awareness protocols.
Marshal Dawson developed his judicial Court and Personal Safety Program to address Florida’s state and county court concerns after hearing from several court managers that past lectures from federal officials did not adequately apply to their environments.

This safety program has been so well received that Marshal Dawson continues to receive special requests to present this training at annual judicial training conferences and court related personnel events statewide. Marshal Dawson’s Court and Personal Safety Program has greatly contributed to the Judicial Branch’s Long-Range Strategic Plan, Goal 4.1 “Protect all judges, court personnel, court users, and facilities through effective security, emergency preparedness, and continuity of operations plans.”

N. Quality of Services: No Chapter summaries.

O. Summary and Recommendation:

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS:

The Florida Supreme Court Office of the Marshal (FSCOM) is perhaps one of, if not the most unique agencies in Florida seeking accreditation. While their mission remains very specific, they are completely prepared to and regularly deliver traditional law enforcement services. The FSCOM is the first law enforcement agency within a judicial function in Florida to seek accreditation. Additionally, they are the only agency located within a judiciary anywhere in the nation to seek any type of accredited status.

The members encountered by the assessment team were eager to interact and share their pride in their job performance. The members of FSCOM are reflective of an engaged, qualified and resourceful workforce. The preparations for the assessment were well managed and with an excellent focus on ensuring ease of use and access to necessary materials by the assessment team. The files and corresponding policies were concise, logical and in good order. All proofs provided were relevant and no noncompliance or corrective action issues were identified. The assessment was completed in one day and was considered by the team members to be flawless in all aspects.

The assessment team unanimously recommends the Florida Supreme Court Office of the Marshal be favorably reviewed for accredited status by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation at the next Commission meeting.

NON-COMPLIANCE SUMMARY: None.

Submitted by Captain David Pate, Team Leader