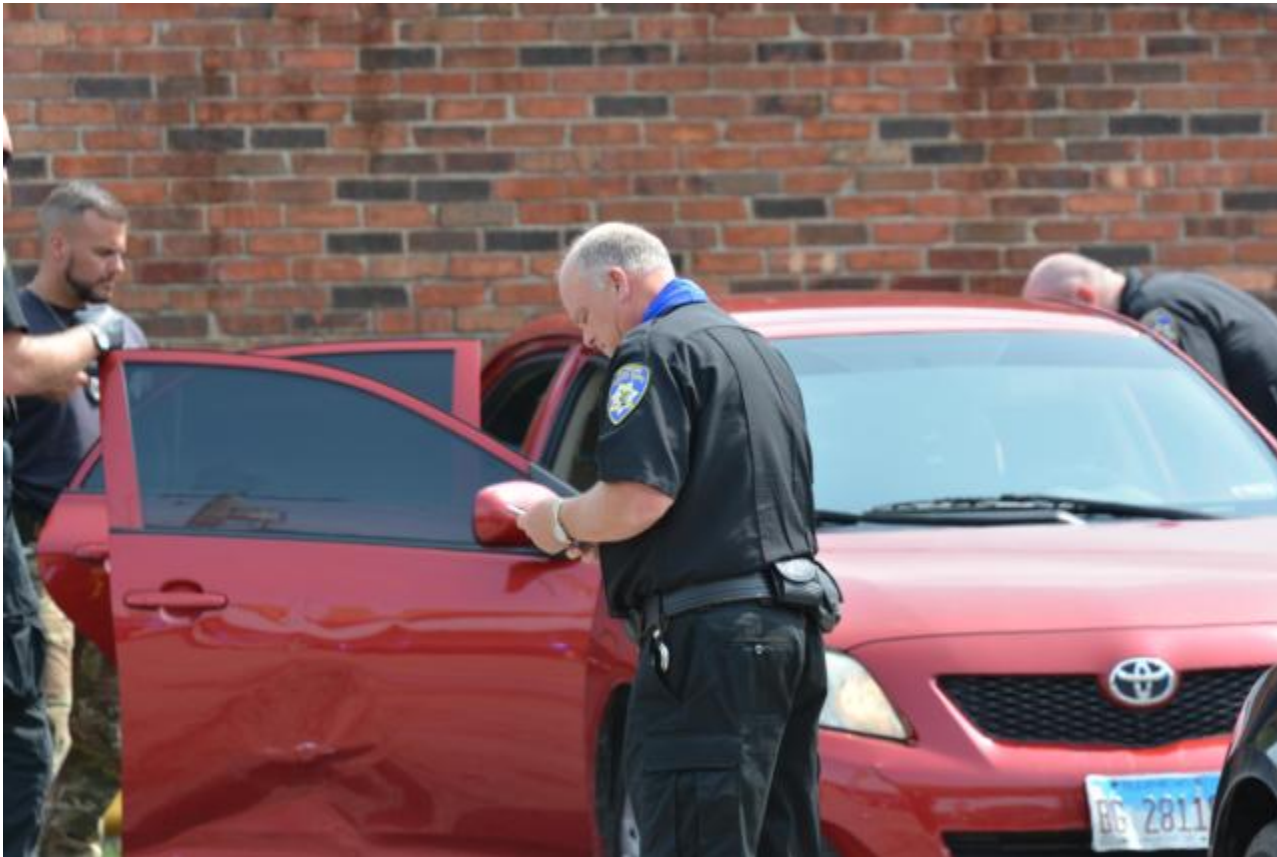


Includes Video Interview: Chief Jason Simmons Retires, Plans To Spend His Time Now With Wife And Family After 3 Decades In Law Enforcement

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
September 25 2020 8:56 AM

SEE VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH JASON SIMMONS:





ALTON - Jason Simmons has lived the non-stop, on-call life of a police officer for three-plus decades.

Alton Police Chief "Jake" Simmons is one person who can always be found in uniform. At almost any big crime or serious situation, Simmons was there as a calming force for not only officers but bystanders at the scene.

Simmons took his role as a police officer seriously. He has served as Alton Police Chief the past seven years and accomplished a lot of excellent things. Likely Simmons' biggest achievement has been helping the community to see police officers are not there just to interrogate but to serve the people.

A favorite memory is watching Simmons participate in basketball games with other officers against youth at the YWCA in Alton. He has always been willing to speak with any sides and when protests came with the Black Live Matters movement, Simmons was there to let people protest, but keep them safe. He has firmly spoken out on the right for public protest and freedom of speech. The chief mostly wanted to make sure protesters were safe and no damage was done. He even purchased water and personally handed it out to protesters at scenes.

"I have been with the Alton Police Department for just shy of 28 years," he said recently. Simmons is retiring from the Alton Police Department on Oct. 1. Simmons stepped forward and retired so other officers could be saved with tight economic times

in Alton because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. "I have loved my time as a police officer in Alton. I spent the majority of my time, 16 years, in detectives. I was part of the Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis for 12 years. I worked a lot of homicides during my time."

Chief Simmons said in many ways it is a "surreal feeling," leaving the police department.

"Alton has been very good to me," he said. "I have worked under a lot of mayors and I have enjoyed them all, including Mayor Walker, Alton's present mayor. I think the mayor has done a phenomenal job with the city. He established a very good team of department heads."

The situation in Minneapolis involving George Floyd's death and how that was handled "sickened any good police officer," Chief Simmons said. "I hope justice is done with the situation in Minneapolis," he said.

Chief Simmons said police work has been his world and dominated his life. He said now he wants to spend time with his wife and family and make them his new quest.

Simmons stressed that no police officer is perfect, but there is a code of conduct that every solid police officer follows. He said the majority of police officers are excellent at their jobs.

One of the key things to be a good police officer, Chief Simmons says, "Is having empathy for other people."

"I have always believed in First Amendment rights and peaceful protests," the chief said. "I have also worked to get the community involved in solving issues. In the future, it will take police departments teamed with a community to make things work."

Now, he said his focus is "to look forward to the next chapter of my life with my wife, Shelly," the "love of my life" who has been so patient throughout his long career.

[Charles Thomas also contributed to this story.](#)