"Do The Right Thing For The Right Reasons:" New Madison County Sheriff Jeff Connor Takes Oath Of Office

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE — New Sheriff Jeff Connor promised to "faithfully" serve the residents of Madison County today in a ceremony at the courthouse.

Connor became the 47th sheriff of Madison County as former Third Judicial Circuit Judge James Hackett administered his oath of office. Jeff's wife, Elizabeth, stood beside him. Retired Sheriff John Lakin presented him with a new badge.

"I am humbled to serve you," Connor said. "The county has come a long way in the last 220 years since the first sheriff was elected in 1812. I expect the sheriff's office here today to continue being one of the finest law enforcement agencies in this region."

The new sheriff said he never thought about being a police officer when he was young, but then someone approached him about it and he was hired at age 23. Connor said his childhood dream wasn't to go into law enforcement, but rather to follow in his father's and grandfather's footsteps and become a steelworker.

"Looking back, all the steps of my life have led to this," he said of his new sheriff's appointment. "It is an honor to be the 47th Sheriff of Madison County."

Connor asked all law enforcement officers in the room to stand, and as they received applause from the crowd he said, "That's who you should support — the men and women in this room."

Connor paid special tribute to his devoted wife, Elizabeth, for standing right by him during the campaign for sheriff and his other years in law enforcement. He said: "Elizabeth has always been supportive.

"We married 39 years ago when I hadn't even planned on being a police officer. We have three children together, five grandchildren, and one on the way. Elizabeth has worked as an emergency room nurse since 1984. She's currently at Gateway Regional Medical Center in Granite City. We have both seen a lot of the same things over the years and witnessed a lot of tragedies." Sheriff Connor stressed the similarities they experienced have always been a common thread between them.

Connor described the support for him at the swearing-in ceremony as overwhelming as it has been since he announced he was going to run for the position.

"I am humbled, to say the least," he said.

The new sheriff thanked the previous Sheriff John Lakin for his friendship and influence over the years.

"He is a well-respected law enforcement person," Connor said. "I cherish his friendship and mentorship."

Sheriff Connor said one of his first goals is to see how the SAFE-T Act ends up and adapt the office to that.

"We have a great team together," he said of his office, which includes Madison County Jail staff.

Jeff Connor has been involved in many high-level cases in the county over the years. He has directed 25-26 homicide investigations with the Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis. He said it was always an "honor" for him to be the one to solve these horrific cases, provide answers for families, and ensure justice was served.

Sheriff Connor concluded that his goal is to make Madison County "a safe place."

"Our job is not to take over communities, because they have their own police departments," he said. "We will want to support and assist them in any way we can when they have major incidents and reach out for help. We will also work to keep the areas in the unincorporated territory of Madison County as safe as we can."

He closed with the following: "I just thank the citizens for having confidence in us," he said. "It is a team approach with the sheriff's office. We have assembled a great team. I hope to make the citizens feel like they accomplished the right thing in electing me, sheriff."

He thanked his parents for his upbringing and the mentors in his 36-year law enforcement career along with everyone who helped him get to where he is now.

"If I had a slogan it would be 'do the right thing for the right reasons,'" Connor said. "That's what I hope to accomplish over the next several years."