

POLICING



in AMERICA

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Lastly, a special thanks goes to Richard J. O'Connell of the Washington Crime News Service. He permitted us to reprint several articles from the *Crime Control Digest*. These articles are an important part of this text.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to R. Steve Nobles, the former Chief of the Oldham County, Kentucky Police Department. Steve joined the Oldham County Police Department on January 1, 1978, and was one of the Department's original three officers. He was appointed Chief in September, 1979. During his tenure as Chief, he exemplified and modeled his department after what many believe to be the professional principles that should drive police management and operations. He was a community policeman before community policing was in vogue. He understood that police officers must not only serve their communities, they must also be a part of their communities. He believed that police officers and departments should be accountable for the human needs and problems that exist in their communities. As an example, he started a program whereby parents with small children who could not afford a child car seat could come to the police department to obtain one.

Steve was also a good friend. He constantly worked with other departments in an effort to improve policing in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. While President of the Kentucky Association of Chiefs of Police, he started a state-level police agency accreditation program. He worked with a variety of community groups on problems such as domestic violence, DUI enforcement, and crime prevention.

Steve's untimely death has had a tremendous effect on law enforcement. We miss him very much.

Larry K. Gaines

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Preface

Police work is becoming increasingly complex. The last decade has seen the federal government almost totally neglect our nation's cities and the many social problems that contribute to crime and other police problems. The drug problem in the United States continues to worsen, irrespective of the various programs generated by the local, state, and federal governments. Finally, governmental resources are becoming scarce. Government agencies, especially police departments, are having to do much more with fewer resources. These factors create substantial strain and pressure on police departments and police officers.

Moreover, there has been a resurgence of public interest in policing. There has been an increase in the number of television programs dealing with police work, and the news media give more attention to police activities and crime. There is a growing concern among our citizens that they are not as safe as they once were.

It becomes obvious that law enforcement remains at the center of government activities, especially at the local level. It is also clear to professionals in the field that there are many misconceptions about police work, and these misconceptions inhibit policing from becoming fully effective. These misconceptions are propagated by the news media, government officials, and by citizens themselves. The purpose of this text is to provide an overview of police work, and hopefully, to provide an accurate assessment of where we are and where we need to go. This unique look at policing provides the reader with an understanding to assist in making decisions about law enforcement operations and policies.



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The Police in American Society

1

The American police fulfill their various responsibilities to the public within the confines of a unique environment. This environment is constantly evolving and is composed of social, legal, economic, political, and intellectual forces that combine to create a unique climate. This environment substantially influences the behavior of American police officers and, to some degree, determines where and when they will enforce the law, how they will go about enforcing the law, and even which laws will be enforced and which ones will be ignored. Although the police can be distinguished from other social institutions and are a distinctive governmental entity, their actions are largely controlled by forces within the environment that are external to police organizations.

The primary shapers of the American police institution are society and government. Because of their interdependence, the terms “government” and “society” are often used interchangeably. They are, however, distinct. Societies can exist without formal government, but government cannot exist without a social structure and citizens. The relationship between government and society has occupied the attention of political scholars since the early days of philosophy. Many great political thinkers of the 1700s and 1800s spent considerable time examining the role of government in society. Political philosophers such as John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau developed lengthy works on the ideal relationship