



Legislation Text

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Congratulations to Officer Christopher Challenger, recipient of the City of Coral Gables “Officer of the Month Award,” for the month of April 2022.

I would like to respectfully nominate Officer Christopher Challenger, for Officer of the Month of April 2022.

Traditionally, the City of Coral Gables Police Department’s Officer of the Month is awarded based on apprehending criminals or solving cases. However, police work has evolved greatly, and Community Policing plays a vital role in police work today.

On April 13, 2022, Officer Challenger was dispatched to a residential alarm. When he arrived at the residence, he met the homeowner, Mr. John Tomberlin, who is 90 years old. Officer Challenger engaged in a conversation with Mr. Tomberlin and discovered he is a retired City of Miami Police Officer. Mr. Tomberline distinguishly served with the City of Miami Police Department from 1956-1990. Mr. Tomberlin invited Officer Challenger inside his home where they continued their conversation and he proudly showed Officer Challenger his shadow box on the wall that had City of Miami Police badges and patches.

Through their conversation, Officer Challenger discovered that it would be Mr. Tomberlin’s 91st birthday the following week. Officer Challenger promised him that he come back to celebrate his birthday.

Throughout the week, Officer Challenger researched Mr. Tomberlin’s career and was able to locate multiple newspaper articles. Some of the articles discovered dated back to 1959 and continued throughout Mr. Tomberlin’s illustrious career. Officer Challenger took all the articles and carefully pieced them together to create an impressive montage of Mr. Tomberlin’s 34-year career. In addition to the framed photos, Officer Challenger also used images of Mr. Tomberlin’s original City of Miami Police ID and printed it on an aluminum tumbler to present to Mr. Tomberlin on his birthday.

During this short period of time, Officer Challenger advised me, PIO Sergeant Escobar and City of Miami Police to coordinate a large gathering of officers to celebrate this special occasion. Although everyone was onboard, the large gathering did not come to fruition due to circumstances beyond his control, he was still able to assemble an intimate gathering of Coral Gables Police and City of Miami Police, all on their own time.

Mr. Tomberlin, his daughter, and granddaughter were elated to have the police officers present on his birthday.

He was overcome with emotion to have the police comradery once again. Officer Challenger took a routine alarm call and turned it into to a positive police experience with a fellow police officer and a long time City of Coral Gables resident. Officer Challenger always represents the City of Coral Gables with compassion and professionalism. Therefore, he should be commended for his actions, by being awarded with the Officer of the Month of April 2022.