

## UPD Assistant Chief of Police Named Statewide Officer of the Year

Contributed by Deborah Purnell  
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OXFORD, Miss. - Ray Hawkins, assistant chief of police at the University of Mississippi, has been named Officer of the Year by the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Association.

Hawkins, who joined UM's Department of Police and Campus Safety in December 1996, headed the security plan for the Sept. 26 presidential debate on the Oxford campus.

"During his tenure at Ole Miss, Ray has exhibited strong organizational and leadership skills; however, Ray truly showcased his leadership abilities when he headed the university's security plan for the 2008 presidential debate," said Chief of Police Calvin Sellers.

Ray Hawkins

"Any kind of acknowledgement is good," Hawkins said. "It's humbling but yet definitely validates what we do here at Ole Miss. I don't work for accolades, but it's still great to be recognized."

UPD and the city of Oxford coordinated security efforts for the debate with various local, state and federal agencies, including the U.S. Secret Service. Hawkins stepped into the role of interim UM chief of police when former chief Jeffrey Van Slyke accepted a position last spring at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

While Hawkins has coordinated campus security detail for numerous dignitary visits, including King Abdullah II of Jordan and Prince Edward of England, nothing could prepare the 18-year law veteran for the debate, which was covered by journalists worldwide.

"No words can describe the amount of work that went into planning the debate," Hawkins said. "In the end, I simply wanted our department to be able to say, 'We did our best.'"

Sellers, who joined UPD three months before the debate, said the way Hawkins kept the department going while planning a major historic event in the absence of a chief is "the single event that justifies him winning this award."

Hawkins, a 2001 UM graduate with a degree in criminal justice, has held many roles during his tenure at Ole Miss, including field training officer, lieutenant of special services/patrol/investigations and commander for protective services team.

He is a certified crime prevention specialist and National Rifle Association handgun and shotgun instructor, as well as an instructor with the Lafayette County Law Enforcement Officers' Training Academy. He recently was elected to serve on the Mississippi Board of Law Enforcement Standards and Training as the campus law enforcement representative.

"Ray is a well-rounded person who seamlessly balances his work and his community roles in Yalobusha County," Sellers said.

Hawkins and his wife, Kathleen, live in Water Valley, where he is a deacon of New Providence M.B. Church. He is a member of the Water Valley Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Foundation and the Yalobusha County Economic Development District, and school board president for the Water Valley School District.

For more information on the University Police Department, go to [http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/u\\_police/](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/u_police/) .