

Governor Jay Nixon's Speech
Given at the Missouri Law Enforcement Memorial Service
Jefferson City, Missouri
May 2010

It is a privilege and an honor for me to be here today with many of the brave men and women who serve and protect their fellow Missourians.

I want to welcome all of you – and especially the families of those who died in the line of duty – to the Capitol and the monument that honors the sacrifice of Missouri law enforcement.

As law enforcement officers, you willingly – and without hesitation – put your lives on the line in service to your fellow citizens. Your courage, your training, and your dedication and sense of duty help keep us safe.

You represent law enforcement agencies from all across Missouri. Your “beat” might be the interstate highways, the busy streets of our largest cities, the back country gravel roads, a stretch of open lakes and rivers, or the corridors of our most secure prisons.

Wherever you have come from in Missouri, you are here this morning in a show of compassion and solidarity for your fellow officers who are no longer with us, and for their families.

This is a ceremony of remembrance and respect, of saluting the memories of not only these officers who gave their lives during the past year, but of each of those whose names are on this memorial.

After being here for so many years, I can testify that it is a ceremony that always stirs the hearts of those who witness it.

And I am certain many of you join me each year in praying that we will add no more names to this memorial.

But the nature of what law enforcement officers do – how the safety and well-being of others is paramount – all but ensures there will be those who give their lives in the line of duty.

The names on the Law Enforcement Memorial go back to the early days of Missouri as a state.

This ceremony stands as a reminder that in every decade and every generation, there are those who take on the responsibility for the safety of society. Quietly and without fanfare, they face danger everyday to protect us.

We add to this memorial the names of two of your brothers who fell in the line of duty last year, and the names of two who gave their lives in years past.

They wore the uniform of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police, of the Joplin Merchant Police, and of the Missouri Pacific Railroad Police.

The common tie binding not only them together, but also all of law enforcement across our state, is that these guardians of peace were dedicated to the cause of upholding the law.

When they took that oath swearing to uphold the Constitution, they made a commitment and dedicated their lives to act on behalf of their fellow citizens. And they made this commitment knowing full well that it might some day require the ultimate sacrifice.

As we remember:

- Trooper Dennis Engelhard
- Officer Julius Moore
- Patrolman Tom Morrison and
- Officer Harold Turner Woolery

We need to take the time to say “thank you” to those who stand between us and harm. We also need to say “thank you” to the families represented here today.

We can show that thanks not only by saying it to them, but also by recognizing the challenges faced by the men and women who wear the badge and by then supporting them in what they do to protect society.

And, as I have done in years past, I want to recognize that those who accept the responsibility for our protection here at home are often the same young men and women who volunteer to serve in our military reserves and National Guard.

Only two weeks ago, I had the privilege of being in Fulton to help welcome home 200 military policemen of the Missouri National Guard who have come home after being posted at a detention center in Afghanistan.

They, too, were walking a dangerous law enforcement beat and putting themselves in harm’s way on behalf of their fellow citizens – just as our officers do back home.

Even as they have returned home, another unit of military police will be deployed to Iraq next week. The 4175th Military Police Detachment includes members of several local law enforcement agencies, and we pray for their safe return from this mission.

So to all our officers – those we honor today, those serving in the military, and those out working the beat – I want to say thank you. Thanks to you, our streets, our schools, and our homes are safer.