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Office of University
Communications

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Tom Anderson '04 Travels State as N.C. Public Safety Risk Manager

Tom Anderson '04 of Statesville, N.C., believes that personal success doesn't happen by accident. An alumnus and adjunct professor for Gardner-Webb University, Anderson tells students that academic and career success is a combination of intentional steps, goal setting, and a high level of commitment.

Tom Anderson poses with his nephew, Marcus

Tom Anderson poses with his nephew, Marcus.

To reach his goals, the first intentional step he took was to pursue a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Anderson had been at the Statesville Police Department for eight years when he met GWU Professor Dr. Bobbie Cox, who now serves as the University's Criminal Justice Coordinator. She inspired him to investigate continuing his education. "After researching several universities and programs, I quickly determined that GWU was going to be the best fit for my policing schedule, would assist in furthering my career potential and mobility, and equip me for the future challenges I would face as an officer," Anderson assessed.

Anderson took the second step when he accepted Cox's advice and obtained his master's degree. "She told me that she would consider me for a future adjunct position if I continued my academic journey," he expounded. "With this extra piece of motivation, finishing my bachelor's degree and then pursuing my master's was my top priority. Dr. Cox invested in me personally and did not just see me as a number on a roster. This in turn, helped to further propel my academic success in addition to my career accomplishments. I learned from Dr. Cox how to better value our students and to invest in their potential."

Anderson's commitment to his job comes from being raised in a family of law enforcement officers. His dad is a former officer as well as his brother. "I have a lot of respect for the profession and saw this as a way of life and career rather than a job," he stated. "My classes and my degree not only opened doors for career advancement but, in many cases, created the doors that I would go through. In 2008, I competed for and was promoted to the position of police chief in Statesville. Without my degree, I would not have been properly equipped or qualified for this position."

Anderson stepped down as Statesville Police Chief in 2015 to take a job with the North Carolina League of Municipalities. He still serves as a reserve officer for the department

while traveling the state in his role as North Carolina's Public Safety Risk Manager. He provides resources and training in high liability matters to police chiefs and city leaders and teaches active shooter response to municipal employees in over 540 North Carolina cities and towns. "Choosing GWU was an investment in myself, my career, and additionally my family, who have benefited from the career successes that were possible with the completion of my education," he reflected. "I have benefitted tremendously from my association with GWU."

Tom Anderson shows Kezlan Johnson the fingerprint station. Anderson started a law enforcement explorers post and Johnson was a member.