

**BIOGRAPHY**  
**JAMES ALTON CANNON, JR., ESQ.**  
**SHERIFF OF CHARLESTON COUNTY**



James Alton Cannon, Jr., is the Sheriff of Charleston County. He was first elected Sheriff in 1988 and is serving in his sixth term. The Charleston County Sheriff's Office is one of the largest law enforcement agencies in the state, employing over 900 people. Sheriff Cannon is responsible for the oversight of an annual budget of over 55 million dollars.

He has earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the College of Charleston and a Masters of Criminal Justice degree from the University of South Carolina. He also has a Juris Doctor degree from the University of South Carolina. The Sheriff is a member of the South Carolina Bar and the United States Supreme Court Bar.

In October, 2006 Sheriff Cannon retired from the United States Air Force Reserves at the rank of Colonel. Cannon also served 4 years of active duty in the Air Force as a Russian translator. His entire career as a reservist was spent as a Special Agent in the US Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI). In his last assignment, he served as the Reserve Commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Investigative Region, AFOSI, Scott AFB, Illinois. In this role, he was responsible for directing felony criminal investigations, counterintelligence, counterespionage, antiterrorism and force protection operations conducted by AFOSI personnel operating at fifteen Air Mobility Command and Special Operations Command bases throughout the United States. Cannon had many deployments around the world and came to be recognized as an authority on terrorism and anti-terrorism measures.

Sheriff Cannon's career in law enforcement spans over 35 years, starting as a patrol officer with the Charleston County Police Department in 1971. He then joined the North Charleston Police Department in 1973. While working at North Charleston, Cannon obtained his Master of Criminal Justice Degree and was promoted through the ranks to Lieutenant. In 1978 Cannon received a direct commission as a second lieutenant in the Air Force Reserves, one of two AFOSI agents worldwide to be selected. In 1979, Cannon entered The University of South Carolina School of Law in Columbia, SC and graduated with a Juris Doctor degree in December, 1981. He was admitted to the Practice of law in South Carolina in 1982 and the U.S. Supreme Court in 2004. In 1984 he was appointed Chief of Police of the North Charleston Police Department, where he served until 1987. While at North Charleston, Cannon graduated from the 143<sup>rd</sup> Session of the FBI National Academy. In February 2010, the Sheriff completed the 6<sup>th</sup> Session of the Homeland Security and Defense Executive Leaders Program held at the Naval Post Graduate School.

Sheriff Cannon is credited with successfully merging the Charleston County Police Department and the Charleston County Sheriff's Office in January 1991. He is an innovative and dedicated sheriff who uses his considerable talents and outstanding professional skills to provide leadership and direction to the organization for the benefit of the citizens he serves. He has molded the Charleston County Sheriff's Office into a premier law enforcement agency highly regarded by its peers.

The combination of attorney, military leader and law enforcement professional gives Sheriff Cannon a truly unique perspective of the many problems and threats we face. Known as a man who says what's on his mind, he has a well-earned reputation for honesty and integrity.

Sheriff Al Cannon