Meeting Notes – Aug. 8, 2023

The LaFayette Rotary Club met on Tuesday, August 8, 2023, in the ALFA building in LaFayette. Rotarian Faye Seroyer was responsible for the program and invited as our speaker Mr. Keith Walton. Mr. Walton is an Auburn University Campus Safety Officer. In that role he performs security and vulnerability assessments, is the Threat Assessment Team Leader, is a self-defense instructor and provides personal security details for university and athletic events, all with the goal of providing a safe and secure environment for students, staff, and visitors. He is also the current president of the FBI National Academy for the state of Alabama.

Mr. Walton is a 1983 graduate of LaFayette High School. He began his tenure with Auburn University as a security guard in 1988. He began working full-time as a police officer in 1992. He applied to and was accepted into the FBI Police Academy in Quantico. About the same time the Auburn University police department and the Auburn City police department merged, and he technically became an employee of Auburn City. In 2009 he went back to work for Auburn University where he functioned as a liaison between AU and the city.

Auburn University is growing. This fall of 2023 freshman class is the largest class yet, with 6,000 in-coming freshmen. Those 6,000 were selected from 48,000 applicants. There were applicants from every county in Alabama and from every state in the US. Total enrollment has reached nearly 32,000. Auburn University has just passed its largest budget ever.

Mr. Walton shared with the group some of his specific responsibilities, such as logistics for the President of AU when he travels, security for the board of trustees, including two former generals who were connected to the board, and risk assessments at various locations on campus. There are 2100 security cameras around campus that are monitored 24/7 by the Department of Campus Safety. AU has locations throughout Alabama, not just in Auburn, and even overseas in Italy, that he is responsible for as well. Security preparations even have to be made to handle disgruntled parents of students who were not accepted into Auburn University. His office also coordinates the 160-180 police officers that are employed at every home football game.

Teaching self-defense classes for females through the Department of Kinesiology is another of his responsibilities. He teaches three classes on Monday and three on Wednesday. The AU Campus Security office combines with the Lee County Sheriff's office to do self-defense training for the community. They will also work with the Chambers County Sheriff's department on self-defense courses.

Mr. Walton told several humorous stories about his travel with various coaches, with the 2010 national championship team, and with well-known athletes such as Charles Barkley, Cam Newton, and Suni Lee.

Diane Sherriff