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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**CCSO Major Eric Watson Selected For Riley Institute at Furman University Diversity  
Leaders Initiative's 10<sup>th</sup> Lowcountry Class**

(North Charleston, S.C.) Charleston County Sheriff's Office Major Eric Watson is one of 45 leaders from the Lowcountry and surrounding areas selected to participate in the 10<sup>th</sup> Lowcountry class of the Riley Institute at Furman's University Diversity Leaders Initiative (DLI). "DLI and the Riley Fellows have matured into a potent force to help move South Carolina forward," said Dr. Don Gordon, executive director of the Riley Institute. "The variety of unique experiences and perspectives that this class brings to the table is so important to the meaningful dialogue and work of DLI," Gordon said. He said that although the class is varied in background and experience, "they have a common ability to effect change through leadership positions in their organizations and community."

Poised to join more than 1500 Riley Fellows from across the state, class members meet over the course of five months in a format driven by timely, relevant case studies and other experiential learning tools designed to maximize interactions and productive relationships among program participants. DLI is expertly facilitated by Juan Johnson, an independent consultant and former Coca-Cola vice president. "DLI is unique among South Carolina's leadership programs. In addition to the opportunity to develop new relationships and take part in positive action in their communities, participants gain deep knowledge of how to effectively manage and lead increasingly diverse workers, clients and constituents," said Johnson. As part of the program, leaders also work in cross-sector groups to respond to real issues and opportunities in their communities through capstone service projects.

Participants reflecting South Carolina's demographics and representing the corporate, nonprofit, education, faith-based and government sectors are chosen by nomination and application. "The frames of reference and skills that DLI graduates share provide a remarkable platform for working together to help South Carolina compete in the 21st century," Gordon said.

Currently, Major Watson serves as the Public Information Officer for the Sheriff's Office. He is also a recent graduate of the FBI National Academy Session 258.

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