

## Letter to the Editor

This letter is from three employees at the Richmond City Jail. We have a combined service of eighty-seven years with the Richmond City Sheriff's Office. And we are white.

It is strange for us to think in such terms, but with some of the complaints expressed by a few former deputies that actions or patterns of racism exist at the Richmond City Jail, we cannot and will not remain silent. We have seen and know too much.

When Sheriff Woody won the election, many and probably most workers in the Sheriff's Office were uncertain about our future. Whenever a new boss comes in, you just aren't sure. One of Sheriff Woody's first acts was to call a meeting of all deputies and staff members of the department. We left that meeting confident that it was okay. Sheriff Woody made it perfectly clear that he was going to improve the security, operation, and programs at the City Jail. Then he assured us that our work and experience would be valuable in the changes to come, but that there would be changes and new directions and new attitudes, and that we must adapt and assist. He received our applause and cheers and respect that day.

Since then Sheriff Woody has assembled the most competent leadership team and innovative processes we have experienced. We really do work in a different reality now. There are serious expectations and responsibilities that must be enforced. Working in a jail is very serious business with little room for error or lapse. Sheriff Woody and his staff value, praise, and award excellence, indeed, insist upon it. His deep concern for the inmates has brought new successes in education, drug treatment, and legal services. He has also created an array of post-release programs for the men and women being released to continue receiving assistance in surviving, making new choices, and decreasing chances of their return. He has mobilized churches and

organizations to assist and it's already working! Richmond is safer!

These amazing things are being accomplished because we are a Team, literally, a Team. The Team members are men and women in an array of beautiful hues and ancestries...black and white and brown and all shades between. The three of us have not experienced even a hint of racism, sexism, or unfairness from Sheriff Woody or his staff. We are frankly amazed by their consistent goodness, competency, and positive leadership starting with that first day of introduction and assurances that we are each valued.

The citizens of Richmond and beyond have much to be proud of in the work and character of Sheriff C. T. Woody, Jr. and his Team, the Staff and the Deputies of the Richmond City Sheriff's Department.

John Dooley, Lynn Henry, and Edgar Rollins