



NAMING FACILITIES NOMINATION FORM

DIRECTIONS: Please complete all requirements and portions of this form that relate to your nomination. Only one name is accepted per form submission. Partially completed forms will not be considered.

NOMINATED NAME IS SUBMITTED BY: OFFICER JOHN MARTIN
ADDRESS: 1617 SAINT MARY ST., KNOXVILLE, TN 37917
PHONE NUMBER: 865-201-9912 DATE OF NOMINATION: 3/17/20
EMAIL: SMARTIN@KNOXVILLETN.GOV

NOMINATION

NOMINATED NAME: LT. GORDON "OFFICER G" GWATHNEY
FACILITY RECOMMENDED FOR NAMING: AUSTIN-EAST MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL
SECURITY OFFICE

DIRECTIONS: Please complete the following section if the nominated name relates to a person.

- How many years has the nominated person lived in Knox County? PLEASE SEE ATTACHED
- Did the person graduate from a Knox County school? Yes No
If so, what year? PLEASE SEE ATTACHED
- How many years has the person served Knox County Schools as a staff member or volunteer?
_____ or N/A
- How has the person made a significant contribution to the district? _____
PLEASE SEE ATTACHED
- How has the person represented the virtues or characteristics as a role model to students, staff, and the community? PLEASE SEE ATTACHED

6. How has the person made a significant contribution to public education? _____

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED

7. How has the person made a substantial contribution to his or her field of endeavor or to society in general? _____

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED

8. How has the person exemplified scholarship, creativity, leadership or humanitarian and public service? _____

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED

DIRECTIONS: Please complete the following section if the nominated name represents an event, place, or geographic location:

1. What is the significance of the nominated name to Knox County Schools and the Knox County community? _____

N/A

2. How does the nominated name exemplify the values of Knox County Schools and the Knox County community? _____

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Required:** If you have nominated a person's name, please include a written and signed release from the nominated person, or the most closely associated family representative to the nominated person (e.g., spouse, parent, children, or sibling).
- **Required:** Please include contact information for the nominated person or the most closely associated family representative.
- **Required:** Please attach any and all research that supports the name that you have nominated for consideration, including picture(s).
- **Required:** Three (3) letters of recommendation.
- **Suggested:** Additional letters of recommendation are welcome, but not required.

This form, along with all attachments, should be mailed or delivered to:

**Knox County Board of Education
Naming Facilities Committee
P.O. Box 2188
Knoxville, TN 37902-2188**

Reference: Knox County Board of Education F-140 "Naming Facilities"
<https://www.knoxschools.org/cms/lib/TN01917079/Centricity/domain/974/board%20policies/F-140%20Naming%20Facilities.pdf>

Note: Names may be submitted at any time. The Naming Facilities Committee shall convene within a reasonable period of time following receipt of nomination and submission of all required documents. The Committee recommendation will be submitted to the Knox County Board of Education for consideration as part of the regular session agenda process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have reviewed Knox County Board of Education Policy F-140, have submitted the Naming Facilities Nomination Form with all required documentation and confirm that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all information provided is true and correct.

Signature _____

Date 03/17/20

For questions, please contact the Board of Education office at (865) 594-1630 or by email at board.office@knoxschools.org.

For Use by Naming Facilities Committee only

Principal acknowledgement and confirmation of review of documentation, research and input.

Signature _____

Date 4/14/2026

Regional Director _____

Regional Supervisor _____

Superintendent acknowledgement and confirmation of review of documentation, research and input.

Signature _____

Date 4/21/2026

Statement of Nondiscrimination: In accordance with Public Law 101-336 and 42 U.S.C. § 12101, Knox County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex or disabilities in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

**Naming Nomination for
Lieutenant Gordon "Officer G" Gwathney**

1. How long has the nominated person lived in Knox County?

Lt. Gordon "Officer G" Gwathney lived in Sevier County. He worked for the Knoxville Police Department since January 6, 1997.

2. Did the person graduate from a Knox County School?

No. Lt. Gwathney graduated from Harrison-Chilhowee school (now King's Academy) in Sevier County.

3. How many years has the person served Knox County Schools as a staff member or volunteer?

Lt. Gwathney served as the Knoxville Police Department School Resource Officer for Austin-East Magnet High School from 8/15/1999-4/20/2003. He has continued to serve the east Knoxville Community as a Patrol Supervisor throughout the remainder of his career. He took pride in maintaining a close relationship with Austin-East, former students, and the east Knoxville community.

4. How has the person made a significant contribution to the district?

Lt. Gordon "Officer G" Gwathney made a profound and lasting contribution to the district through more than two decades of dedicated service to the students and families of east Knoxville. As a School Resource Officer at Austin-East High School, he built deep, trusting relationships with students, becoming not only a protector but a mentor, counselor, and consistent source of encouragement. His ability to connect with students—many of whom faced significant challenges—created an environment where they felt seen, valued, and safe.

Lt. Gwathney's influence extended far beyond his years inside the school building. By continuing to serve the same community for most of his career, he remained a steady presence in the lives of countless young people and their families. His commitment to building positive rapport between law enforcement and the community strengthened the district's broader mission of fostering safe, supportive learning environments.

Through his compassion, integrity, and unwavering dedication to the well-being of the students of Austin-East, Lt. Gwathney left a legacy that continues to shape the culture of the school and the district. His contributions are not only significant—they are enduring.

5. How has the person represented the virtues and characteristics as a role model to students, staff, and the community?

Lt. Gordon "Officer G" Gwathney embodied the virtues and characteristics that define a true role model for students, staff, and the entire east Knoxville community. His consistent display of integrity, fairness, and compassion set a standard for how public servants should engage with

young people. He led by example—showing students what it meant to treat others with respect, to handle conflict with calm judgment, and to approach every individual with dignity.

Officer G's gift was his ability to be both authoritative and deeply approachable. Students trusted him because he listened—truly listened—to their concerns, their struggles, and their hopes. He treated every interaction as an opportunity to uplift rather than to discipline, teaching by his presence that strength and kindness are not opposing traits but complementary ones.

For staff, he was a dependable partner who brought steadiness and professionalism to every situation. For the community, he stood as a bridge-builder, demonstrating how positive relationships between law enforcement and residents can transform the climate of a school and its surrounding neighborhoods.

Through his everyday actions—showing patience, offering guidance, protecting those in his care, and consistently going beyond the expectations of his role—Lt. Gwathney modeled the values of service, humility, courage, and compassion. His influence helped shape not just safer hallways, but stronger young men and women who witnessed firsthand what honorable leadership looks like.

6. How has the person made a significant contribution to public education?

Lt. Gordon "Officer G" Gwathney made a significant contribution to public education by directly strengthening the learning environment, the safety culture, and the emotional well-being of the students he served. As the School Resource Officer at Austin-East High School, he understood that education can only thrive where students feel safe, supported, and respected. Through his daily presence, he helped create the conditions that allowed teaching and learning to take place.

Officer G's impact extended far beyond traditional safety duties. He became an integral part of the school's educational mission by mentoring students, encouraging them toward positive choices, and helping remove barriers that might otherwise disrupt their ability to learn. He modeled accountability and discipline not through force, but through compassion and relationship-building—qualities that helped students gain confidence, self-control, and trust in the adults around them.

His long-term service in the same community meant that he supported students not just during school hours, but throughout their formative years. Many students credit him with being a stabilizing influence, someone who believed in them when they struggled to believe in themselves. His example reinforced the idea that public education is a partnership between schools, families, and the broader community.

By embodying the belief that every student deserves safety, dignity, and encouragement, Lt. Gwathney left an enduring imprint on public education in Knoxville. His contributions helped shape a school culture where students could grow academically, socially, and emotionally—making his legacy a meaningful part of the district's ongoing educational mission.

7. How has the person made a substantial contribution to his or her field of endeavor or to society in general?

Lt. Gordon "Officer G" Gwathney made a substantial and lasting contribution both to the field of law enforcement and to society as a whole through his unwavering commitment to community-centered policing. Throughout his career, he demonstrated that effective public safety is rooted not merely in authority, but in relationships, trust, and genuine care for the people he served.

In a profession where positive community engagement is essential yet not always achieved, Lt. Gwathney became a model of what true service looks like. He prioritized connection over correction, mentorship over enforcement, and understanding over assumption. His work as a School Resource Officer at Austin-East High School became a benchmark for how law enforcement can support and uplift youth, particularly in communities facing socioeconomic challenges.

Beyond the school walls, Lt. Gwathney's consistent presence in east Knoxville helped foster stronger bonds between officers and residents. His reputation for fairness, respect, and compassion strengthened community confidence in law enforcement and encouraged collaborative approaches to solving problems. Many young people who encountered him grew to view police officers not with fear or distance, but with trust—an impact that carries immeasurable value for society.

Through two decades of dedicated service, Lt. Gwathney advanced the ideals of his profession and exemplified how one individual's character can positively shape an entire community. His legacy is one of service, empathy, leadership, and profound contribution to the well-being of Knoxville.

8. How has the person exemplified scholarship, creativity, leadership or humanitarian and public service?

Lt. Gordon "Officer G" Gwathney exemplified leadership, humanitarian service, and creative problem-solving throughout his career, consistently demonstrating qualities that elevated both his profession and the community he served.

His leadership was defined not by rank or authority, but by influence. Students followed his guidance because they trusted him; colleagues relied on him because he led with stability, humility, and a deep sense of responsibility. Whether navigating crises or supporting a struggling student, Lt. Gwathney approached every situation with clear judgment, patience, and calm strength.

He was also profoundly creative in his approach to building relationships with youth. Understanding that connection was the key to safety and growth, he found ways to reach students on their level—through conversation, humor, mentorship, and a willingness to truly see them as individuals. This creativity transformed his role from that of a traditional officer to a mentor who helped students chart positive paths forward.

His humanitarian spirit was evident in the countless acts of kindness he offered without recognition: checking on families outside of work hours, supporting students through personal hardships, and working tirelessly to ensure that every young person felt valued. He treated each member of the community with dignity, demonstrating a level of compassion that transcended his official duties.

In public service, Lt. Gwathney stood out as a professional who not only protected his community, but uplifted it. His approach to service reflected a deep belief in the potential of young people and the importance of creating environments where they can thrive.

Through his leadership, creativity, and humanitarian dedication, Lt. Gwathney set a standard that continues to inspire students, staff, and the broader east Knoxville community.

Release Authorization

From: Lt. James Wilson, Knoxville Police Department

Dedicated Liaison to the Family of Lt. Gordon Gwathney

Subject: Authorization for Naming of the Security Office at Austin-East Magnet High School

I, Lieutenant James Wilson, serving as the designated liaison to the family of the late Lieutenant Gordon "Officer G" Gwathney, hereby affirm that the family fully supports and authorizes the naming of the Security Office at Austin-East Magnet High School in his honor.

The designated name shall be:

****Lieutenant Gordon "Officer G" Gwathney Security Office****

This naming reflects the family's wishes and acknowledges Lt. Gwathney's profound and lasting impact on the students, staff, and community of Austin-East and east Knoxville.

Signed,

Lieutenant James Wilson

Knoxville Police Department

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of a request to rename the school resource officer office at Austin-East Magnet High School after Knoxville Police Lieutenant Gordon Gwathney, who died earlier this year. Lieutenant Gwathney was the first SRO at Austin-East starting back in 1999 and was in the position until 2003. Gwathney had such an impact during his time at Austin-East that he maintained relationships with students from that time up until his passing. He was still known in the East Knoxville community as "Officer G" decades later due to his impact during that time and his continuous efforts to better the community.

Whether during Gwathney's career in the United States Army where he attained the rank of sergeant or his nearly thirty-year career with KPD where he attained the rank of lieutenant, Gwathney exemplified the leadership traits of leading from the front and leading by example. In his interactions with the public, he strived to treat everyone fairly and with dignity regardless of their background or ethnicity. Although from Sevier County, Gwathney worked the vast majority of his career in East Knoxville, and it was his second home. This was exemplified when members of the community organized a vigil in his memory after his passing. The event was filled with stories of his empathy and character and how he worked diligently to care for those of the community.

Gwathney was also a firm believer in education. He attained a bachelor's degree and, many years later, went back to school to earn a master's degree in criminal justice in 2016. He knew that continual improvement was necessary to progress successfully in life and a key aspect to that endeavor was education. He regularly encouraged educational pursuits while an SRO at Austin-East and beyond to both those officers under his charge and to members of the public.

I cannot think of an individual that more exemplifies the purpose of an SRO in a school. A person who continuously strives to maintain safety while also showing empathy, compassion, and a genuine care for those around him. He promoted education not only in his words but also in his own actions. I would very strongly support the effort to rename the office at Austin-East Magnet High School after Lieutenant Gwathney, and it would be a fitting legacy in his memory.

Sincerely,

Captain Nevin L. Long

Knoxville Police Department

Field Operations Bureau / East District Commander

To Whom It May Concern,

We, the undersigned officers of the Knox County School Security Division currently serving at Austin-East Magnet High School, respectfully submit this letter in support of naming the school's security office in honor of Lieutenant Gordon "Officer G" Gwathney.

Though we did not have the privilege of serving alongside Lt. Gwathney personally, his name, reputation, and legacy are deeply known within both the Knoxville law enforcement community and the halls of Austin-East. As the first School Resource Officer for the Knoxville Police Department, Lt. Gwathney helped establish a standard of service that continues to shape the role we carry out today.

What stands out most in the stories we have heard is not just his pioneering role, but his unwavering commitment to the students, families, and broader East Knoxville community. He was more than an officer—he was a trusted presence, a mentor, and a bridge between law enforcement and the young people he served. His impact was not temporary; it created a foundation that still influences the culture and expectations of safety, respect, and connection within this school.

Every day, as we walk these halls, we benefit from the path he helped forge. His legacy is evident in the relationships we strive to build, the standard of professionalism we uphold, and the sense of purpose tied to protecting and serving this community. Naming the security office in his honor would not only recognize his historic contributions but also serve as a lasting reminder to future officers and students of the kind of service that truly makes a difference.

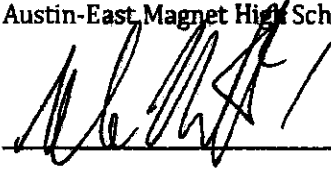
Lt. Gwathney's influence on Austin-East and East Knoxville is both significant and enduring. It is only fitting that his name be permanently associated with a place dedicated to the safety and well-being of the very community he served so faithfully.

We strongly support this proposal and believe it would be a meaningful and appropriate tribute to a man whose legacy continues to inspire.

Respectfully,

The Knox County School Security Division Officers

Austin-East Magnet High School

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Mantooth', written over a horizontal line.

Sgt. Jacob Mantooth

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Wyesha Edwards', written over a horizontal line.

Officer Wyesha Edwards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tyler Hunley', written over a horizontal line.

Officer Tyler Hunley

Officer John A. Martin

Knoxville Police Department

Austin-East Magnet High School – School Resource Officer

12/10/2025

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with profound respect and unwavering conviction that I recommend the Security Office at Austin-East Magnet High School be named in memoriam of Lieutenant Gordon "Officer G" Gwathney. Throughout his decades of service, Lt. Gwathney shaped not only the safety culture of this school, but the spirit of what it truly means to serve as a School Resource Officer in a community that requires patience, understanding, and genuine compassion.

In my 17 years with the Knoxville Police Department, Lt. Gwathney supervised me during three different periods of my career. Each time, his leadership met me exactly where I was—guiding me, challenging me, inspiring me, and helping me grow. He was more than a supervisor. He was a role model, a mentor, and a living example of what a servant-hearted officer should be. His influence helped shape the kind of officer and man I strive to be.

When I was assigned to Austin-East as the acting School Resource Officer, just after a tragic event occurred within its halls, I initially hesitated. The role carried a weight and responsibility that I did not take lightly. Soon after accepting the position, Lt. Gwathney called me. His words—steady, wise, and rooted in decades of experience at this very school—helped me understand the mission of this building and the calling of an SRO within it. He reminded me that success here is not measured by enforcement alone, but by connection. Not by authority alone, but by the ability to earn trust, to show compassion, and to be a consistent presence for students who may lack that in other areas of their lives.


Any recognition I have received as an SRO is built upon the foundation he established long before I ever stepped into this role. He modeled what it means to be present, patient, dependable, and deeply committed to the welfare of every student who walks these halls. His legacy is not abstract—it lives in the countless young people he encouraged, the relationships he built, and the standard he set for anyone who serves here.

Naming the Security Office the "Lieutenant Gordon 'Officer G' Gwathney Security Office" is more than a gesture of remembrance. It is a symbol—a permanent, visible reminder of the values expected of any future School Resource Officer assigned to this building, or any other. It establishes a standard of service rooted in empathy, humility, integrity, and relationship-driven policing. Every future SRO who steps into that office should see his name and be reminded of the legacy they are entrusted to carry forward.

Lt. Gwathney's influence continues to shape this school, this community, and all of us who had the privilege to serve under his leadership. Dedicating this space in his honor ensures that his legacy endures—not only in memory, but in the daily practice of those who follow him.

I offer my strongest recommendation and full support for this naming. Lt. Gwathney's contributions, values, and impact deserve to be honored in a manner that reflects the depth of what he gave to Austin-East and to east Knoxville.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Martin", with a small dot at the end of the signature.

PO4 John A. Martin

Knoxville Police Department

School Resource Officer, Austin-East Magnet High School