



NEWS

RELEASE

SHERIFF EARNELL R. LUCAS

## **Sheriff Earnell R. Lucas Names James Burnett as Director of Public Affairs and Community Engagement**

**Milwaukee, WI (May 28, 2021)** – Milwaukee County Sheriff Earnell R. Lucas is announcing the appointment of James Burnett as Director of Public Affairs and Community Engagement. Mr. Burnett is an award-winning journalist and veteran communications strategist who has advised government leaders, nonprofit organizations, and Fortune 500 corporations. As Director of Public Affairs and Community Engagement, he will serve as chief public information officer for the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office and oversee community outreach services.

“I welcome James Burnett to our staff at the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office. He brings a level of experience and energy to this position that few possess. I am confident that he will utilize his skills and abilities to expand our responsiveness to and communication with communities across Milwaukee County. I know that he will build upon the foundation that has been laid during the past two years by Director Faithe Colas and our Office of Public Affairs and Community Engagement.”

Mr. Burnett began his career as a staff writer at the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, covering crime, law enforcement, and popular culture. He later served as a senior staff writer and columnist at the *Miami Herald* and was a writer for the *Boston Globe*, where he shared the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Reporting for group coverage of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. During his reporting career, Mr. Burnett examined violence as a public health problem, authored cover stories on topics of social significance, and contributed on-air to a popular current affairs program on national television.

As a communications adviser, Mr. Burnett counsels government, nonprofit, and corporate clients on public relations and thought leadership. He has served as Director of Public Relations and Social Media for the Boston Foundation, as a consultant to Oakland, California-based nonprofit Dream Corps, and as media and content strategy director at the global public relations consultancy MSLGROUP, where he led media relations strategy for Fortune 500 corporations. Mr. Burnett joins the Sheriff's Office from Kane Communications Group, where he served as Director of Strategic Public Relations and worked with major clients including the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division and the Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management.

“I've had the pleasure of working in communications as a journalist and counselor for more than 20 years,” Mr. Burnett said. “Now I have the honor of entering public service with the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office. I look forward to working with Sheriff Lucas, his leadership team and the

public safety professionals who comprise this agency to enhance messaging, provide clarity, and find new ways to educate the public about its activities and objectives.”

Mr. Burnett resides with his family in Milwaukee County, where he coaches youth baseball and serves as a board member for civic and educational organizations.

Mr. Burnett will assume his appointment on Monday, June 7. He will succeed Director of Public Affairs and Community Engagement Faithe Colas, who has served with distinction since joining the Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Office in 2019. During Mr. Burnett’s transition into this position, Director Colas will continue with the Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Office as a senior adviser.

“I thank Director Colas for her outstanding service and dedication to the people of Milwaukee County,” said Sheriff Lucas. “She has helped our agency build relationships and trust with the communities we serve. On behalf of the Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Office, I wish her the best in her future endeavors.”

For further information, please contact Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Office Administration at (414) 278-4766 or [MCSOAdministration@MilwaukeeCountyWI.gov](mailto:MCSOAdministration@MilwaukeeCountyWI.gov).



*James Burnett*

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