

Governors State University

## OPUS Open Portal to University Scholarship

---

Newsroom

Marketing and Communications

---

11-9-2020

### **GSU Connections: Tod Kamleiter**

Office of Marketing and Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://opus.govst.edu/newsroom>

---

University Park, IL,  
November  
09,  
2020

# GSU Connections: Tod Kamleiter

Flossmoor Police Chief Values Diversity he Found at  
Governors State



When you are a White police chief in a town where half the residents are people of color, it helps to be able to see a situation from a point of view other than your own. For Flossmoor's Tod Kamleiter, earning a [Master of Public Administration](#) in 2010 at [Governors State University](#) shaped the way he sees and approaches policing because the students in his cohort were from very different backgrounds.

"Not all of us thought the same way," he said.

This diverse perspective has helped him navigate today's civil unrest stemming from police treatment of people of color. When Black Lives Matter protesters marched in Flossmoor this summer, Kamleiter followed in a squad car and at one point confronted a man who taunted them, telling him to go back inside.

"Policing has changed," he said "Our officers are well-trained and community oriented. They're not just there to charge people with a crime. I encourage them to be community caretakers. I tell them, 'Sometimes you have to be a warrior, but when you're not taking on that role, you have to be there to help people and give them a sense of security.' "

## **Getting to GSU**

Kamleiter's career in law enforcement began in the Indiana Department of Corrections, and included a year working on death row at Indiana State Prison in Michigan City. After six years, he switched to policing. "I wanted to be able to make a difference," he said. "By the time people get into correctional facilities, there isn't much opportunity for that." Kamleiter joined the Flossmoor Police Department 24 years ago as a patrol officer and rose through the ranks, eventually becoming chief in 2019.

In 2008, when Kamleiter was a patrol sergeant responsible for supervising other officers, he decided to head back to school.

"I'm a driven person and wanted to move through the ranks. It's in my DNA; I have to be moving forward," he said.

As an undergraduate studying police administration, Kamleiter had been in classes with other police officers. But for graduate school, he wanted to broaden his scope beyond law enforcement professionals and thought of Governors State. "What drew me was its reputation. Also, I'd attended workshops there and I was very impressed with the staff. I remember the first time I drove out to campus. I thought, 'This is a gem in the south suburbs,'" he said.

## **Cohort Support**

In the Masters in Public Administration program at GSU's [College of Arts and Sciences](#), he said, "The class was made up of park district superintendents, hospital administrators, librarians. They were all administrators but they didn't all have the same background," he said.

## **Practical Lessons Still Apply**

Kamleiter served as Flossmoor deputy chief for six years, a position with duties ranging from labor management to traffic analysis, and from media relations to field training for police officers. His time at Governors State brought long-lasting lessons that helped him manage that scope and continue to aid in his day-to-day operations as chief, heading one of the more progressive police departments in the Southland.

The Flossmoor Police Department is "doing well," Kamleiter said. "I think we have some social equity in the community. We've made a deliberate effort to be transparent, like adopting the 10 Shared Principles of Policing," a historic 2018 agreement between the

Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police and the (NAACP) designed to build trust. And the department's Policy on Use of Force is posted on its website, the chief said.

The crime rate continues to be low in Flossmoor, although Kamleiter said, "Every crime you can think of has happened here. We just don't have the frequency that other communities do."

A big part of his success in Flossmoor can be attributed to relationship building skills he learned at Governors State. As much as possible, Kamleiter said, Flossmoor police try to engage with residents in a positive way.

"We've been very deliberate in our opportunities to make connections with the community, like National Night Out and Coffee with a Cop," he said, referring to annual events that bring officers and residents together in informal settings.

### **Advice for Current Jaguars**

Kamleiter is enthusiastic about the opportunity students have at Governors State to better themselves. "If you're thinking about continuing your education," he said, "take the leap. You'll reap the benefits later. And at GSU, you'll find a ton of resources."

For those in the trenches, the chief's advice is to keep working hard. "Stick with it. It'll be the proudest moment of your life when you walk across that stage to get your diploma."