

The FBI at 100

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Today, July 26, 2008, marks the 100th anniversary of the FBI. Ceremonies commemorating this milestone were celebrated at FBI Headquarters and venues throughout the country on July 17th. The FBI is a proud and accomplished organization. I'm extremely biased about my reverence for the FBI. I had the honor to serve in the Bureau as a Special Agent for 28 years. During my career, I had the good fortune to work many high profile cases ranging from public corruption, complex bank failures, corporate fraud, and terrorist financing to child molestations and kidnapping. Throughout my tenure, the agents, analysts and professional support personnel I worked with were first rate and dedicated individuals who always persevered through challenging circumstances. What I remember and cherish most about my experience in the FBI was the quality of the people who represent the FBI, the "FBI family". There is much to be said about the integrity of the "FBI family".

The Bureau is certainly not without its faults or shortcomings as its critics are fast to point out. The biggest disappointment during my career was the Robert Hanssen spy scandal. I worked public corruption with Hanssen when he was first transferred to New York around 1978. Hanssen's unconscionable betrayal tarnished the Bureau. But it was the Bureau that identified Hanssen's traitorous acts and built the case that sent him deservedly away to prison for life. In spite of Hanssen and other dark moments, the FBI has consistently and deservedly distinguished itself as the preeminent law enforcement agency in the world.

Unfortunately, some critics of the FBI either have ulterior motives or are clueless in that their perceptions are out of touch with reality. Consequently, these critics fail to let the facts get in the way of their criticism. However, other critics have valid arguments. Moving forward toward the next 100 years, the FBI has significant issues that must be addressed and resolved. The Bureau must keep pace with emerging crime problems and balance criminal priorities with the important demands of terrorism. The FBI has had well documented failures with technology. In today's era, technology must be cutting edge. In

the last six months, much concern has been expressed about the FBI's inability to staff Headquarters supervisory positions and their current career development program. The staffing and career development issues are important, but not new. Similar issues existed throughout my career in the FBI.

The one constant the FBI has is the quality of individual who has chosen the Bureau as a career. "Fidelity, Bravery and Integrity" are ingrained in the FBI culture. As long as the FBI attracts quality employees who are willing to sacrifice and live up to the mantra of "Fidelity, Bravery and Integrity", the FBI will continue to be the premier organization it is.

It's easy to criticize. It's difficult to distinguish. Despite criticism, deserved or not, the FBI is a distinguished organization.