

March 10, 2018

To the Citizens of Bradley County:

It was an honor to serve for over three years as your chief deputy sheriff. I served alongside some of the finest officers and administrative personnel you will find anywhere in law enforcement.

As you know, I recently tendered my resignation to Sheriff Eric Watson, ending my career in law enforcement that has spanned over 37 years. My reasons for leaving were many, but also included a matter of conscience.

I would like to clarify the circumstances regarding the departure of former Detective Captain Steve Lawson who resigned shortly before I left. Sheriff Watson has stated publicly, in an accusatory tone, that Captain Lawson walked out on the criminal investigations department and the people of Bradley County without due regard or notice. This is simply not true.

On the date Captain Lawson notified me that he was turning in his notice, I met with him and his entire detective division that morning. Captain Lawson addressed his personnel to explain his decision and to make certain any loose ends were taken care of before he departed. He personally handed me his resignation letter and offered to work out a two week notice. As the ranking officer present that day, I waived the notice period and we bade him farewell.

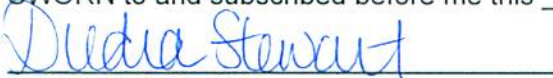
Steve Lawson is not one to walk out on a job unfinished. I hope the recounting of events on the morning of January 3, 2018, provides proof that Lawson in fact made sure that his tasks were complete before his departure.

Sincerely,



BRIAN K. SMITH

SWORN to and subscribed before me this 9 day of March, 2018



NOTARY PUBLIC

My commission expires: 12/23/2020

