

# Illustrating a point

## Emonn O'Neal OBE DL

High Sheriff of Greater Manchester 2024-25

A new initiative emerged from a partnership I brokered with the Manchester United Foundation. This is the charity associated with the famous club, which uses football to engage and inspire young people to build a better life for themselves and to unite the communities in which they live. Together we created the High Sheriff's Football Tournament. There have been two tournaments so far, played during school half-term weeks. The games are played with mixed teams and every participant receives a medal, with the winning team lifting the brand-new High Sheriff's Trophy.

In a further attempt to spread the word about the work of the High Sheriff while capturing imaginations, I appointed a 'Cartoonist in Residence' which, I am guessing, has not been done before. Salford artist Brian Travis created whimsical cartoons based on photographs I sent him following some of my visits across the communities. Clearly not all engagements are appropriate and protecting the integrity of the Office of High Sheriff was paramount. However, there were some events that did lend themselves to an illustration. I was delighted with how many people reacted to the cartoons on social media and the interest it generated in the role of High Sheriff.

As is to be expected, I spent a great deal of time with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) during my shrieval year. I was present at the attestations of new recruits, both regular and special constables. The passing out parades for each cohort added appropriate celebrations as the new recruits headed out across the county. My chaplain,



At the Young Citizen of the Year Awards Photo: Paul Moore Photography



With participants at the High Sheriff's Football Tournament

Father Barry Lomax, is also the lead chaplain at GMP so together we were able to contribute to all the ceremonies, which has been very much appreciated by the Chief Constable and his staff.

I was also delighted to present a High Sheriff's Special Recognition Award to Chris Oldham who has been GMP's force photographer for 40 years. Additionally, Mike Walmsley MBE DL steps aside as GMP Special Constabulary Chief Officer. Mike has dedicated 22 years of voluntary service to the Specials, half of that time as Chief Officer. He was most deserving of a High Sheriff's Award for his remarkable public

service.

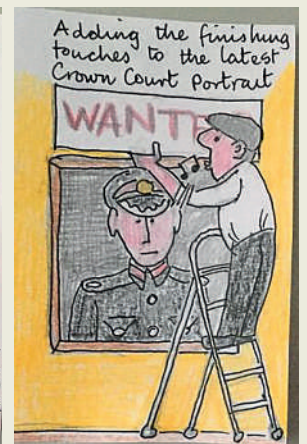
High Sheriffs know that there are many young people who make huge contributions to our society, but their achievements do not always get the airtime or column inches they deserve. Consequently, my final project, of which I am very proud, was to present the High Sheriff of Greater Manchester's Young Citizen of the Year Awards. The awards were generously supported by the jewellers Beaverbrooks, whose chairman is Mark Adlestone OBE, a former High Sheriff of Greater Manchester (2019).

Nominations were invited at the end of November and the presentation evening was held at the end of March. The panel of judges appointed a winner in each of Greater Manchester's ten boroughs with runners-up and others who were highly commended. I was delighted with the response and it was a joy to meet everyone. The youngsters were incredibly impressive and we heard some phenomenal stories of their altruism.

The future of Greater Manchester is in good hands.



Presenting a High Sheriff's Award to GMP Special Constabulary Chief Officer Mike Walmsley MBE DL Photo: Eddie Garvey



Brian Travis, Cartoonist in Residence, sees things a little differently...