



Fingerprint Work Named No. 2 in State

By Cindy Swirko

Gainesville Police Department ranked second only to the FDLE office in Orlando.

Some Gainesville Police employees have become especially adept at identifying islands and ridges, but it has nothing to do with the earth.

Their terrain is the swirling map of fingerprints, and they made GPD second in the state last year in matching prints in a state computer to those they lifted at crimes ranging from forged checks to murders.

"We're very proud of our department and more so proud of the people in my unit," said Sgt. Wayne McIntire, who heads the forensic unit. "We have really top investigators and latent print examiners."

GPD two years ago used about \$100,000 in grant money to buy an Automated Fingerprint Identification System, or AFIS, computer. It is linked

to a state computer bank that has prints of every felony arrest for the past several years.

Investigators send fingerprints from a crime scene electronically to the AFIS bank in Tallahassee. The computer there sends back a list of possible matches.

GPD print examiners compare the state fingerprints to the local prints to try to find a match that can help catch a criminal or rule a suspect out.

McIntire said GPD made more than 200 matches in 2000, second only to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Orlando office.

"Orlando is a huge area and that covers a lot of agencies. For one agency to come in with over 200 identifications is a great feat," McIntire said. "It shows the quality of fingerprinting and crime scene processing that our department does and the quality of the work our latent print examiners do."

Print processors include officers,

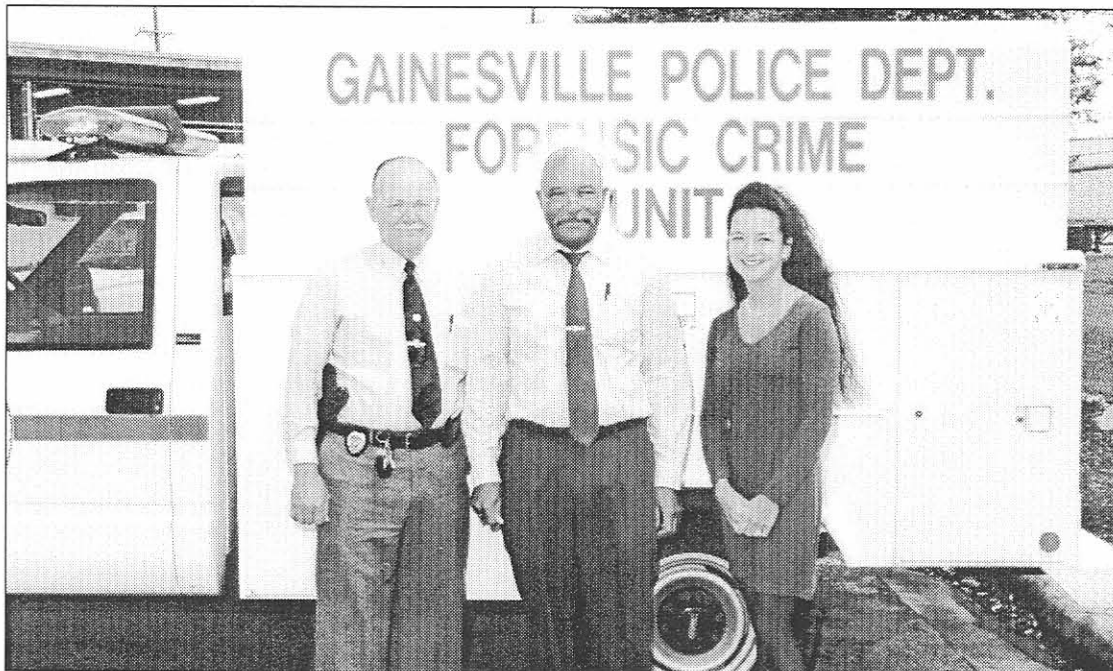
police service technicians and forensic investigators.

Their skill lies in finding and cleanly lifting prints at the scene and then identifying the unique characteristics of the print to match it.

McIntire said more than 10,000 prints are lifted a year.

"Sometimes we'll get as high as a couple of hundred prints at a scene. Sometimes we'll have a homicide case where we print every possible surface in the house," McIntire said. Matching prints involves a lot of detail work. There are different things – islands, ends of ridges, beginnings of ridges, different patterns. You are looking for identification marks." ■

(Cindy Swirko is a staff writer for The Gainesville Sun. This article appeared in the Wednesday, February 7, 2001 edition page 2B.)



From left to right; Sgt. Wayne McIntire, latent print examiner William Gallmon, and latent print examiner Melissa Kilmer of the Gainesville Police Departments Forensic Crime Lab.