

The General Assembly hasn't made it easy for Cecil Goins to do his job — keeping the legislature's upper house safe. Sergeant-at-arms since 1992, he oversees a 15-member detail that provides security for Senate sessions and committee meetings. Due to a peculiarity in state law, visitors to the legislature aren't required to undergo a search for weapons. "When I tell my colleagues this, they are amazed. They always ask if someone has ever brought a weapon in, and I tell them, 'If they have, they've never used it.'"

Even though violence hasn't been a threat, Goins, 82, has much to keep him busy. "We get more people protesting these days. You get people up in the galleries shouting and demonstrating."

But changes in the galleries are nothing compared with the career shift that took him into security almost by accident. During his freshman year at N.C. A&T State University, the Southern Pines native was drafted, finishing his

Army basic training in August 1945. "We were going to be part of the invasion of Japan. But then they dropped the [atom] bombs." Instead he was among the first troops in the occupying force. When he finished his tour in 1947, he returned to college, graduating with a bachelor's in business administration in 1950. He rejoined the Army, this time as an infantry officer, finally leaving the service as a major in 1963.

Goins then went to work as assistant business manager at Shaw University, where — among other responsibilities — he was in charge of its bookstore. There he met an FBI agent who periodically checked on books purchased by a professor the bureau suspected of communist leanings. One day, Goins made a joke to the agent that changed everything. "He came in with his nice shoes and his suit, and I said, 'I need a job like you got.'"

## Cecil Goins

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS, N.C. SENATE, RALEIGH



MAURY FAGGART

The agent took him seriously. When he discovered Goins had a military background, he recommended him for the U.S. Marshals Service. He was appointed in 1965, starting a 20-year career with the federal police force, which he says is sometimes undervalued. "Everybody thinks the FBI does all the important things. But we served the warrants. We were the cavalry."

His time with the Marshals Service gave Goins a front-row seat for some of the major events of the '60s. For example, he was at the civil-rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., in March 1965 and at the Pentagon in October 1967 when it was surrounded by about 3,000 anti-war protestors, including child-care expert Benjamin Spock.

Goins retired from that job in 1985 and worked in Raleigh as a private investigator before a friend, Sen. Tony Rand, D-Fayetteville, asked him to become sergeant-at-arms. His salary ranges from \$25,000 to \$35,000, depending on how long the Senate stays in session. The grandfather of one could have retired years ago but says he enjoys working. "I used to say I would take it day by day. Now it's year by year."



## Jim Stevens

CEO, ALLEGIANCE SECURITY GROUP LLC  
MOREHEAD CITY

**Résumé:** Born in Goldsboro. Bachelor's in political science in 1968 from Campbell University. Master's in education in 1981 from Brenau University in Gainesville, Ga. Taught business in high school for a year in Smithfield.

When Jim Stevens was searching for a place to start a security business in 1998, he chose one where he felt secure. He had summered in Morehead City as a child, and his parents recently had retired there. He even stayed there for his next venture after selling that company, Security Services of America, in 2004 for \$45 million. Stevens remained at Security Services for two years as president before buying and merging two other companies into Allegiance Security Group. Today, Stevens, 62, is part owner of Allegiance, which employs about 2,500 and provides security guards for businesses in 12 states and Washington, D.C. A 30-year industry veteran, he expects revenue to increase this year by 17% to about \$70 million.

Those are heady numbers for a former high-school teacher. He left the classroom when a friend at the U.S. Department of the Treasury persuaded him to apply there. A special agent who investigated gambling, tax fraud and other crimes, he took a medical retirement in 1980 after sustaining

a head injury on the job — he won't talk about the circumstances.

He went to work for an Atlanta company that trains police officers, then in Los Angeles for CPP Security, which later bought Pinkerton Security and took its name. Stevens wound up as senior vice president in charge of its government-services division. He left for Detroit-based Nationwide Security in 1991, where as vice president he was sent around the world as a consultant for businesses and the governments of Oman, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. He quit to start Security Services.

He also is vice chairman of the North Carolina Protective Services Board, a regulatory body that oversees security companies. He says the industry isn't immune to the bad economy. For example, the decline in construction means fewer guards are needed at work sites. Still, the industry is less vulnerable than most. "There is always going to be a need for security, regardless of what's going on in the economy. Even if it's soft in certain areas, others will remain strong."

Thirty-seven years ago, Larry O'Brien began a career in business development at Charlotte-based Security Forces. Now 65, he's part owner, and the company has expanded from 100 employees to more than 3,400. Revenue was about \$104 million last year, up \$3.5 million from 2007. Clients include office-park owners and residential-property managers in 10 states.

**Résumé:** Native of Brooklyn, N.Y. Bachelor's in 1966 from Washington & Jefferson College in Washington, Pa.; MBA from Temple University. Worked in marketing for J.C. Penney and a Philadelphia-based bank before moving to Security Forces.

## Larry O'Brien

CEO, SECURITY FORCES INC., CHARLOTTE

**How the business has changed:** "It has become much more professional over the years. Minimum standards for hiring have been raised."

**Why he expects to thrive despite the sour economy:** "People need a certain level of security for their businesses. It's often one of the last things they cut back on."

**On the importance of video analytics — technology that programs monitors to be sensitive to suspicious activities:** "If you have someone watching 30 screens, they might not detect everything 100% of the time. You can use technology more effectively."



MAURY FAGGART

## Joe Budd

CEO, THE BUDD GROUP INC., WINSTON-SALEM

Even as a child, Joe Budd took the family business seriously. After church, he helped make the rounds of buildings cleaned by what was then North State Supply Inc., a small janitorial company his father, Richard, had purchased in 1963.

Budd, 46, still works at the family business, though things have changed. For one, he's in charge. In 2001, he bought the Winston-Salem-based company, renamed The Budd Group, though his father is chairman emeritus. For another, it now operates in the Carolinas, West Virginia, Kentucky, Georgia and Florida, and it provides security and landscaping in addition to cleaning services. About 1,100 of its 3,100 employees are in security.

Taking over the company has been a lifelong mission. In addition to the after-church duties, he worked

there during summers and other breaks from high school and college. After earning a bachelor's in business from High Point University in 1983 and his MBA two years later from Wake Forest University, he started full time in the sales department.

Under his father's direction, the company had grown steadily. The decision to add security services in the early 1980s was easy, Budd says. "This was really at the request of the clients." After a modest start, the security division got a boost in the early 1990s when The Budd Group bought security companies in Raleigh and Tampa, Fla.

Security is now the second-largest division, after janitorial services, and accounts for about 30% of revenue, which topped \$70 million last year, up 15% from 2007. Its approximately 250 security clients include



drug companies, high-tech businesses and accounting firms. High-tech surveillance is among the most requested services. "It's changed over the years. We're no longer just providing the night watchman."

**SPOTLIGHT ON: Gene Loye** CEO, SENTRY WATCH INC., GREENSBORO



Gene Loye's company monitors alarm systems. After earning a bachelor's in business in 1965 from Guilford College, he took a job in sales in the Gate City for Columbus, Ohio-based Pet Milk Co. Three years later, he became a distributor for Diversified Manufacturing and Marketing, a local company that specialized in alarm systems. In 1970, he bought the division that made alarm-system panels — he doesn't recall what he paid — and created Sentry Watch. It now operates a high-tech call center with 49 employees. In 2008, it grossed \$4.1 million, up nearly 14% from the year before. Loye has been an officer for several industry groups, including president of the North Carolina Burglar and Fire Alarm Association. Loye, 66, talked recently about what sparked his company's growth, industry changes and legislation he is proud of influencing.

*"We were asked to install an alarm system at the home of Ty Boyd, a Charlotte TV personality. He had this half-million-dollar home, and we were putting in a \$12,000 system. We sold it on the condition that all the wiring would go inside the wall, which, at the time [the late '60s], was practically unheard of. We came up with a drilling device that allowed us to go into the wall to install the wiring. That drill took off, and we were able to market it successfully."*

*"Once the computer age took hold in the '80s, it increased the capability and dependability of systems. It would have been hard to imagine before that the sheer impact they would have."*

*"North Carolina was one of the first states to have an association for burglar- and fire-alarm businesses, and we were able to make some groundbreaking changes. Perhaps the most instrumental piece I worked on was requiring background checks on employees to help keep out the criminal element."*

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