

## **John L. O'Connell '96**

### Justice Award

This weekend marks the second time in 2018 that John O'Connell has returned to the Saint Anselm campus to be honored by his alma mater, and both trips invoke the famous declaration from the poet Walt Whitman, "O Captain! My Captain!" In January, John returned as a two-time captain of the men's basketball team who posted 1,329 career points and 783 rebounds in his four-year career, making him the fifth all-time scorer and seventh leading rebounder in program history. The Hawks combined for a 92-29 record during the career that lifted John into the Saint Anselm Athletics Hall of Fame this past January. Tonight John returns once again to be honored as a captain, this time as one of the youngest and most respected captains on the New York City Police Force. His brief professional basketball career with the likes of the London Lions notwithstanding, John's destiny to become a police officer was in his very blue New York blood. It was after all, his grandfather's, his father's, his mother's and his brother's calling. And of course he is married to a detective. Promoted to the rank of Captain in 2016, John was just recently promoted and is currently the Commanding Officer of the 9th Precinct. He was appointed to this position in July. The 9th is a historic New York City Precinct which encompasses Manhattan's East Village, Tompkins Square Park and numerous other high profile locations which cater to the commands 350,000 residents. Previous to this assignment, Captain O'Connell served as the Executive Officer of the 34th Precinct, where he supervised 230 officers policing the Washington Heights neighborhood. Back when John was playing basketball at Saint Anselm this neighborhood was known as the murder capital of New York City, with over 200 murders annually within two square miles. John has played an integral role in the NYPD's Neighborhood Policing strategy and supervised the first command to use body worn cameras. His outstanding leadership has led to a nearly 11% decline in crime this year and the number of homicides in Washington Heights this year is currently at zero. His rapid rise through the ranks since joining the NYPD in 2005, his courageous service to his quiet and unassuming hometown of New York City, and the admiration he has garnered from the men and women he leads, all make the Saint Anselm Alumni Association proud to bestow the 2018 Justice Award upon one of New York's and Saint Anselm's finest, Captain John O'Connell.