



Inside the FBI

Learn more
about the FBI's
war on crime
from one
alumnus
directing task
forces in the
U.S. and abroad.

EVERY DAY, one man in Washington, D.C., puts thousands of dedicated men and women into life-and-death situations. A battlefield general of a different sort, Ken Kaiser '78, assistant director of the FBI's criminal investigative division, oversees a global war on crime.

It's a sobering task. Ken directs all the FBI's white-collar crime investigations, including corporate fraud, public corruption, organized crime, and civil rights violations, plus all violent and gang-related crimes.

"I have the awesome responsibility of being in charge of nearly 5,000 people who do a very dangerous job, and ensuring that they come home safely," he says. "I worry that a decision I make will get someone hurt or killed. I literally have people's lives in my hands."

As a student at Wheaton, the Evanston, Illinois, native volunteered to tutor boys who lived in the notorious, gang-infested Cabrini-Green housing project. This experience sparked a desire to help others. Watching a young man take his grades from a D to an A, Ken realized, "Wow. I've really accomplished something; I've helped someone else out."

After graduating from Wheaton, Ken's desire to assist others led him to join the State Department's diplomatic security group, charged with protecting foreign dignitaries on state visits. In 1982, he made the leap to the FBI, following his father's (an FBI agent) career path. He then worked in counterterrorism in the days before the first World Trade

Center bombing, eventually rising to special agent in charge (SAC) of field offices in New Orleans and Boston. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Ken returned to his former office to command operations, working with 750 other agents to secure the city and rescue people in distress.

Of the FBI's benevolent functions, he says, "We investigate crimes against the elderly, like health-care fraud, or violent crimes against individuals, and we bring the perpetrators to justice. You feel like you're making a difference in the world, making it a better place to live. It's service to the public, to the country, and to mankind."

While his work has assumed a more executive edge since his promotion to assistant director in April 2007, it's no less taxing. Ken directs 450 task forces in the U.S., and 25 more in countries like Romania and Colombia. (The total number of these task forces increased by 200 in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.) Ken is also the face of the FBI on criminal matters, regularly detailing the Bureau's investigations for national and international news media.

The FBI motto, "Fidelity, Bravery, Integrity," reflects Ken's faith in Christ. "When you're taught Christian values, you don't put yourself first; you put others first and try to be a good example. I care about the people who work for me, and they know it. That came from my education at Wheaton."

With a twinkle in his eye, Ken adds, "I'm always proud of Wheaton College graduates; there are very few I've had to throw in jail."

by Dan Edelen '92