

by Mary Ann Hutcheson

De'Andre Hugue

"I'm Just a Cop Humanizing the Badge."

Irmo Police Department Staff Sergeant De'Andre Hugue is known as a hometown hero, a "positive creator," and a dedicated colleague who promotes pride in wearing the policeman's badge.

Hugue has been with the Irmo Police Department for ten years. The thirty-two-year-old hails from Jasper County in the South Carolina Lowcountry. He majored in Criminal Justice at the University of South Carolina, with a minor in law enforcement, and served as a detention officer for three years before arriving at Irmo.

Hugue's mother and father have over twenty years of experience in law enforcement. He says, "'Spare the rod; spoil the child'? They never spared the rod. But they got me where I am. If it weren't for them guiding me and being in law enforcement themselves, I wouldn't be where I am in this position today."

Wearing the badge of a police officer is challenging during the best of times. Hugue turns those challenges into something positive. He starts by putting the grace of God into everything he does. The right mental attitude, persistence, and a love for people follow. Hugue's media presence spreads positivity to a wider audience with the support of friends, peers, and the public. "The support from my department is just beautiful, including that of my chief, Robert (Bobby) Dale," he says.

Hugue has seen negative sentiments grow after the deaths of George Floyd Jr. in 2020 and Tyre Nichols in 2023. "There are a lot of perspectives out there. Most of us representing the badge would do anything to protect and serve. We take pride in wearing those badges. There are a lot of good cops out there. I want my work to encourage people to judge police not by their presence but by their actions," he says.

In addition to his considerable media presence, including Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, Hugue is known for winning first prize among 1,900 United States law enforcement, military, and first responder participants in the June 2023 "Cheer Choice Award." The award is given to "positive creatives" who make a difference in the world.

In 2021, Sergeant Hugue developed the acronym "Hulkrilla." His distinct musculature and physical presence could definitely qualify him as a Hulk, and he does enjoy working out. But "Hulkrilla" stands for something far more critical in his life. Each letter refers to a characteristic he believes should exist in the hearts and actions of all of us, especially in those who serve and protect. They stand for humanity, unity, love, knowledge, respect, integrity, loyalty, leadership, and accountability. People know him as Hulkrilla. He feels those characteristics should describe what we all look to achieve as we relate to one another.

Regarding his future, Hugue says, "I have twelve more years in law enforcement. Eventually, I'll look to retire and open up a tow truck business called "Hulkrilla Towing."

Law enforcement is in the family. Hugue's seven-year-old son already likes playing cops, so there may be a Hulkrilla, Jr. someday. Hugue reminds his son to "relax a little" for now. Maybe someday. ■

