



# BARBALUNGA FOR SHERIFF

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**“Time For Change – Justice That Works”**

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## **BARBALUNGA SAYS A 12 YEAR RETROSPECTIVE JOB PERFORMANCE REVIEW IS OVERDUE – SAYS MORE DIVERSITY IS NEEDED**

Berkshire County—Alf Barbalunga, a Democratic candidate for Berkshire County Sheriff, says that in his job, like those of most Berkshire County residents, he is constantly being reviewed, held to high standards, and like most of us, he could be separated from his employment if he fails to perform.



One of the issues Alf takes pride in is knowing that he has increased diversity in what used to be the predominantly “white-male” field of probation, including the first non-Caucasian internship hires ever. He also hired the first female probation officer in the jurisdiction.

And, over his eight years as President of the Massachusetts Chief Probation Officers Association, Inc., Alf increased the diversity of its executive leadership from 28% to 69% non-Caucasian and/or non-males, including Black, Hispanic, and Asian representation.

He received the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Trial Court Cultural Diversity Certificate of Appreciation in both December of 2021 and October of 2020, where he was one of approximately 6,200 employees eligible for consideration of this prestigious honor. In December of 2016, Barbalunga assisted with the inception and rollout of the annual Cultural Appreciation Week celebration, showcasing the named Cultural Proficiency Champions, of which he was one.

“A phrase I heard when I was young,” Barbalunga says, “is one that I live by and like to repeat often, ‘There but for the grace of God go I.’” I didn’t understand it as a child, but as I got older, I came to realize that, for whatever reason, when one of us is dealt a favorable hand in life, we should live with empathy, appreciate our position in life and our advantages.

More than that, we are duty-bound to “pay it forward”, to help others so they can achieve the same measure of success. This is what I try to do every day by helping others in my career as a probation officer or donating my time and resources to my community.”

In addition to creating diversity within his career circles, from June 1997 – September 2014, Barbalunga organized a basketball team with under-privileged youth and young adults, using his personal love of basketball as a vehicle for mentorship.

**The Berkshire County Chapter of the NAACP**  
Presents  
**GATHER-IN 2013**  
A FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENT FOR ALL BERKSHIRE COUNTY

**Activities Include:**

Entertainment	Girls & Boys Youth
Face Paintings	Basketball Tournament
Food Booths	Celebrity Dunking Booth
Bouncy House	Vendors, Games
Music	Pony Rides

• **FREE Bike Raffle For Kids** •

Location:  
Pitt Park on Columbus Avenue  
Pittsfield, MA

**Saturday, July 20, 2013**  
**12 noon ~ 7pm**

For more information or to reserve a booth contact:  
Henry Lee 841-0542  
or  
Dennis Powell 464-9060



“Being part of a team is a wonderful experience when learning how to be accountable“, Barbalunga writes. “Also, captaining these teams developed my leadership skills and continued to exemplify the importance of performing and executing at the highest levels. It is because of the life lessons I learned while a student-athlete, I created and managed a traveling three-on-three basketball team. During this time, I provided opportunities to disadvantaged youths, often non-Caucasian, who would travel and enjoy visiting various cities through the Northeast, almost always for the first time. I also arranged for some of these youths to receive tutoring support for academic challenges. Furthermore, I connected many of these student-athletes with resources to explore collegiate scholarship opportunities at the junior college, Division III, Division II, and occasionally at the Division I college or university levels. It was incredibly rewarding to witness young men have a chance to further their dreams and avoid becoming horrific cliché statistics of violence and/or incarceration.”

In looking back, Barbalunga compares his record with that of the Office of Sheriff for the last 12 years. “I know of a number of white male Pittsfield police officers, known associates of the Sheriff, who were hired during the last 12 years and walked onto the job as captains, without any correctional experience; some retired several years later to draw a state pension.

In doing so, the Sheriff eliminated all promotional opportunities for his rank-and-file employees who had experience. Some say that is patronage; others say they had “experience”, but in my view, it’s not balanced. We should be hiring a more diverse workforce and promoting from within so that the leadership at all levels in that organization reflects the gender and cultural diversity of the current staff and the community. I only know of two promotions of non-Caucasian employees within the last 12 years, one of whom is now retired, and neither of these promotions resulted to inclusion on the Executive Leadership Team.”

Presently within the sheriff’s 14-person Executive Leadership Team, all are white, and only three are women, one at a part time status. Additionally, there are currently two open lawsuits against Bowler and select members of his Executive Leadership Team, in which women complained of sexual harassment and/or employment discrimination (including a pregnant woman), and then both were subsequently fired. One of these same Executive Leadership Team members was also previously the subject of hostile workplace complaints, by two women employees at the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office. In 2003, that lawsuit resulted in a \$355,000 award for medical payments and punitive damages. These Executive Leadership Team members continue to receive raises and promotions under Bowler, rather than face investigatory actions, and if warranted, discipline or termination. Barbalunga says, “Suffice to say, we will handle women’s discrimination complaints with extreme gravitas if I am elected.”

“Nationally,” Barbalunga says, “and I know this is a disappointing statistic, but 90% of sheriffs are white, while only 5% are African-American and only 2% are women. This year, here in Berkshire County, I myself was under a lot of pressure not to enter this race, which I overcame, and here I am running a tough race, but unfortunately, we did not have any female or non-Caucasian candidates step forward and offer even more choices for the voters. And, yes, it’s not lost on me that I’m identified as a white male, but as someone who has always strived to be color and gender blind in hiring, I hope, if elected, to change the hiring and promotional culture within the Sheriff’s Office, and in 6 or 12 years, I would like to see female and/or minority candidates, perhaps with better skills than I, step forward and run for that office. Ideally, we should have a diverse group of 4, 5, even 6 plus people running for sheriff in 2028. Hopefully, during the next 6 years, the changes I bring to the Sheriff’s Office will remain as a significant legacy to the advancement of diversity.”



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