



**Chief of Police Murphy Paul**

February 11, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **STATEMENT BY POLICE CHIEF MURPHY PAUL**

The Baton Rouge Police Department was made aware of a post circulating on social media in which two Baton Rouge Police Officers are dressed in blackface. According to the post, the pictures are from a Baton Rouge Police Department yearbook. A preliminary review of the matter indicates the officers were working in an undercover capacity during a department-approved operation when the photos were taken. *The Advocate* published a story about the operation on February 22, 1993.

Blackface photographs are inappropriate and offensive. They were inappropriate then and are inappropriate today. The Baton Rouge Police Department would like to apologize to our citizens and to anyone who may have been offended by the photographs.

The photographs in the post were taken more than 25 years ago. Administratively, the department cannot apply existing policies to conduct that happened before the policies were in place. Policies that were existing at the time of the behavior would have to be applied. The department is bound by the Louisiana Law Enforcement Bill of Rights, which places a timeline on administrative investigations related to officer conduct.

Today, we would not allow our officers to wear blackface in an official capacity under any circumstances. We have policies in place to prevent our officers from engaging in this type of behavior both on and off-duty.

Our BRPD Training Staff recently returned from Oakland Stockton, California where they received training on Procedural Justice Policing. The Procedural Justice Program will be part of the training academy curriculum for new BRPD officers, as well as our annual in-service training for all Baton Rouge Police Officers. The Baton Rouge Police Department is diligently working to apply 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing best practices and standards to our agency.

###