

Forensic scientist recognized for work

Forensic scientists may not be required to beat the street and face dangers like detectives and officers, but their roles in fighting crime and finding the truth are just as valuable. Checking fingerprints, analyzing bullet trajectories, and identifying fibers can turn the direction of an investigation and lead to the successful closure of a case.

Bill Alvine Sr. was one of the first forensic investigators, entering the field 60 years ago, long before television cop dramas recognized the position. His career highlights include opening and directing independent forensic science labs in New Jersey and Florida, authoring case and litigation history novels, and providing his expertise for the advancement of trials in federal and state courts.

Today, Alvine serves as a special assistant to the dean at the University of New Haven's Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Science.

"Bill's contribution to the field of forensic science has been profound, especially since his work in forensic engineering as applied to the field of fire science was among, if not, the very first scientific application on record," said Thomas Johnson, dean at the University of New Haven.

In honor of his work, the university honored Alvine with a plaque at a ceremony at Cedar Crest, a retirement community in Pompton Plains.

"I'm proud to be honored in front of a small group of my good friends than if I was honored in front of a large group of strangers," said Alvine.

Despite the popularity of the forensic scientist in pop-culture, Alvine says the television shows misrepresent the real world of forensic science and consequently challenge the judicial system.

"I'm questioned by so many of my fellow citizens here at Cedar Crest," he added.

