



**Thomas Barker**  
**25<sup>th</sup> ACJS President**  
**1987-1988**

Tom Barker was born just prior to America's involvement in World War II, growing up in the state of Alabama, just outside of Birmingham. Upon graduation from high school, Barker became a police officer with the Birmingham Police Department, where he worked as a patrol officer for six years. While serving as a police officer, Barker attended Jefferson State Jr. College where he majored in police administration. After two years, he transferred to Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, where he graduated with a B.A. in Sociology in 1971. He continued his studies at Mississippi State University, earning a M.A. in Sociology in 1974, by focusing on police corruption, an area of research that would span his entire career.

Barker then left policing and accepted a position at Valdosta State College in Valdosta, Georgia. There he served as an Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice and Sociology, and became Director of the Criminal Justice program. While working full time at the academic post, Barker also continued on at Mississippi State, working toward his Ph.D., which he was awarded in 1976. As he neared completion of his degree, he accepted an academic posting at Mississippi State as an Associate Professor and served as the Director of Correctional Programs. In 1977, Barker returned home to Alabama, accepting an academic posting at Jacksonville State University, where he remained until 1999, eventually becoming Dean of the program there.

While at Jacksonville, Barker became a member of both the Southern Criminal Justice Association and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. He became very active with SCJA, serving as the Region's Trustee to ACJS and eventually becoming the Association's President for the 1984-1985 term. In addition, while serving as SCJA's President, he also served as a Trustee-at-Large in ACJS. In 1986, he served as the Annual Meeting's Program Chair, and was then elected the following year to serve as ACJS President.

After serving as ACJS President, Barker remained at Jacksonville State University until 1999, when he accepted his current position as Professor of Criminal Justice and Police Studies at Eastern Kentucky University. While there he developed a new area of academic research into outlaw motorcycle gangs, becoming the foremost authority on Biker Gangs. He also continues to research in the area of police corruption and deviance, and he has served as a Specialized Police Academy Instructor for over 25 years.

In 1985, Barker was awarded the Outstanding Criminal Justice Educator of the Year Award by the Southern Association of Criminal Justice, and in 1995, he received the Richter Moore, Jr. Founders Award.

For his hard work and dedication to the Academy, in 1993, Barker was honored with the ACJS Founder's Award.