



Fall 11-17-2021

Retired from FBI, Mason '80 Helps Fill School Bus Driver Shortage

Ann Aubry
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news>

Recommended Citation

Aubry, Ann, "Retired from FBI, Mason '80 Helps Fill School Bus Driver Shortage" (2021).
News and Events. 4098.
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/4098>

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at The Ames Library at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Retired from FBI, Mason '80 Helps Fill School Bus Driver Shortage

Nov. 17, 2021

After rising through the ranks at the FBI, then serving as a senior executive at Verizon until his retirement in 2020, Michael Mason '80 is pitching in to combat a school bus driver shortage in his home community of Chesterfield County, Virginia.

The former IWU trustee is living out the words of Illinois Wesleyan's late president Minor Myers jr., doing good after also doing well.

During his 23-year career at the FBI, Mason rose to become fourth in command at the agency and "one of the four most senior African Americans in the FBI's history, and I'm very proud of that," Mason told [The Washington Post](#).

But when he learned of the severe national shortage of school bus drivers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mason stepped up to fill the need. These days he drives a bus for students with special needs.

"I believe if all of us gave a little something, wow — how we could impact this world!" he told [CBS News](#).

"I think in our society, we need to get next to the idea that there are no unimportant jobs. What could be more important than the attention we pay to our education system?"

These words to [CBS's Steve Hartman](#) are an echo of remarks Mason gave when he spoke at Illinois Wesleyan's [Commencement](#) in 2006. His [Commencement address](#) includes the story of a janitor at NASA who, when asked by President Johnson to describe his job, answered, "Mr. President, I come to NASA each day, to help put a man on the moon."

"I have to tell you, I absolutely love this story," Mason told the IWU Class of 2006. "The answer that the man gives is an attitude I try to inculcate in the people who work with me. The janitor's response was born, not of arrogance, but rather of an understanding that his work — no matter how some may define it as menial — his work contributes to the greater good."

As he told [The Washington Post](#) in 2021, "Half of loving your work is the attitude you bring to it" — and he hopes his nonlinear career move will inspire others.

Mason told [CNN's Anderson Cooper](#) that he's donating the bulk of his bus driver salary to his favorite charities — including his alma mater, Illinois Wesleyan University.

"If I'm rich in anything," he told Cooper, "It's mentors, it's coaches, it's teachers. I had some wonderful people in my life pushing me to excel throughout my life. I am so grateful to them."

National coverage of his inspirational story has also included the [New York Post](#).

Mason was featured in the [IWU Magazine](#) in 2004.



Mike Mason's story inspired a rare occurrence — when YouTube comments are uplifting.



Mike Mason '80

By Ann Aubry