Celebrating Our History, Celebrating Our Staff.

Peace Officers' Memorial Day "Hall of Honor" Dedication May 15, 2013

From the Sheriff

Every year the Sheriff's Office and other law enforcement agencies throughout our county, state and nation commemorate Peace Officers Memorial Day on May 15th. Each year in Washtenaw County members of law enforcement, county officials, and community members come together at the Washtenaw 100 Memorial Park on Michigan Avenue in Ypsilanti to honor the law enforcement officers in Washtenaw County who have died in the line of duty. This ceremony is always a solemn and deeply moving occasion.

This year on May 15th in addition to the Washtenaw 100 Memorial ceremony, the WCSO dedicated its new "Hall of Honor" celebrating and honoring the lives of the four WCSO officers who have fallen in the line of duty during our office's history. This new "Hall of Honor" is dedicated to the memory of Deputies Harold C. Ewald, Jerry Russo, Leo Borders, and Frank "Butch" Crampton who, displaying courage, dedication and self-sacrifice, died in the line of duty protecting the residents of Washtenaw County.

The WCSO "Hall of Honor" owes a special thanks to Deputies Robert Losey and Harry Valentine, who saw the potential for the Hall when consideration was being given to where to re-install the cast bronze plaques that were moved during the expansion construction. However, the evolution to a Hall of Honor was a true Sheriff's Office project. WCSO staff members joined together, volunteering time, energy, and expertise to bring this vision to fruition.

Staff from all over the agency pitched in to make the Hall of Honor a special place and the ceremony something to remember. These great staff members include (but not limited to): Tom Sinks and Teresa Zentz from the Detective Bureau. Charlene Gransden and Myron Blackwell from Human Resources. Undersheriff Mark Ptaszek, Chief Deputy Rick Kaledas, Haley Gordon and Kathy Wyatt from Admin. The members of our Honor Guard. Tracy Shelton-Colson who sang the National Anthem. Wes Fabian who took the photos. Mike Jackson who put the reception food together. To these staff members and all the other members of the WCSO, who contributed to the construction of the Hall of Honor and to the dedication ceremony, please accept the appreciation of the Sheriff's office and that of the families of the fallen officers we honored.

I would also like to recognize and thank all those from outside the Sheriff's Office who contributed to the "Hall of Honor" and dedication ceremony. These included (but are not limited to) County Administration and the Board of Commissioners who passed a Resolution Honoring our fallen officers and U.S. Congressman John Dingell who read a resolution honoring our deputies into the U.S. Congressional Record and sent his local field representative to the ceremony to present it along with a flag that had flown over the U.S. Capital.

May 15th 2013 and the dedication of our "Hall of Honor" will be a special day in the history of the WCSO. The quote on the wall of the Hall of Honor says, "They gave much and asked little. They deserve our remembrance. For as long as these walls stand they will be remembered, not for how they died, but for how they lived." As long as there is a WCSO, the memories of these men, who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their community and its residents, will not fade

As we continue to remember and celebrate these men's lives, and the history of the WCSO, let us also appreciate one another. Let us celebrate the dedication, integrity and courage of the current staff members of the WCSO who are committed to servicing others, and like other brave men and women of law enforcement across our country are willing to "run into danger" when necessary, instead of away from it

Thank you all.

Sheriff Jerry L. Clayton