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Levy County Law Enforcement Memorial shows Tri-County Area links



This is the wreath that rested in front of the podium before it was taken to be placed at the base of the flagpole at the Levy County Courthouse.



These are other wreaths to honor the fallen officers.

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Story, Photos and Videos

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BRONSON – Information shared during the Levy County Law Enforcement Memorial program Thursday afternoon (May 9) reflects the strong Tri-County Area connection among law enforcement families.



Sheriff Bobby McCallum opens the program.

Members of the MCSO Honor Guard present the colors.

When Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum was speaking about last year's murder of two Gilchrist County deputies, he shared with



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listeners facts to show the strong Levy-Gilchrist connections.

The keynote speaker Thursday was Holly Reed-Stemple, the widow of the late Capt. Chad A. Reed Sr. of the Dixie County Sheriff's Office.

Four members of the Marion County Sheriff's Office Honor Guard presented and retired the colors during the program, and they escorted the wreath from Courtroom A of the Levy County Courthouse outside to the flagpole, where Sheriff McCallum and Williston Police Chief laid the wreath in closing.

Carolyn McLain, a 17-year-old volunteer with the Marion County Sheriff's Office Pipes & Drums Corps, played Amazing Grace on bagpipes as she calmly walked away from the site where the wreath was to be laid.

Pastor Terrell Burge of the Bronson Community Church gave the invocation at this memorial service held to honor the memory of LCSO Deputy Atticus Haygood Ellzey, WPD Cpl. David W. Moss, Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Noel Beltran Ramirez Jr. and GCSO Deputy Taylor Fletcher Lindsey.

As Sheriff McCallum opened the ceremonies, he welcomed the families of the fallen heroes who were to be recognized. Present were Lori Moss, the widow of WPD Cpl. David Moss; the Ellzey family, including Chiefland City Manager Mary Ellzey, WPD and Williston Fire-Rescue Administrative Assistant Brooke Ellzey Willis and Wilma "Aunt Cooter" (Ellzey) Sherwood, the daughter of Haygood Ellzey; The Ramirez Family; and keynote speaker Holy Reed-Stemple, the widow of Capt. Chad Reed Sr.

Sheriff McCallum started the program by speaking about Deputy Ellzey, who was killed on Jan. 28, 1945 in the line of duty.

He was 63 years old at the time of his death. He was shot and killed in the town of Otter Creek after being lured into a wooded area by two men, Sheriff McCallum said.

Deputy Ellzey had asked the two men to leave an African-American bar to avoid conflicts. The men shot him.

Deputy Ellzey's oldest son Joe, who had just bought a brand-new car, if rushed to the scene and took his dad to a local doctor's office. Deputy Ellzey was able to identify the two men that shot him, the sheriff said.

While taking his father to the hospital in Gainesville, McCallum said, Joe blew up his brand-new car. Both men were arrested and convicted, McCallum said, and they served life in prison. That can

Deputy Ellzey was survived by his wife and 14 children, the sheriff said.

On Jan. 25, 2018, part of U.S. Highway 19 near the Town of Otter Creek was named in honor of Deputy Ellzey.

That story and photos can be seen by clicking [HERE](#).



WPD Deputy Police Chief Clay Connolly speaks about the late WPD Cpl. David W. Moss.

Williston Deputy Police Chief Clay Connolly next spoke about an officer he knew who died in the line of duty in that

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easternmost city of Levy County.

Prior to the 1988 murder of Cpl. Moss, Connolly had become an officer in the WPD.

As the WPD “Dinosaur In Residence,” Connolly said as he began to share his thought about his friend, he asked listeners to understand he had taken some literary license.

Moss was 31 years old when he was killed, Connolly said, saying Moss was “a big kid” and asking “Who among us is grown up at 31?”

He loved professional wrestling, animals and children, Connolly said of Cpl. Moss, and he loved Williston and patrolling the streets.

“During the wee hours of July 30 (1988), David rolled up on a disabled car on Southwest Fifth Street,” Connolly said. “the car hadn’t been yet reported as stolen and David went to find the driver of the car. As he rounded the corner of the pawn shop on noble avenue, David was confronted by a dysfunctional 19-year-old ne’er-do-well who had a stolen pistol that he had taken from a house where he had been squatting illegally.

“David was ambushed,” Connolly continued. “David had then made a choice that defined the word ‘hero’ in my mind. David returned fire. He effectively neutralized the threat, so that others would not be victimized by him in the future.”

Should Connolly be in the same position, he hopes to act similarly, he said.

“Maybe David was not so much of a kid after all,” Connolly said. “Maybe he was pretty grown up after all.”

LCSO Undersheriff Brett Beauchamp speaks about the connection to the Ramirez family.

Levy County Undersheriff W.O. “Brett”

Beauchamp III then spoke about the two deputies killed last year in Trenton.

Gilchrist County Sheriff’s Office Sgt. Noel Beltran Ramirez Jr. and GCSO Deputy Taylor Fletcher Lindsey were gunned down while they were eating a meal in Trenton last year, Beauchamp said.

That incident shook the community to the core, he said. No one in law enforcement anywhere in the Tri-County Area will ever be the same, he said.

To read the story, photos and videos about that incident, click **HERE**.

Undersheriff Beauchamp explained why these deaths hit the Levy County Sheriff’s Office very hard.

Sgt. Ramirez began his career at the Williston Police Department, Beauchamp said. He then worked from 2011 to 2016 at the LCSO, he added.

“He left friends and colleagues in both agencies,” Beauchamp said. “Secondly, Sgt. Ramirez’s parents Mr. and Mrs. Noel Ramirez Sr. live in Levy County. And finally, Sgt. Ramirez’s sister Solianet Ramirez works as a detention corporal for, you guessed it, the



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Levy County Sheriff's Office.”

The undersheriff said the agency is honored to have the Ramirez family at the memorial service.

He thanked the family members of all of fallen officers.

“Your loved ones’ memories will not be forgotten by the members of the Levy County Sheriff’s Office,” he said. “And you, as survivors, will always hold a place in our hearts at the Sheriff’s Office.”



Holly Reed-Stemple speaks about the loss of her husband DCSO Capt. Chad Reed Sr., and how it affected her and their two boys. He was shot and killed Jan. 14, 2010, while he and other deputies attempted to arrest a murder suspect fleeing from south Florida.

<https://youtu.be/3WgWmPPmVTw>

This video shows Holly Reed-Stemple as she begins telling people about what it means to a family of a law enforcement officer after he is gone.

Holly Reed-Stemple, the keynote speaker of the day, is on the Board Trustees of the Northeast Florida Chapter of the Concerns Of Police Survivors.

This national group helps survivors of law enforcement officers who have been killed, including helping fellow officers affected by those deaths. To learn about [COPS](https://www.concernsofpolicesurvivors.org/) and-or to donate to them, please visit this website

<https://www.concernsofpolicesurvivors.org/>.

Reed-Stemple said people should see the fallen officers as heroes, and they should see their surviving families as heroes as well, because their favorite officer isn’t here anymore.

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Their boys were 9 and 5 when Capt. Reed was killed, his surviving spouse said. The older boy knew what it meant to be dead, but the younger boy needed help learning about it.

As time passed, her old boy asked “Why?”

“I can’t explain why,” she told her oldest son. “All I can tell you is that God has a bigger plan. We may not understand that plan, but we just have to keep our faith in the Good Lord, and put one foot forward.”

Not a person to be in the limelight, nine years ago, Reed-Stemple’s life has changed in that way as well.

She said being the public speaker “was Chad’s job.”

Back then, her duties were the behind-the-scenes support functions of a law enforcement officer’s wife.

While he has been gone for years, there is not a day when she does not think about her late husband. She and their sons have learned to focus on the positive aspects of life, and to take things one step at a time.

She and her sons are thankful to God for the time they had when he was alive, she said.

She spoke about that day.

“One Jan. 14, 2010, our lives were changed forever,” she said. “Change we were not prepared for. Change that we didn’t want. Change that happened because one person made a split-second decision to pull a trigger and shoot my husband.”

She worked in Mayo then, and was about 45 minutes away from Cross City.

They would talk at noon to make plans for their evening activities.

The boys were in karate, she said. Her mom was with them. Capt. Reed was leaving from the jail that day, she said. He was on the phone with her as he left. She could hear the radio chatter in the background.

It was a statewide BOLO (be on the lookout) for the murder suspect from south Florida.

Dixie County deputies found the suspect on U.S. Highway 19, and he told his wife that he had to go check on the officers.

“But he said that he would see me when he got home and that he loved me,” she said. “That’s the last time I spoke to him.”

From the time the officers arrived on scene at the gas station until it was over, she said, was 35 seconds.

Her boys are now 14 and 18 years old, and C.J. Reed is getting ready to graduate from Dixie County High School, she said.

“This is not our first milestone without Chad,” she said.

An example she gave was the first time C.J. Reed had to wear a tie at an FFA event. They used a YouTube video for him to learn how to tie a tie.

“And now we all three know how to tie ties,” she said.

She put it in perspective for everyone to consider.

“Milestones are tough no matter how many years have passed,” she said. “So, for those of you who are here today, if you don’t hear anything else I’m telling you, remember milestones are monumental.”

She intimated that this is bittersweet because her son is graduating, but his father is not going to be there.

Reed-Stemple shared with people that when they see a person like her or some other

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surviving person from a tragedy like this, please don't wait for that person to ask for help. Just go forward and act.

The smallest of gestures can help a person's spirit to an immeasurable degree, she said.

She shared her very strong endorsement for Concerns Of Police Survivors.

To learn about COPS and-or to donate to them, please visit this website.

<https://www.concernsofpolicesurvivors.org/>

After Reed-Stemple spoke, the memorial concluded in the parking lot next to the courthouse at the flagpole, where Sheriff McCallum and WPD Chief Strow laid the wreath. Sheriff McCallum thanked his Executive Assistant Robin Hardee McCracken for coordinating the Levy County Law Enforcement Memorial and making it a success.



In this still shot, Sheriff McCallum and WPD Chief Dennis Strow prepare to lay the wreath at the base of the flagpole after accepting it from the MCSO Honor Guard, as Carolyn McLain, 17, a volunteer with the Marion County Sheriff's Office Pipes & Drums Corps, plays *Amazing Grace* on bagpipes.

https://youtu.be/sGE7XI_wkJ4

In this video, the wreath is laid as Carolyn McLain, 17, a volunteer with the Marion County Sheriff's Office Pipes & Drums Corps, plays *Amazing Grace* on bagpipes as she calmly walked away from the site where the wreath was to be laid. The MCSO Honor Guard is seen in action as well.