



Retired Alton Police officer remembered fondly by family and fellow officers

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
February 14 2019 1:17 PM



ALTON – A retired Alton Police Officer passed Tuesday just after he was able to celebrate his 90th birthday.

Harry Williams was hired onto the Alton Police Department on Dec. 1, 1955, and was active on the force until he retired at the rank of sergeant on July 1, 1979. He continued to show support for the department through his attendance at the annual Policeman's

Ball until his health would no longer allow it, according to an email from Alton Police Public Information Officer Emily Hejna. Williams was the oldest retired Alton Police officer at the time of his passing.

His granddaughter, Megan Williams, the former Alton City Attorney, said that her grandfather wanted to make it to the age of 90.

“Grandpa always said he wanted to make it to 90, and his 90th birthday was last week,” Megan Williams said. “So he made it to 90 and then made it back to grandma before Valentine's Day.”

Harry Williams was married to his wife Kathleen for 60 years. She passed just after their wedding anniversary. He was able to celebrate his 90th birthday with his entire large family.

After his time on the force, Harry Williams served on the Alton Civil Service Commission and the Alton Police Pension Board.

“I have so many great memories of my grandpa, but one thing I was always incredibly proud of was the fact whenever someone found out I was Harry Williams's granddaughter, they would launch into a story about how much they loved him, and tell me how he helped them in one way or another,” Williams said in an email to the Alton Police Department. “I have never come across anyone with a bad word to say about him. He was an incredibly hard worker who would do anything for his family or someone in need. He set the example of service to others for our family.

“My grandpa was tremendously proud of his work as a police officer, and he kept it close to him up until the end,” Williams continued. “As grandpa's Alzheimer's progressed, he moved to Cedarhurst Memory Care in Edwardsville. Routinely, we would find grandpa walking around the building checking everyone's door handles. We would try to redirect him, but he would tell us that it was fine. He was out on patrol making sure everyone was safe. Being a police officer was so much a part of his identity, it stayed with him throughout his life.”

Megan Williams said her grandfather gave the best “grandfather hugs,” adding he tended to his large family as well as his career. She said two of her uncles became police officers as well. She said he would often check on people he helped on his days off work to make sure they were safe.

Harry Williams was also able to join his granddaughter in court one day, and he was able to go out on patrol with Alton Police Chief Jake Simmons.

“It was great of Jake to let him do that,” Megan Williams said. “The Alton Police were always so great to him when he came around. He would be my date to the Policeman's Ball.”