



March 2011

## Honoring Heroes: A Police Dog Tribute

From: KatesBoylston

When Aryn, an 11-year-old German Shepherd that worked for the Gwinnett County Police Department as a K-9 officer, was euthanized, his handler was devastated. But Cpl. Mike Waddell wasn't the only one who loved the devoted dog. Aryn's recent funeral service at Oak Rest Pet Gardens in Bethlehem, GA., drew more than 100 police officers, members of the public and county officials.

Aryn was euthanized earlier this year because of health problems. The dog served the Police Department for seven years but was retired in 2004 after being shot in the line of duty.

Waddell, the dog's handler, was chasing suspected murderer Terry Chaney through the woods in January 2004 when the suspect shot Aryn twice. Officers killed Chaney when they returned fire, and Aryn survived three hours of surgery.

Julianne Brace, a funeral director at Oak Rest, which is owned by Deceased Pet Care Funeral Home and Crematory, said the Waddell family requested a private viewing in the chapel to have some time alone with Aryn. When that was finished, the casket was sealed and an honor guard carried the casket to a gazebo, where a public service was held.

Waddell, who was accompanied by his wife Ruth and 8-year-old

daughter Nikki, did not speak at the service because he was overwhelmed by the loss of the dog he considered a member of his family. Officer Don Merchant read a statement on Waddell's behalf: "Even though (Aryn) had just adjusted to his retired life very, very well, he always would start barking and whining at me while doing his 'happy dance' when I would put on my uniform. He never stopped waiting to go with me. I truly believe Aryn enjoyed his time here on Earth, but he did not do it for himself."

Other speakers also spoke about the important job Aryn did and the bravery he exhibited. In addition to the scores of police officers in attendance, a few police dogs also were on hand to pay their respects with their handlers.

Waddell's wife, Ruth, said after the service that Aryn was like a family member. "We felt that the funeral and the services were a way to honor him and for the community to also offer him their appreciation because he helped the community so much," she said. She credited the dog with saving her husband's life, adding that although she and her family have had other pets, this was the first one they honored with a funeral service. "I think it was helpful for my husband and myself," she said. "Aryn was more than just a dog to us, so I felt it was something that we needed."

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### Man Sells Ad Space on Urn

Aaron Jamison wants to pay for his cremation and urn costs before he dies of colon cancer so his wife wouldn't have to worry.

Jamison suffers from colon cancer and was given only a few months to live and earlier this year he planned to sell advertising space on two urns that will hold his ashes - one for his wife and one for his parents. The family of the musician/comedian noted that it was "typical Aaron" to concoct this plan, mentioning he was known for quirky little things. Jamison has already collected money for several ads and plans to hand-paint the ads on the two urns. He hopes to raise \$800.

From: Mortuary Management Magazine



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