



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

RISA VETRI FERMAN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

KEVIN R. STEELE
FIRST ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY
COURTHOUSE
P.O. BOX 311
NORRISTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
19404-0311

SAMUEL J. GALLEN
CHIEF COUNTY DETECTIVE

STEVEN J. LATZER
CHIEF OF STAFF

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S FAX
COUNTY DETECTIVE BUREAU

(610) 278-3090
(610) 278-3095
(610) 278-3368

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 20th 2014

Montgomery County District Attorney Risa Vetri Ferman and the Lower Merion Police Department Honor Fallen Lower Merion Officers, Sergeant Francis J. Fanning and Officer Elwyn A. Fletcher, in Fallen Hero Plaque Dedication Ceremony



On October 14th, 2014, Montgomery County District Attorney Risa Vetri Ferman, along with the Lower Merion Township Police Superintendent Michael J. McGrath and James Binns, Esq. the Founder of the Fallen Heroes Plaque Dedication Program, dedicated Hero Plaques to honor the sacrifice made by two fallen Lower Merion heroes, Sergeant Francis J. Fanning and Officer Elwyn A. Fletcher. These solemn dedications marked the 23rd and 24th Hero Plaques presentations in Montgomery County. Sergeant Francis J. Fanning died in the line of duty forty-eight years ago and Officer Elwyn A. Fletcher, eighty-seven years ago.

Sergeant Francis J. Fanning lost his life in the line of duty on July 6th, 1966 after 28 years serving Lower Merion Township Police Department. He began his career in law enforcement on March 15th, 1938. Sergeant Fanning was appointed to the rank of Sergeant on November 28th, 1953 after serving in patrol. Sergeant Fanning was in Department headquarters when he was stricken by a heart attack and passed away.

Sergeant Fanning was survived by his wife Mary, daughter Barbara (Fanning) Davis. Davis attended the dedication along with her son, and Fanning's grandson, Michael Fanning and numerous other relatives.



Officer Elwyn A. Fletcher was killed in the line of duty on June 9th, 1927 while in pursuit of a speeding auto on his motorcycle on Montgomery Avenue in Ardmore. One of the tires on his motorcycle blew out and he was thrown from his vehicle, ultimately making his sacrifice at Bryn Mawr Hospital. Officer Fletcher was survived by his wife, Sarah.



These two Hero Plaques were sponsored by Lower Merion Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 28 and the Lower Merion Police Benevolent Association.



DA Ferman explained the significance of law enforcement's sacrifice for our communities, "It takes a very special kind of person to serve in law enforcement. It takes a person who will put others before himself or herself. It takes a person willing to stand in the line of fire and in harm's way to keep others safe. These individuals go to work not knowing if they will come home. We are here to not only remember those who made this noble sacrifice in the past, but also to honor the service of the men and women who surround us today."

Hero Cop Founder James Binns said: "It is our great privilege to be rendering this homage to these officers and to all these men and woman putting their lives on the line every day. We dedicate plaques to those officers who died in the line of duty and we are celebrating not the fact that your ancestors were killed but the way they lived their lives." Binns recognized the breadth of the program in other communities noting that the dedication marked the 268th and 269th plaques dedicated in the program overall.



Lower Merion Police Department Superintendent Michael J. McGrath said: "The rich history of law enforcement in this region particularly Lower Merion now acknowledges 2 of 4 individuals, Sergeant Fanning and Officer Fletcher, who have lost their lives in service in this community since the 114 years this police department has been in existence." Two prior Lower Merion officers who were killed in the line of duty, Officer Edward Setzer and Officer Francis X. "Buck" Roy, were previously honored.

Michael Fanning, the grandson of Sergeant Fanning, was present at the ceremony with ranging generations of the Fanning family from his mother, Barbara Davis to the newest family members, the seven-month old great-great grandson of Sergeant Fanning. Michael Fanning said, "Thank you all on behalf of my family. We are very proud and it is a great reward from a great police department to have my grandfather honored here today." Upon the unveiling of the plaque, daughter Barbara Davis held tightly onto the roses that had been attached to the plaque. She explained that her father truly enjoyed his work as a police officer. She remembers how her father relished in his ability to help people as an officer of the law. Sergeant Fanning also worked as a firefighter, drove an ambulance and in his younger years served on the pistol team. Sergeant Fanning found many outlets in order to serve his community better. Loss would affect him greatly; she recalled his silence when he would have a rough day and come home somber. Barbara Davis remembered her father for his kindness and humility when it came to law enforcement and helping the people in his community.

The next Fallen Hero Plaque Dedication ceremony will be held on November 18th, 2014 at 9:30 at the Jenkintown Borough Police Department honoring Officer John J. Plunkett who died in the line of duty on March 9th, 1957.

Approved for release:

Risa Vetri Ferman