

Memorial honors Ray Belgard



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

Members of Salinas VFW Post 7895 conduct a gun salute Tuesday at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds following a memorial for former Watsonville Police Chief and County Supervisor Ray Belgard, who died March 1.

More than 500 attend event to remember late police chief

By TARMO HANNULA
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More than 500 people filled the Crosetti building at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds Tuesday for a humor-laced memorial for former Watsonville Police Chief and County Supervisor Ray Belgard. Belgard died March 1. He was 76.

A host of political figures, business owners, police and fire officials, justice system members and a wide mix of community members joined the extended Belgard family and friends for two hours of speeches, a tribute video, a bagpipe salute, a wreath presentation, flag and

color presentation and a gun salute. The memorial was followed by lunch in the same building.

"I want to welcome everyone to the fourth or fifth retirement event for Ray Belgard," Watsonville Police Chief Terry Medina said.

The line elicited a wave of laughter, a tone that hung in the air throughout the event.

Dean Flippo, district attorney for Monterey County, said Belgard had no trouble reaching across county lines to get the job done.

"Ray is highly respected with all of us

in Monterey County," he said. "Ray was destined to be a leader. He didn't seek the spotlight but at times he couldn't avoid it. Ray knew what was best for this area and he was open to everyone. To me, Ray always had this twinkle in his eye. He had a sense of humor that wouldn't stop."

Retired Justice Christopher Cottle told the audience that he had known Belgard for close to 40 years.

"Ray loved Watsonville in a special way and he loved South County," he said.

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"He loved being police chief. He was always saying it was the best job he ever had."

Supervisor Tony Campos highlighted that Belgard had served two consecutive terms as supervisor.

He reminded those present that Belgard was a Watsonville High graduate, Class of 1948; that he was inducted into the alumni Hall of

Fame; and that he was also chosen as the Man of the Year by the Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce in 1989.

Campos also spoke of how Belgard used to drive a souped-up hot rod along East Lake Avenue and up and down Main Street.

"Ray taught us the true meaning of giving," Campos said. "Ray had many titles but the one that

never changed was that of friend."

Chris Luck, a longtime friend of Belgard's, said, "His sense of order about life was right on."

Luck capped the day's speeches with a quote he labeled The Famous Ray Belgard Quote, "Just do the right thing and do it for the right reasons."

After the speeches, U.S. Navy representatives and Navy veterans were joined by George Rivera of the district attorney's office and WPD officer William Barrett in presenting the American flag to the Belgard family.

Six members of the Salinas VFW

Post 7895 performed a gun salute outside the building.

The salute was followed by "Taps," played by Tony Rojas, Airman 2nd class, U.S. Air Force.

Police departments were represented from Watsonville, Santa Cruz, Capitola, Marina, Carmel by the Sea, Livermore, Sierra County, Los Banos San Jose, Scotts Valley, Sunnyvale and Santa Cruz and Monterey county Sheriff's offices.

North Monterey County fire joined Watsonville fire in hoisting a huge American flag over the entrance of the Crosetti building.



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LEFT: Watsonville Police Chief Terry Medina speaks at the memorial. ABOVE: A U.S. Navy representative presents a flag to Roger Belgard, Ray Belgard's son.