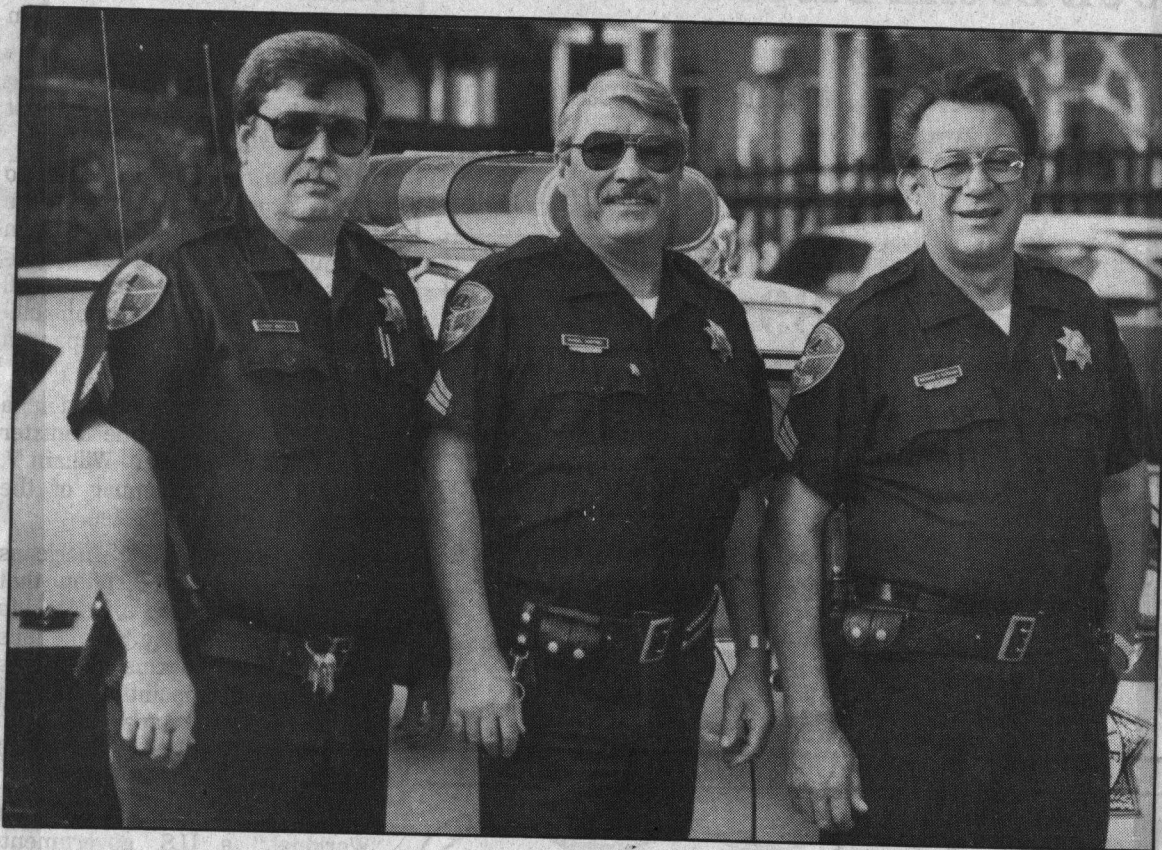


Retiring cops recall the way it was in Watsonville



Mike McCollum

Jerry Broyles, left, Manny Martinez, center, and Dick Estrada have 92 years of service among them.

Watsonville are taken to the jail in Santa Cruz. But the old station had its own jail. At meal time, Martinez said, "We'd walk the prisoners across the street to the canteen" to eat. The prisoners weren't handcuffed, and occasionally, one would run away, usually after eating. Dangerous prisoners were fed in their cells.

All three men said they never seriously considered leaving police work.

"I was comfortable doing what I was doing," said Martinez, who spent the last 10 years as the Police Department's juvenile officer.

Martinez said he plans to "just take it easy" and do some traveling with his wife, Gloria, who will retire soon from the office staff at the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. They plan to spend more time with their six grandchildren.

Martinez, who grew up in Watsonville, said he has no plans to leave. He may take on some part-time work, but it won't be law-enforcement related.

Broyles, 53, said he will also stay away from any law-enforcement work. Broyles, who is single and has grown chil-

dren, said he will travel and eventually move farther north in California, to a town the size Watsonville was 30 years ago.

As for the immediate future, "I've got an old Chevy truck at home I've been waiting to restore," Broyles said.

Estrada, who has a wife, four children and three grandchildren, said he will continue working on the family cattle ranch on Mount Madonna with his brother, Frank.

"I've been working 16 hours a day most of my life," Estrada said. "Now I'm just going to work one job."

By LANE WALLACE
STAFF WRITER

WHEN Manny Martinez, Dick Estrada and Jerry Broyles were young officers in the Watsonville Police Department, they didn't have the luxury of walkie-talkies when they were on night foot patrol downtown.

The officer kept an eye on an overhead light at Main and Maple streets — if it was on, he was wanted at the station.

If an officer got more than he could handle in breaking up a bar fight "somebody would usually drop a dime in the phone and call the station" so another

sometimes pull over the cars of suspected drug dealers and search the car so thoroughly that they'd take the seats out.

"After a few times, they wouldn't come back" to town, Estrada said.

"We knew who the criminals were," Estrada said.

Estrada remembered one habitual drunk in Watsonville who was a good cook.

"When the rehab (jail farm) needed a cook, they'd tell us to pick him up," Estrada said.

It was a mutual-benefit deal — the rehab got a good cook, and the man got healthier dur-

At meal time, officers would walk prisoners to the cafe across the street. Occasionally, a prisoner would run away, usually after the meal.

officer could be summoned, Martinez recalled.

Martinez, Broyles and Estrada, who will all retire Dec. 28, sat down together this week and talked about the old days — when Watsonville had 13,000 people, bars lined Main Street from Second Street to the Pajaro River, the city limits ended at Martinelli Street, and toughness was a qualification for being an officer.

"You had to be tough. If you had a problem you fought your way out," said Estrada, 56, who became an officer in 1958 and was joined by Martinez and Broyles in 1960. All three are retiring as sergeants.

When the three started, there was no Miranda ruling requiring officers to advise arrestees of their rights. Officers would

ing his stretch in jail.

While the retiring officers like to recall times past, they aren't saying things were better years ago.

Giving the Miranda warning is just one of a number of procedures police officers routinely follow that weren't done 30 years ago.

Estrada and his fellow retirees believe the changes are for the better. Police work "is a profession" now, Estrada said.

Broyles said officers sometimes get upset if they see somebody they arrested get off on a technicality. The legal system, Broyles said, "is overwhelmed by the (growing) number of people in it."

Broyles, Estrada and Martinez didn't dwell on the legal system.

"You remember the good times," Broyles said.

"What I'm going to miss most is the guys," Estrada said. "We're the last of the Mohicans."

While the three were being interviewed, former police chief Ray Belgard, who becomes county supervisor Jan. 1, wandered by. When Belgard praised the men, Estrada said, "You're full of it, Belgard. You fired me three times."

Everybody, including Belgard, howled with laughter.

There were other things to laugh about, including the patrol cars without heat on cold nights.

"I'd put a piece of cardboard in front of the radiator and hope it got warm," Estrada said.

Officers had duties beyond enforcing the law in the early days.

"Remember the chores?" Broyles said.

Those chores included raising the flags on city property, including the City Plaza, a task done so early in the morning that some officers were still half-asleep.

"Once in a while you'd see a flag upside down," Martinez said.

At one time in the '60s, Martinez said, he was the only Spanish-speaking officer, which meant he'd be called to Municipal Court to translate. There's now court staff for translation.

"We all remember the time Kim Novak stayed at the Resstar Hotel," Broyles said.

From the late '40s to the early '80s, the police station was on Union street in the building now used by the city Purchasing Department.

Today, people arrested in