

Roy Ingersoll dies

Former WPD chief was 77

By TRISHA LEONARD
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

Roy Ingersoll, a retired Watsonville Police Department chief and former City Council member, died Friday of natural causes. He was 77.

Ingersoll, a lifelong resident of Watsonville, was an Army veteran and graduate of the FBI academy in Quantico, Va. He was involved in several community organizations, including the Rotary Club, Elks Lodge, Sons in Retirement, 65 club and the Retired Public Employees Association. But he is most often remembered for his 32 years of service from 1951-83 with the WPD.

"He was such a mainstay in Watsonville," said WPD Deputy Chief Manny Solano. "He came from the day when Watsonville had few officers and was known for its nightlife."



Ingersoll

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Roy Ingersoll is seen at his desk as assistant chief of Watsonville police in the 1960s.

courtesy
Watsonville Police
Department

INGERSOLL

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In a March interview aired on the Watsonville channel, Ingersoll spoke of his time with the WPD, and the changes he'd seen.

"I remember when we could all fit on the front steps of the department," Ingersoll said. "We were a very small department."

In the interview, Ingersoll described some of the major incidents he'd seen on the force, which consisted of everything from the floods of 1955 to strikes. But he spent time talking about one incident in particular: a fire that spread through town. After the fire started at a packing shed on the west side of town, the embers were carried by the wind, causing buildings on Union and Main streets to catch fire as well.

"But it was all controlled," he said. "Policemen were turned into firemen, firemen were turned into policemen, but everyone did their part and we all worked in unison."

"He was a wonderful fellow and one of the best police officers Watsonville had ever seen," said Bill Johnston, who served as Watsonville mayor while Ingersoll was with WPD. "He kept the department going when we were a distressed area. We didn't have a chief and he stepped in and pulled us out when we needed him. He was well-liked by the officers."

Ingersoll also mentioned that, when he first started on the force in 1951 at age 21, police uniforms consisted of army jackets and pants dyed in blue and black. A few years later, the city gave WPD officers a clothing allowance of \$20 per month.

But while many remember Ingersoll as an integral part of the WPD, others remember him first and foremost as a friend.

"My every memory of Roy is sweet and pure," said Register-Pajaronian columnist Steve Bankhead.

Johnston also carries fond memories of Ingersoll, whom he had known nearly 40 years.

"He was a heck of a guy," Johnston said. "I'll miss him be-

cause I used to chit-chat with him every so often."

Ten years after retiring from the WPD in 1983, Ingersoll went back to serving the community, this time as a city councilman.

"In 1997, when his term was up, he was about to run for mayor, but had to have a bypass surgery," said Ramona Ingersoll, Roy's wife of nearly 57 years.

Fearing for her husband's health, she told him she would not run another campaign for him. Roy underwent the surgery, but his health slowly declined in the following years.

"He was treated very well with medications," Ramona Ingersoll said. "But he was in and out of Watsonville Community Hospital during March and April (of this year)."

"I'm just thankful for the time I had with him and am glad he won't have to go through that anymore," she said.

Roy is also survived by his sons, David Roy Ingersoll of Watsonville and Robert Ingersoll of Seaside; brother, Craig of Copperopolis; and two grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in Roy's name to your favorite charity.