

Roy Ingersoll: 'The city's man' has died

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Former Watsonville councilman,
assistant police chief dead at 77

By JULIE COPELAND
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

They called him one of the last "old-time cops," a man who cared about the city, its residents and its children.

WATSONVILLE Roy Ingersoll, a retired assistant police chief and former city council member, died Friday morning. He was 77.

Ingersoll grew up in a split family, his parents divorcing when he was young, and he described himself as a "wild child," according to David Roy Ingersoll, one of his two sons.

"He was never ashamed to admit it, and he ended up having to go into the military," David said. "They gave him direction. He came back out and went to the academy."

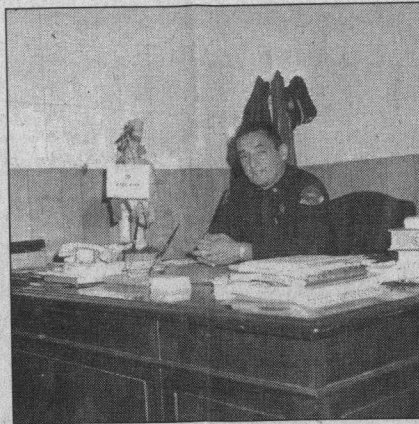
Shortly thereafter in 1951, he joined the Watsonville Police Department where in his 32 years, he rose through the ranks from patrol to juvenile officer, detective and finally assistant police chief.

"One time the city manager, mayor and police chief were all out of town and he assumed all the jobs while they were out of town," David said. "He was always proud of that."

In a video history of the Watsonville Police Department recorded March 9 with Deputy Chief Manny Solano, Roy Ingersoll said when he started the police department was so small, they all fit on the front steps of the police department. There were only three patrolmen working in the evening and two patrol cars running at any given time.

Ingersoll joked that in his 18 years as a juvenile officer, "Most of those kids I worked with made it all the way into college, some as attorneys, doctors ... but some are permanent members of the penal institutions."

Solano said Friday that Ingersoll was his "main source of historical reference about the department," helping him identify old photos, retain the traditions and develop a historical video, which is play-



Contributed photo

Former Watsonville Assistant Police Chief Roy Ingersoll in November 1971.

ing on Community TV channel 70.

Ingersoll and his wife, Ramona, who is from Oklahoma, met in Pajaro in 1945 and have been married for 56 years.

David said growing up with a father who is a police officer wasn't unusual.

"He did all the father normal things. We actually as kids shared him with a lot of kids in the town because he was the juvenile officer, and he was in charge of

the boys club of Watsonville."

Chuck Carter, a former mayor and city police captain, remembers the first time he met Ingersoll. Carter was just a boy.

"When I was a kid living on the west-side, I remember him in uniform coming by. I had a couple of cute cousins and he used to like to swing by," Carter said. "And then when I applied to be hired by the Watsonville Police Department he was on my interview panel. He was the tough one."

Carter said, "He was one of the last of the old-time cops in town."

John Radin, former Watsonville city manager, who met Ingersoll in the late 50s and counted him as a good friend until his death, described him as "a square shooter, one of the last old-time cops. He was straight and as honest as they could be..."

"He helped a lot of kids in the area and a lot of the kids really liked him. But he called a spade a spade and some people didn't like it."

After he retired, he ran for City Council, serving one term, and worked with his son Robert, a private investigator in Seaside.

He loved genealogy, researching the family history back to Scotland, joking that he was eligible to wear a kilt, though he never did.

David said his dad was simply "the

Roy Ingersoll

DIED: Friday.

EDUCATION: Graduated from Watsonville High School and the FBI Academy in Quantico, Va.

BACKGROUND: Served four years in Army Air Corps, stationed on Johnson Island off Hawaii; worked for Watsonville Police Department for 32 years; served one term on the City Council.

SURVIVORS: Wife, Ramona Ingersoll of Watsonville; sons Robert Ingersoll of Seaside, David Roy Ingersoll of Watsonville; brother Craig Ingersoll of Copperopolis; and two grandchildren.

SERVICES: None.

CONTRIBUTIONS: To donor's favorite charity.

ORGANIZATIONS: Watsonville Rotary, Elks Lodge, SIRS, 65 Club, R.P.E.A.

city's man. He just cared about the city, and its residents and the youth of the city and an all-around city person."

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