Sheriff Honors Retirees with Nearly a Century of Service

The Sheriff’s Office is saying ‘Happy Retirement’ to three long-time employees whose service totals nearly a century.

The most notable of these is Investigative Sergeant Terry Kaiser, who began his law career with the Sheriff’s Office in 1970 and has continued to safeguard...
and serve this community for 48 and ½ years! When presenting Kaiser with a resolution in his honor this week, Sheriff Steve Bernal noted that he was only four years old when Kaiser was hired on, and he was humbled to be called ‘sir’ by this venerable and accomplished officer.

Kaiser attended both Monterey and Seaside high schools and came back to Monterey County after serving in the Navy as a Petty Officer Third Class Cryptology Technician.

He has served seven Sheriff’s during his long career, rising through the ranks to Investigative Sergeant. For the last 38 years he has supervised cases including homicide, narcotics, gangs, stolen vehicles, burglaries, weapons and agriculture-related crimes. He was one of the first Sheriff’s SWAT Team members, attended the FBI National Academy and was assigned to the United States Presidential protection details for Presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, and George H.W. Bush Sr.

After receiving his resolution, Kaiser received well-deserved applause from colleagues and the Board of Supervisors.

Also noted for years of service this week, Commander Ronald Willis, who is retiring after 28 years with the department. He is leaving with a legacy of exceptional work, team work and community commitment.

During his long tenure with the department, Willis has promoted through the ranks and held an impressive list of assignments including Search and Rescue, Tactical Team, Dive Team, K9 Handler and Unit Supervisor, Motor Squad, Mounted Unit Member and Instructor, Explorer POST Program Director and most recently, the 2019 U.S. Open Incident Commander.

Willis has also been honored through the years for his service including an Outstanding Service Award for being a member and organizer of the Sheriff’s Correctional Search Team, an award from the Board of Supervisors for Outstanding Team Member of the Year, a MADD Award for DUI Arrests and interdepartmental honors for outstanding work.

Also making the move to retirement is Detective Charles West after 23 years of service to Monterey County.

During his more than two decades of service. West investigated cases related to homicides, narcotics, gangs, burglaries, stolen vehicles and has served as a Corrections Deputy, CERT Team Member, Patrol Deputy and
Training Officer, Sheriff’s Office SWAT Team member, Monterey County Gang Task Force member, Department of Justice S.T.I.N.G Team member as well as a Hostage Negotiator.
Among the many commendations West has received are a “Life Saving Award” from the City of Watsonville in 2012, the Monterey County Peace Officer’s Association’s “Peace Officer of the Year” honors in 2012 and the Monterey County Behavior Health Crisis Intervention “Officer of The Year” award in 2017.

Congratulations and happy retirement to all.

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**Librarian Earns Magazine Award**

There is a familiar face in the latest edition of Country Woman magazine: Monterey County Libraries own Marlene Thomason, who was named Country Woman of the Year!

Thomason, who is Library Assistant at the King City branch, was nominated for this award by her friend and colleague Robin Cauntay,

Cauntay says Thomason epitomizes the country woman spirit and Thomason, who was raised on a ranch that has been in her family for over 150 years and married a rancher with similar local historical connections, says she has always been country.

“My family taught me to work hard and a work ethic and I married into a like-minded family,’ she says. “To be a true country woman, one must be able to adjust to the situation and set one’s mind to it.”

Thomason loves her deep rural roots and thinks it is a big plus in her work at the library, knowing the area, the patrons and their needs.

Thomason’s connection to the County Libraries came in the mid -1980s when she volunteered at the
Monterey County Administrative Office

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Parkfield branch for three years before joining the staff. In 1998, she took over as branch head before moving to the King City library.

Cauntay says when she became Thomason’s supervisor 12 years ago, the first thing Thomason did was take her on a tour.

"She is well-versed in the rich history of the area as well as its wilderness, flora and fauna," says Cauntay.

Congratulations Marlene!

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Marlene at home on the ranch with friends.

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County Law Enforcement Carries Special Olympics Torch

A large contingent of county law enforcement helped the Special Olympics Torch on its way through Monterey County this week.

Running the torch through communities is all part of the build up to the annual Special Olympics Games and county law partners have been big supporters over the years.

The torch came up the valley from King City to Salinas on Monday, June 17th and was met by dozens of law enforcement supporters as well as Special Olympic athletes in Salinas to continue the torch’s journey on to the peninsula.

Runners from Monterey County Probation, Sheriff and the District Attorney’s Offices joined fellow officers from other agencies taking the hand-off and running with the torch.
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through a portion of south Salinas. For this leg of the journey, Probation Chief Marcia Parsons proudly carried the torch on the route from Salinas City Hall through downtown Salinas to the Taylor Building on Main Street where it was handed off to another group of runners.

A big thank you to our county runners and all those who took part because not only did they run but raised money for Special Olympics by doing so.

The torch is now at UC Davis which is hosting the Special Olympic Games this weekend.

Photos by Victor Lurz.