



## Perris News

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### Perris Remembers Public Safety Commissioner Robert Hayes

Perris Public Safety Commissioner Robert Hayes, who worked tirelessly on behalf of the Perris Citizens Patrol and the City Police Department, died New Year's Eve of an apparent heart attack.

Mr. Hayes, a member of the Public Safety Commission since 2000, was stricken in his residence and died en route to the hospital. He was 75.

"There are certain people who just do their work and don't seek any recognition for it," said City Clerk Judy Haughney, who knew Mr. Hayes through his responsibilities with the Public Safety Commission and Citizens Patrol. "They are truly the backbone of any organization. Bob was one of those people. He was very low-key and very humble. He did not like being in the spotlight or being recognized for his efforts. He served just because he felt it was the right thing to do. His death is a great loss to the City of Perris."

Mr. Hayes was born in Chicago and served in the Marines, the Marine Reserves and the Illinois National Guard. He was a Korean War veteran.

Mr. Hayes grew up in the Jim Crow-era of blatant racial discrimination which he experienced first-hand. When he went to a movie theatre while serving in the military he was told that African-Americans could sit only in the back of the theatre.

Despite the bigotry shown toward him, Mr. Hayes never lost faith in America and in the nation's ability to change and improve itself. He spent his entire life working from within the system to effect those changes, serving as a police officer in Racine, (Wisc.), from 1965-75 and working for the Kenosha, (Wisc.) Civil Defense Auxiliary Police. He worked as a private security officer in Canyon Lake from 2003-2005.

As a member of the Public Safety Commission, Mr. Hayes helped rewrite and modernize the City's noise and animal control ordinances. His work with the Citizens Patrol entailed volunteering at police checkpoints, assisting at traffic accidents and driving through neighborhoods and commercial areas looking for suspicious activities and reporting them to police.

As a Perris Police volunteer, Mr. Hayes drove the department's cruisers to the repair garage so they could receive regular service. He also towed the department's "Radar Wagon," an electronic sign that notifies people about how fast they are driving.

City Councilman Mark Yarbrough remembered Mr. Hayes as reliable, courteous and caring.

"He was a true gentleman," Yarbrough said. "If Bob Hayes was on the job, you knew it would be handled properly. The man really made a difference. He truly cared about people. If we had more people like him, the community would be a better place to live. I will miss him dearly."

Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers said Hayes had a servant's heart and was motivated only by his desire to see Perris become a better place.

"His only goal was to work toward improving the lives of residents who live in the City of Perris," Rogers said. "He will be sorely missed."

Mr. Hayes is survived by his son, Jonathan; Jonathan's wife, Jonelle and two grand-daughters. A memorial service will take place at 12:15 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 11, at Riverside National Cemetery.



Perris Public Safety Commissioner Robert Hayes in a photo taken at Christmas 2010.