

IOWA POLICE JOURNAL

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION FOR THE IOWA STATE POLICE ASSOCIATION



HONORING OFFICER JUSTIN MARTIN AND SGT. ANTHONY BEMINIO

Article content courtesy of desmoinesregister.com



When a driver backed into her car a few weeks ago, Laura Holms was struck with how well Urbandale Police Officer Justin Martin handled the incident — and the kids in her backseat. "Justin was nice enough to stand there for a good 10 minutes, talking to the kids," Holms said. "They were just so impressed that he would take the time with them. And as we left, they said things in the car about how wonderful he was and how cool the officers were."

When Holms learned that Officer Martin, 24, along with Des Moines Police Sgt. Anthony Beminio, 38, were shot and killed early on Wednesday, November 2nd, she and her family were overcome with emotion. "When we found out that Officer Martin was one of the officers who was killed, my daughter (Dory), who is 9, broke down crying," Holms said. "She even said, 'I don't know why I'm crying, Mom. I don't even know him,' but it's just the idea that one of the people who is here to protect us isn't here anymore."

Sgt. Beminio served in the traffic unit and as a detective before being promoted to sergeant last year. Prior to that, he was a school resource officer at Roosevelt and East high schools. "It takes a special person to be a school resource officer," said Roosevelt High School Principal Kevin Biggs. "It can try your patience, but, at the end of the day, they leave their door open for our students and they build relationships."

"He just had a great relationship with all of the students," said Steve Foritano, a former Polk County prosecutor who worked with Sgt. Beminio on court cases. One of his children attended Roosevelt during Sgt. Beminio's tenure there. "He always had a big smile on his face. He was just a great guy. I think everybody is just shocked and heartbroken."

More than 2,500 hundred people attended a vigil for both officers Friday, November 4th, at Walker Johnston Park in Urbandale, along with dozens of uniformed police officers from several metro-area departments.

Addressing the crowd, Urbandale Police Chief Ross McCarty said, "Police can't carry out their jobs if they don't have the support of their community. As I look out in this crowd and see these officers from different agencies mixed in with each of you, I think it's the height of what community policing is about. These last few days, the community has shown love and care for your officers, and we are very appreciative."

Des Moines Police Maj. Steve Waymire asked the crowd to pray for both families, but also to remember that other police officers continued to work that Wednesday night, even after knowing that two of their colleagues had just been killed. "Doing their jobs all night long, in fear of their life," Waymire said, "because we still had someone out there who meant them harm."

Perhaps the most poignant reminder of the sacrifice Officer Martin and Sgt. Beminio made came from Urbandale Mayor Bob Andeweg: "For freedom to flourish, there must be some willing to pay that ultimate price. Those are easy words to say, but very few live that. Justin and Tony, they lived that."