



Former Hope Mills Police Chief Hodges dies

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Posted Jun 24, 2019 at 3:09 PM Updated Jun 24, 2019 at 4:51 PM

Hodges, who served as Hope Mills police chief for nearly 23 years, was remembered as an icon in the community.

HOPE MILLS — Former Hope Mills police chief John Hodges, who led the department for more than two decades, died Monday morning.

“It’s a huge loss to the town,” said Melissa Adams, the town manager. “He was such a wonderful, compassionate human being, besides the fact that he was a beloved police chief.”

Mr. Hodges, 84, was Hope Mills police chief for nearly 23 years before retiring in 2009. Before that, he served as police chief in Mount Olive.

Before joining the Mount Olive Police Department, Mr. Hodges served for two years as a captain and assistant police chief in Hope Mills.

He joined the Hope Mills department after about 20 years of service in the Army, retiring from the Army Criminal Investigation Division at Fort Bragg in 1979. Before his military service, Mr. Hodges had served in the Mayodan and Spray police departments.

Mr. Hodges’ son, Chuck Hodges, currently serves as chief of the Hope Mills Fire Department.

In a 2009 Observer story, Mr. Hodges talked about his decision to come back to Hope Mills.

“I was very pleased to be able to come back here as chief of police,” he said. “I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.”

Hope Mills Mayor Jackie Warner said that Mr. Hodges remained active in town affairs long after his retirement. Warner said she saw him as late as Thursday or Friday.

“He was always very upbeat,” Mrs. Warner said. “Any type of event we had, he was there.”

Recently, the town Board of Commissioners voted to name a new public safety building for Mr. Hodges. Construction of the facility is scheduled to begin this winter.

“It’s just a shame that he didn’t live to actually see the building,” Mrs. Warner said. “He was in the old building from the start.”

In retirement, Mr. Hodges found a hobby in dancing.

He competed in “Dancing with the Fayetteville Stars” fundraising competitions and in 2013 competed with a partner in the U.S. Pro-Am Dance Championship in Charlotte, despite having knee replacement surgery a few years prior.

Hope Mills commissioner Jerry Legge called Mr. Hodges an icon in the community.

“They don’t make many people like John Hodges,” Mr. Legge said. “He was a friend to everybody all the time. And he did his job very well.”

Mr. Legge said that Mr. Hodges and late Hope Mills mayor Al Brafford would sometimes speak to a 4-H group that his wife coordinated.

“I don’t know who enjoyed it more, the kids or John and Al,” Mr. Legge said.

Visitation is scheduled from 6 to 9 p.m. Friday at Pinecrest Funeral and Cremation Services, 4721 Dunrobin Road in Hope Mills. A funeral is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday at Southview Baptist Church, 4089 Elk Road, in Hope Mills. Burial will be in Lafayette Memorial Park and Mausoleum, 2301 Ramsey St.

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