

Steven R. Leu

This week we are happy to name Steven R. Leu as the 138th inductee in Marshfield's 150: Heroes and Leaders, Past and Present register. Steve Leu was nominated by his daughters, Maria Prust and Julie Leu-Martinek.

Steve Leu, known by many as "Tarbs," was born and raised in Marshfield. He attended Marshfield High School and graduated with the Class of 1971.

In 1985, Steve began his career as a police officer with the Marshfield Police Department, where he filled many roles during his career. He was one of the first crisis negotiators for the department and later served as team leader. He represented Marshfield on the Wisconsin Crisis Negotiation Association board of directors for years. He also served as liaison officer to the Marshfield Police Department Auxiliary Unit and was a main player in getting the Marshfield Police Department Bicycle Patrol equipped and implemented. Steve was also the commander for the department's honor guard.

Steve was knowledgeable and skilled when it came to firearms. He quickly became one of the "top shots" in the department and was well known for his shooting skills throughout his career. He represented the department at Wisconsin Professional Police Association (WPPA) State Shoots, bringing home many trophies and plaques. He took great pride in hosting the WPPA State Shoots at the Marshfield Police Department shooting range in 2000 and 2006, where the competition and facilities received many compliments. Steve was integral in the design and construction of the Marshfield Police Department shooting range.

Steve was passionate about developing skills and instilling confidence in other officers. He initially served as a range officer, later becoming the range master and then the department's firearms training coordinator. He was a certified firearms instructor, teaching pistol, shotgun, submachine gun, and personal handgun safety to law enforcement, and spent many years donating his time teaching hunter safety.

Steve was well known and respected throughout the community. He embodied the concept of community-oriented policing and spent his career developing relationships with community members, building trust between the community and the police, and humanizing the badge. He sincerely enjoyed interacting with people, whether responding to calls for service, working a special event, or stopping out at his daughters' softball games, he was always approachable and treated people with fairness and respect. He knew the job wasn't always black and white. Steve listened to people and had empathy for whatever situation they may have been in, always saying, "It doesn't cost a thing to be nice." He received



special thanks from many people throughout the years for the sincerity and compassion he showed when people were experiencing the worst times of their lives.

Within the police department, Steve was viewed as a leader and mentor. He was looked up to and relied upon for his wisdom, calm demeanor and sense of humor. He loved sharing his experiences, anecdotes, and knowledge with coworkers, especially to help newer officers. He cared about his coworkers and wanted to make sure everyone went home safe, often checking in with them after difficult situations and calls. Steve had an impact at the police department. He was said to be an anchor and having him around assured everyone that whatever mess they might find themselves in, they were going to be okay. They knew they could draw on his experience and he was not going to let them fail.

Two incidents during Steve's career merit mention. In 2005, a semitrailer driver led police from nine jurisdictions on a 90-minute four county chase. It began near Medford and ended in Marshfield when Steve fired numerous rifle rounds into the truck's radiator. The resulting loss of fluid caused the truck to shut itself off and the man was taken into custody peacefully. Then in 2011, Steve and fellow officers Terry Endries and Michael Topness put themselves between a 5-year-old girl and a vicious dog attacking her. They received the first Fred Beell Honors Award presented by the Marshfield Police Department, the department's own version of a Medal of Honor meeting criteria of bravery at the highest level, sound judgment, high risk of injury to oneself and demonstrating the true meaning of service to others over self.

Steve was active in the Marshfield Professional Police Association (MPPA), to the point that he was referred to as the "Godfather" of the MPPA. The effort he put into the organization made the association's donating thousands of dollars to local non-profit groups, scholarships, and youth sports organizations throughout the years possible.

Outside of law enforcement, Steve was active in the community. His vision was always to give back to the community. He spent countless hours volunteering for the Marshfield Eagles Aerie 624 as a member and trustee, earning the "Eagle of the Year" and "Father of the Year" awards. He helped with fish fries, steak feeds, called Bingo, and sold many raffle tickets for the Eagles over the years.

Steve was proud to have organized and emceed the Sportsmen's Night Out banquet, a joint event of the MPPA and Marshfield Eagles. Twenty-four years later, the event is still held annually. He had a great love for the outdoors, hunting and fishing. He created the banquet for sportsmen to bond over this passion and to pass the tradition onto the next generation of sportsmen and sportswomen. He recognized the need to include the next generations and made sure that every youth in attendance won a door prize. His goal was to instill the same passion for the outdoors and ethical hunting and fishing practices into the generations who followed him.

Steve also spent time volunteering to deliver flowers for Marshfield Rotary and on Valentine's Day, many flower recipients had laughs reading cards with Steve's name added to them. He also drove a school bus as a second job, then continued to drive bus after he

retired from the police department. He loved interacting with the kids and sincerely cared about their safety. He was aware of the dangers that existed in the world and was prepared to protect those children at any cost. Steve received many thanks from families and was a favorite to many kids.

Steve was proud to serve as a police officer for the city that he grew up in, lived in, and raised his own family in. He believed in passing wisdom and values onto others and helping people. He believed that everyone should be involved and contribute to the community, which he did on and off duty, and continued after his retirement from the police department as a lead officer in 2014.

Steve died December 14, 2021, after a hard-fought battle with cancer. Although he is no longer with us, his impact on the Marshfield Police Department and Marshfield community is permanent. Many have commented that his passing has left a huge void in this community, but the legacy of "Tarbs" lives on.