



I have received numerous calls from retirees who worked with retired Sergeant II **Don Westfall**, who passed away on Feb. 23, 2017. All of them stated what a great officer, supervisor and League Director he was. I was especially touched by a eulogy written by a former watch commander of mine during the 1980s, retired Lieutenant **Rik Violano**. Because of all the lives Sergeant Westfall touched while a member of the LAPD, I thought it would be appropriate to reprint Lt. Violano's touching words.

As always, please feel free to contact me at CraigLally@lappl.org, or call me at (213) 251-4554.

Eulogy: Retired Sergeant II Donald (The Hat) Westfall —EOW Feb. 23, 2017
by Rik Violano

*I can't say Don's passing surprised me. I knew he was ill. Luckily, former Defense Representative **Greg Dust** and I, along with several of Don's close friends, were able to visit with him a few years back at the Academy restaurant. He was recovering from a stroke. His body was in a wheelchair, but his outlook, mind and wit weren't.*

I telephoned him periodically through the years and sent him Christmas cards. I didn't know that he had taken a turn for the worse. That's not surprising because Don just never complained. He was always positive and humorous. That's one of the reasons I enjoyed working with him. Sure, he was a bit corny at times, but he always had that ability to make lemonade out of lemons, and smile/laugh while doing it.

*I knew Don from my first assignment out of the Academy at Hollywood Division in 1965. He was a senior patrol officer (one hash mark) who, along with his longtime partner, **Bob Dovidio** (SP), worked the mid-PM watch. Uniquely, they always sat near the front of the room just behind us probationers. Bob was the quiet, reserved type, while Don was the life of the roll call. He always wore his hat, cracked jokes and exchanged information on the bad guys. I frequently saw them stop by the night watch detective's desk to exchange information. Later, I'd see them with some bad guy in tow headed for booking approval.*

*Later in his career, Don became a defense rep. Like his talent at police work, he took to it like a duck to water. He became a much sought-after “rep” by cops in trouble. He did it for many years while still working his primary assignments. I’m sure it was a springboard to being elected a League Director. As former Defense Rep **Rick Wells**, so aptly put it, “I doubt if many people know that the ‘free’ ammo that they qualify with was a result of Don suing the City. Many other work-related safety items have been provided to officers at the City’s expense as a result of his willingness and courage to stand[up] for what he believed was right.” Don was justifiably proud of his many accomplishments as a League Director.*

*Later in my career, I became the OIC of the Officer Representative Section (ORS). My assistant OIC promoted out, and I had to select a replacement. Because it was such a sensitive assignment, I had to be very judicious in my selection. I knew very little about being a defense rep. I realized that I needed an experienced defense rep and a loyal supervisor of the Department to fill the vacancy. Before making my selection, I consulted with the League’s President, **George Aliano**, and Chief Gates’ chief of staff, **George Morrison**. They both touted Don as a solid choice and someone they could work with.*

With Don’s assistance, I could manage that group of iconoclastic, sometimes mischievous, but always dedicated group of reps. At times, it was like the saying about wrestling a pig: “The pig loves it and you get dirty.” I couldn’t have done it without Don. Because of his reputation as a rep, he had great credibility with the other reps. He supported and tutored them, while also requiring them to comply with the Department’s rules and regulations. He skillfully walked that fine line between management and the troops. He could adeptly point out a flaw in a Department rule or regulation in defending an officer, yet enforce it until it was changed. He was a sergeant first, and then a defense rep.

I feel very fortunate to have known and served with Don. He was one of the cops I think of when I reflect on “the good old days” of the LAPD. He’s undoubtedly up in the great roll room in the sky, sitting close to the front with his hat on, cracking jokes and passing out information on the bad guys down below.

Thanks for the wonderful memories, partner—KMA 367.