

Lessons learned from Leo: Remembering Bel Air Police Chief Leo Matrangola



*Bel Air Police Chief Chief Leo F. Matrangola
(July 18, 1952 - July 12, 2015):*

Seen here at the 2012 Christmas parade on Main Street in Bel Air, the Chief was riding Jeannie Schick's horse Dirk. (Photo: Bob and Jeannie Schick)

Today would have been the 63rd birthday of Leo Matrangola. He served as Chief of Police in Bel Air from 1991 until his battle with leukemia led to a medical leave of absence last October. The Chief passed on to Eternal Life this past Sunday. Flags have flown at half-mast all week in his memory.

After attending grade school at St. Margaret's in Bel Air, Leo was a member of the Class of 1970 at The John Carroll School. He entered the Baltimore County Police Department as a cadet after his high school graduation. This led to a 45-year career in law enforcement, first in Baltimore County and then in the Town of Bel Air.

A role model and youth mentor:

Leo dedicated his life to doing good for the community and being a mentor and role model to our youth. I knew him for more than four decades. He and his family lived down the road from my parents for years, and we also enjoyed a long relationship through our John Carroll connection. He was a gem.

Selfless and kind-hearted, Leo had a great smile and always asked about the well-being of others. And he believed in promoting programs and efforts to showcase our community's youth.

Reflections by a young family friend:

Martha Schick of the John Carroll Class of 2013, is now a Journalism major at Emerson College, Class of 2017.

She shares some great memories and lessons learned from Leo:

"Growing up, Leo and Diane have been like another set of grandparents to me. I have a picture of me, about three years old, sitting on one of Diane's horses while wearing Leo's giant cowboy hat and grinning..."



Martha Schick shares a passion for horses with the Matrangola Family:
(Photo circa 1998: The Schick Family)

"It doesn't really feel like Christmas to me until I have one of Diane's chocolates and talk to Leo at their annual party about the latest thing I'm trying to accomplish. And whenever I got to see them, I'd get more big hugs and "We're so proud of you" exclamations than I could count.

"I can't talk about Leo and Diane separately because they were the perfect couple. Every interaction they had - whether with each other, with me, or with their animals - was filled with love. They completed each other so effortlessly, and made everyone around them feel complete by extension. I know now, at 20 years old, that if I can find someone who loves me as wholly and strongly as Leo and Diane loved each other, I will have been blessed beyond belief.

"I got to FaceTime with Leo from Boston during his last week. He was funny, a little bit irreverent, and still so concerned with how I was doing... in other words, completely Leo.

"He talked to me about my living arrangements next year, offering advice. He gave me the number of a colleague who could give me an internship. He joked with me about politics. And we ended the phone call with an "I love you." That was him. "I don't remember a time when he wasn't trying to help me, whether it was through advice or help getting me out of my first parking ticket. I don't remember a conversation that wasn't full of jokes and his throaty laugh. And I don't remember ever feeling unloved.

"Leo was not my relative by blood, but I will never be able to separate him from growing up, and I don't want to. He was fully devoted to everything in his life - Diane, his family, his friends, his job - in ways every person should aspire to be. "And to everyone out there, still walking on this earth: look out. Now that I've known someone as wonderful as Leo, you all have a lot to live up to."

-Martha Schick



Police Chief Leo Matrangola died last Sunday: He would have been 63 today.
(Aegis file photo/ The Baltimore Sun)

In Memoriam:

A public memorial service for Chief Matrangola is planned for August 22, 2015 at 1 p.m. at Bel Air High School, 100 Heighe Street, Bel Air, Maryland 21014.

Arrangements are being handled by McComas Funeral Home.

Read more here.

Rest in peace, good and faithful servant.