

# Killed in the Line of Duty

## A Family Mourns

By Deputy Chris Miller (Retired)  
and Deputy J.D. Harris (Retired)  
Photos by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Museum

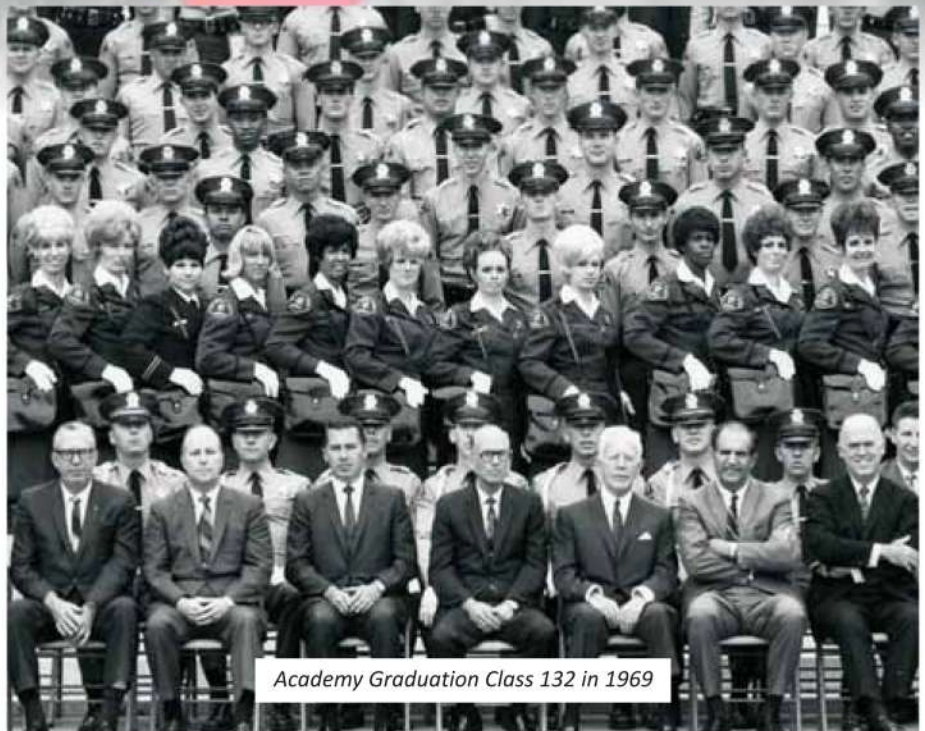
**W**hen Mary Campbell became a Los Angeles County Deputy Sheriff, she had no idea that her career would be such a roller coaster ride. The high point was when she became one of the first twelve female deputies to ever work in a patrol car. The lowest point was when her husband, also a deputy, was shot and killed in the line of duty.

### Mary's Career Begins

When Mary graduated from Class 132 in 1969, female deputies only attended a two-month Academy because they didn't work in patrol cars. Male deputies attended much longer since they received training for patrol.



Deputy Mary Campbell-Hurdle  
in Patrol School



Academy Graduation Class 132 in 1969

After graduation, Mary was transferred to Sybil Brand Institute for Women. She worked SBI for three years, but was always looking for an opportunity to transfer to another assignment. Unfortunately, openings for female deputies were limited to Juvenile Bureau, the women's jail, undercover assignments, or a station desk answering phone calls and handling the front counter.

### First Patrol School

In 1972, Sheriff Peter Pitchess started a new program where female deputies would be allowed to work patrol. Mary applied and was accepted. Since females did not receive patrol training in the academy, it was necessary to rectify this deficit. Thus was created the

very first patrol school which, from that time forward, has been attended by every deputy that has gone to patrol. Mary was apprehensive about going to a fast-paced station and expressed her desire to not go to East L.A. Station, having heard that it was dangerous and had a lot of crime. Upon completion of her training, Deputy Campbell received her new assignment: East L.A. Station.

### One of the First Women in Patrol

When Mary first showed up at East L.A. Sheriff Station she, like all of the other female deputies beginning their new patrol assignments, wore a white blouse, green skirt,

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*First Patrol School Graduates 1972*

black pumps with one-inch heels, and carried a purse containing her revolver and handcuffs. Even though Sheriff Peter Pitchess wanted a softer "feminine appearance", the demands of the occupation mandated an adjustment. The women found it very difficult to do their job, especially when they got into fights where they would desperately struggle to hang on to their purse so the suspect wouldn't get hold of the gun inside. Foot pursuits were impossible. The women had to kick off their shoes, since you can't run in heels, and pull up the skirt which restricted their movement. This obviously was not

going to work. In addition, the white blouse was a safety issue as it made them an easy target at night.

Mary met her training officer, Deputy Ken Duffy, at briefing on her first day. The lieutenant came into the briefing, which was unusual, and Mary watched as he proceeded to chastise Deputies Dee Hurdle and Ray Fleenor. Being new to the station, the lieutenant was out in the field the day before trying to get acquainted with the area when two radio cars passed him rolling Code 3. Wondering if he had missed a call, he followed them. The two radio cars continued

*Sheriff Pitchess presents Mary Campbell with her academy graduation certificate*



to roll Code 3 until just before they pulled into a donut shop where they stopped, turning off their lights and siren. Mary couldn't believe they would pull such a stunt. Little did she know that a few years down the line she would be marrying one of them.

### **Beginning their Life Together**

After completing the six-month patrol training, Mary began working a car by herself on day shift, later transferring to PMs. Between handling calls and booking suspects, Deputy Mary Campbell got to know Deputy Dee Hurdle.

Dee had been at SEB for a month attending disaster and riot training, known as DART. When he returned, he stopped and talked to Mary while she was working security at the East L.A. Station gate. This was during the time of the East L.A. riots and each deputy had to spend two hours of their shift providing security at the front or back gate of the station.

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Didier M. Hurdle

Mary didn't care much for Dee at first, but she grew to like him. One day while she was working gate security, he stopped by to visit. Mary said she wanted to wallpaper her bathroom, but didn't know how, so Dee offered to come over and do it for her. After that they began dating. They were still dating when she transferred from East L.A. to Crescenta Valley Sheriff's Station. It was then that they decided to get married.

They were married on February 1, 1975, and later that year, Mary became pregnant. In July 1976, she gave birth to their son, Matthew. Nine-year-old Stephen, Mary's son from a previous marriage, now had a baby brother.

When her maternity leave ended, Mary and Dee decided she should stay home with their new baby. Mary resigned as a full-time deputy, but became a reserve deputy so she could maintain her skills and stay in good standing with the Sheriff's Department in case she needed to work full-time again. In the back of her mind was a deep-seated and inexplicable fear that something was going to happen to her husband.

Dee transferred from East L.A. Station to Lynwood Station when it opened on May 1, 1977. He worked the station desk until one week before his death. That final week he worked a patrol car in the Willowbrook area.

### A Premonition

A few months before Dee was killed, Mary started having panic attacks that were so severe she couldn't catch her breath. If she was driving, she had to pull over to the side of the road, overcome by an intense feeling of dread that something horrible was going to happen to her. She never imagined that something horrible really was going to happen, but it would be to Dee, not her. These panic attacks happened all the way up until Dee's death, after which she never had one again.

### Call in Sick!

On Friday, November 25, 1977, the day after Thanksgiving, Dee received a call that his uncle, who was suffering from Alzheimer's and living in a group home, had walked away and could not be found. Since his uncle had gone missing that morning and Dee didn't need to be at work until PM shift, Mary suggested he call in sick. It didn't take long to locate his uncle and after Dee returned home, Mary continued to encourage him to call in sick. USC was playing UCLA and she wanted him to stay home so they could watch the game together. They argued a little as Mary tried to change his mind, but Dee felt obligated to go to work.

### A Deadly Encounter

Feeling a dedication to duty, Dee Hurdle chose to go to work instead of leaving his fellow deputies short-handed the day after Thanksgiving.

During briefing, the sergeant assigned Dee to work with Cadet Johnny Brown. Nearing

the end of his Academy training, Cadet Brown was assigned to Lynwood Station for a week where his suitability as a patrol deputy was evaluated.

While patrolling the Willowbrook area of Lynwood, they happened upon what looked like a drug deal in progress, with money being exchanged for drugs. After the transaction was completed, a man who had been standing outside the car alerted the driver about the deputies, then walked to a house and went inside.

Hurdle and Brown observed two people still sitting in the vehicle. Thinking the car was going to drive away, they drove around the block with the intention of pulling in behind when it started to leave. As they came back around, they saw that the suspect vehicle had moved down the street and stopped. Hurdle turned down the street and pulled in front of the suspect vehicle, so they were now facing each other.

Since it was dark, Hurdle turned on the driver's side spotlight, pointing it at the suspect inside his car, but when Brown attempted to turn on his spotlight, it didn't work. The radio cars at that time had a toggle switch on the dash that allowed a deputy working alone to flip a switch up and activate the spotlight on the passenger side to make it look like there were two deputies in the car. In order to do this, the spotlight had to be turned on and pointed at the suspect vehicle. If the toggle switch was in the down position, the spotlight on the passenger side wouldn't work. This was the case when Brown attempted to use his spotlight that night.

As the radio car came to a stop in front of the suspect vehicle, Hurdle now saw only one person in the other car. He told Brown to watch himself since he didn't know where the second suspect went. Cadet Brown quickly exited and rapidly approached the driver side

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of the suspect vehicle. At the same time, Deputy Hurdle placed the radio car in park and began walking between the headlights of the radio car and the headlights of the suspect vehicle which were both turned on. This caused him to be illuminated and made it difficult for him to see the suspect.

As Brown reached the driver's door of the suspect vehicle, the occupant began firing at him. Brown immediately drew his revolver and returned fire. One of the suspect's rounds struck Brown in the leg. During the ensuing gun fight, a bullet struck Deputy Hurdle in the shoulder. The round went through the "O" on "Los" of Los Angeles County on his shoulder patch, penetrated the left lung, heart and then the right lung, killing him instantly.

Firing all six rounds from his Smith & Wesson Model 15 4" revolver, Brown moved to the back of the suspect vehicle and crouched down in the gutter to reload. He had two speedy loaders, each containing six rounds that were evenly spaced to line up with the revolver's cylinder for a quick reload. As he ejected the spent casings, one lodged under the star part of the ejector, blocking one of the empty chambers. Since Brown was working in the dark, he could not see that the cylinder was jammed and had no idea why he was unable to reload.

During this time, the suspect fled down the street to the house where the drug transaction had taken place. Seeing that the suspect was gone, Brown returned to the radio car and requested immediate assistance.

Units responded Code 3 to the call for help. Dee was placed in a radio car and rolled Code 3 to the hospital while other deputies contained the area.

The suspect was found hiding under some cardboard in the garage and was arrested.



Deputy Mary Campbell-Hurdle

The second suspect was arrested and agreed to testify against the shooter. The D.A.'s Office made a plea bargain with the shooting suspect and he was sentenced to eight years in prison.

Notifications were made up the chain of command. Bill Waller, the captain of Lynwood Sheriff's Station, was participating in the Lynwood Christmas Parade that night and had turned off his pager. He didn't find out about the shooting until he arrived home and listened to a message on his answering machine. Lynwood Station's Operations Lieutenant, John Hammargren, received a call at home and responded to the station to follow up on the search for the suspects. He then drove to St. Francis Hospital to provide support for Mary Hurdle and her family.

### A Knock on the Door

Mary was watching T.V. at home when she heard a knock at the front door. When she answered it, a sergeant from Industry Station

was standing there. He said that Dee had been involved in an altercation and asked if she could come with him right now. From working for years as a deputy, she knew that if a deputy was injured they would call the spouse, but if a deputy was killed, they would come and pick up the spouse. Despite being aware of this protocol, it didn't come to mind that night. Mary said she couldn't leave because she had a baby and an 11-year-old. The sergeant told her that Deputy Margaret Cheney would be coming to watch the kids. Mary then contacted her neighbor who came over to help.

The sergeant and Mary left in a radio car and drove to Industry Sheriff's Station. On the way, Mary asked what had happened, was her husband in a fight or was he shot? The sergeant said he didn't have any details. Arriving at the station, Mary was taken to the helipad and transferred to a helicopter.

During the flight, Mary wore a headset and listened to the radio traffic as different command staff, including the Sheriff, were paged, advising them to respond to the hospital in Lynwood. This should have tipped her off that her husband had been killed, but she still didn't realize it, telling herself that everything was going to be okay, that 'this happens to other people, not to me.'

The helicopter landed in the field of a school in Lynwood where two detectives picked Mary up and drove her to the hospital. When they arrived, she immediately saw her field training officer, Ken Duffy. Ken worked SEB and it was then that she realized the only reason he would be there was if something very bad had happened to Dee.

Mary went up to Duffy and said, "No, don't tell me."

Duffy said, "Yeah, it's really bad, Dee was shot and died at Oleander and Knoff."

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*Sheriff Pitchess presents plaque to Mary and her sons.*

Duffy took Mary into the hospital, explaining that Dee's family members had been notified and were on their way.

### **Saying Goodbye**

Since Dee died unexpectedly, Mary didn't have a chance to say goodbye. When her sister-in-law, Peggy Hurdle, arrived, Mary asked if she would go with her to see Dee. Peggy agreed, and they went in. When Mary saw Dee lying there in the emergency room, the first thing she noticed was that he was still in his uniform and there was a stream of dried blood coming out of the side of his mouth. She slowly walked over and held his hand for the last time. After spending about five minutes saying goodbye to her husband, she came out and shared her grief with his family who asked the Sheriff's command staff if they could get a counselor to talk to Mary.

Lieutenant John Hammargren hugged her and said how sorry he was. He also tried to comfort Dee's parents, along with Dee's brothers and their wives. Officers from other agencies who were friends of Mary and Dee began to arrive, hugging Mary and expressing their condolences. Mary spent several hours at the hospital talking to family and friends, but during this time her mind was busy, taking her thoughts away from the suffocating grief. When it came time to leave, Dee's good friend, Deputy Al Haney, gave her a ride home.

Since her kids were spending the night with family members, Mary was all alone, and in utter shock. Overwhelming silence and loneliness enveloped her. The terrible feeling that this was now her life was almost too much to endure. Sitting in silence, she tried

not to think of what lie ahead. Getting no sleep that night, utter exhaustion only intensified her grief.

### **A Deputy's Widow Mourns**

The next day a deputy from Health and Welfare arrived to inform her about everything that had to be done, and that was going to take place. He also explained about insurance and how that worked. Mary also learned that after his divorce, Dee had neglected to change his beneficiary and all department benefits would go to his ex-wife. This happens often. Deputies get divorced and never change their beneficiary. If they die unexpectedly, all insurance and department benefits go to their ex-spouse. Mary encourages everyone to keep their beneficiary information up-to-date.

Sheriff Pitchess invited Mary and her two sons to his office, where he presented them with a plaque. Captain Waller stopped by every now and then to check on Mary on her sons.

While planning the funeral, Mary was told that the procession from the church to the cemetery, which was miles away, had to be done on the freeway. Mary insisted that the procession travel on side streets, past the street their house was on, but not on the actual street. Her stipulation was denied, saying it had to stay on the freeway. Mary told them okay, that she would take Dee out of his uniform, have her own personal service and bury him in a suit. Department members changed their minds and agreed to Mary's request.

Dee's funeral was held on November 29. After the church service, the procession traveled surface streets all the way to the cemetery in Rowland Heights. The motorcade was so long that when the hearse arrived at the cemetery, radio cars were still leaving the church.

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## Equipment Changes

In order to prevent a recurrence of the equipment failure that Deputy Brown experienced, the range armorer contacted Smith & Wesson. It was discovered that the ejector rod came out too far, allowing an expended casing to become trapped under the extractor star. The solution to this problem was to place a spacer under the ejector rod preventing it from extending all the way out. Once this recommendation was tested and proved effective, the LASD armorer installed the new spacer on every deputy's revolver.

## Effects on the Children

In order to support her boys, Mary returned to work as a full-time deputy a few years after Dee's death. Deputies would come by and spend time with Stephen, who was eleven years old when Dee was killed, providing advice and involving him in activities that he would have gotten from his father. Unfortunately Matthew, the baby that Mary and Dee had together, was only one-and-a-half years old and as time went by, the deputies no longer came around. That absence of support, as well as someone to look up to as a father figure, angered Matthew.

Near the end of their training, each Sheriff's Academy Class chooses a police officer or deputy sheriff who was killed in the line of duty to honor during their colors run. One academy class chose Didier Hurdle. This tribute was very special for the Hurdle family. It was Matthew's first time to interact with members of the Sheriff's Department and he experienced the camaraderie and general concern that law enforcement officers have for each other. Dee's family members as well as Mary, her kids and her grandkids were all in attendance, riding in Sheriff's patrol cars which followed the run. The run took place in

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**Mary wants others to know that tomorrow is not promised to you. You need to live each day the best you can because it can all be taken away in just a second.**

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the City of Lynwood, stopping momentarily at the location where Dee was killed. Everyone paid tribute to him with a moment of silence. Every year, on the anniversary of Deputy Didier Hurdle's death, a briefing is held and the details of his incident are read. Mary's older son, a full-time firefighter and reserve officer for Corona Police Department, attends the yearly briefings if he is available.

When Dee Hurdle was honored at the National Peace Officers Memorial Ceremony, Mary and her family went and were able to view Dee's name that was carved into the wall. Her kids took a piece of paper and a pencil and ran it back and forth tracing the name from the wall onto the paper.

Matthew has attended some of the events honoring his father and says it's interesting to hear people's memories since mementos and family stories are all he has left. He also admits that, since he has no memory of his

father, he wishes he had gotten a chance to know the man he calls dad. Mary and her family always attend the annual L.A. County Peace Officers Memorial Service honoring those L.A. County law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. After the ceremony, they visit Dee's plaque.

Years after her husband was killed, Mary became one of the first peer counselors on the Sheriff's Department. Her experience both as a deputy and a widow has helped other widows of slain officers understand why things were done the way they were and to help them through their grief.

## The Law Enforcement Family

Mary wants others to know that tomorrow is not promised to you. You need to live each day the best you can because it can all be taken away in just a second.

Something Mary didn't realize at the time but has learned since, is when a deputy is killed, the widow is suffering so much grief that she cannot be there for her children. Deputies from Lynwood Station were there for Mary and her oldest son, but due to his age, her youngest son did not receive the support and attention that his older brother did. This affected him growing up and throughout his life.

The Sheriff's Department is very supportive. When a deputy is killed in the line of duty, help is there to attend to the needs of the family. This care and reassurance may be required for years while the children of the deceased deputy are growing up. Just as medical emergencies require a doctor, traumatic events may cause emotional damage that requires professional help, such as a psychologist. As you provide support to the family of a deputy killed in the line of duty, it's important to recognize cries for help and make sure they get the assistance they need.

