

Captain John Steven “Steve” Willis (1948-2025)

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Steve was born in May 1948 to John and Rosalyn Willis. He attended Covington Holmes High School and graduated in 1966. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Eastern Kentucky University and a master's degree in criminal justice from the University of Cincinnati.

After high school, Steve joined the United States Army during the Vietnam War. He was honorably discharged as a Specialist 5

(equivalent to a Sergeant today).

Steve then joined the Covington Police Department on 12/23/1974. On March 27, 1975, Officer Willis completed a 10-week training course at Eastern Kentucky University. By 1978, he was promoted to Police Specialist. In 1978, he became one of the original members of the Covington Tactical Unit, later Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team. He served on the sniper team, as sniper team leader, and as SWAT Commander. He also served on the D Team Undercover Group, and was Chief of Detectives. Captain Willis retired in 2005 with 30 years of service.

He was a member of the American Legion Post #203, Veterans of Foreign Wars (V.F.W.) Marshall Schildmeyer Post # 6095, Golden Rule Masonic Lodge #345, Covington Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #1, and Latonia Christian Church.

Captain Willis died on July 31, 2025.

He was predeceased by his sister, Robin Willis, and brother-in-law, Tom Wheatley. Captain Willis is survived by his wife of 56 years, Linda (Smith) Wills; children, Stephanie (Chester) Humphrey and Alison (Steven) Bohman; grandchildren, Courtney (Will Fields) Jett, Anthony (Natasha) Jett, Ian (Lauren) Bohman, Owen (Regan) Bohman, Lexie Humphrey, and Annie Bohman; six great-grandchildren; and siblings, Chuck (Harriet) Wills, Reba Wheatley, and Glenda (Doug) Christensen;

A visitation will be held on Monday, August 4, 2025 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Latonia Christian Church at 3900 Decoursey Avenue. A funeral service will be held Tuesday, August 5, 2025 at 10 a.m. at the church. Interment and Honor Guard Services will follow at 12 p.m. at Kentucky Veterans Cemetery North, 205 Eibeck Lane, Williamstown.

