Sheriff Simon Lawrence “Si” Leis, Jr. (1934-2026)

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Si was born June 12, 1934 in Cincinnati to Hamilton County Prosecutor and later Hamilton County Common Pleas Court Judge Simon Lawrence Leis Sr. and Ida (Pilger) Leis. He attended St. Xavier High School, played football, including as Captain of the Freshman team, and served as Class Treasurer in his senior year, graduating in 1952. He then attended Holy Cross College, transferred to Xavier University, and earned a double masters in English and History.

On November 20, 1956, Si joined the United States Marine Corps Reserves. On January 7, 1957 Private Leis began Officer Candidate School at Marine Headquarters in Quantico. By January 24th, he was promoted to Private 1st Class. On April 7, 1957, 2ndLieutenant Leis was assigned to Service Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines at Camp Lejeune. He deployed to Beirut, Lebanon as part of Task Force 62 during the 1958 Lebanon Crisis, landing on Red Beach near Khalde, and successfully securing the Beirut International Airport on July 15, 1958. In October 1958, 2nd Lieutenant Leis shipped back to the States. He was dismissed from active duty in 1960, remained in the Reserves, and retired as a Captain.

Si went back to school and received a law degree from Salmon P. Chase Law School in 1965. He then served as a Cincinnati Assistant City Prosecutor from 1966 to 1968, Assistant City Solicitor 1968 to 1969, First Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio from 1969 to 1971.

In 1971, Si was appointed Hamilton County Prosector to fill the term of retiring Melvin G. Rueger and came to widespread public attention, establishing a reputation as one of Ohio’s leading prosecutors. Prosecutor Leis was known for aggressively pursuing violent criminals, organized crime, and public corruption. He argued that the justice system’s foremost responsibility was protecting law-abiding citizens. His office emphasized careful case preparation and close cooperation with local police agencies. Prosecutor Leis consistently advocated for stronger sentencing laws, greater support for victims of crime, and increased resources for prosecutors and law enforcement.

In November 1982, he was elected Hamilton County Common Pleas Judge and served in the same court room as is father.

Judge Leis was appointed to Hamilton County Sheriff in 1987 and

held that post longer than any other Sheriff Hamilton County's history. As sheriff, he assumed responsibility for the county jail, courthouse security, civil process, and numerous law enforcement functions. His administrative leadership focused on professionalism, accountability, and modernization of departmental operations. He worked to improve officer training, enhance public safety programs, and strengthen cooperation among municipal police departments throughout Hamilton County. Sheriff Leis retired on January 6, 2013 with 56 years of service to his city, county, and country.

After dozens of well-publicized battles in his career, his greatest perhaps was after he was diagnosed with cancer. After years of fighting it, he finally lost that battle on June 27, 2026 at the age of 92.

He was predeceased by his son, Simon Lawrence Leis, III; granddaughter. Madison Raleigh, and siblings, Mary Clare Torbeck, Katie Jo Gay, Margaret Leis, and Babs Leis. Sheriff Leis is survived by his wife of almost 70 years, Margery Leis; daughters, Julie Raleigh, Jill Franke, and Jodie George; grandchildren, Kyle (Natalie) Raleigh, Chelsea Raleigh, Carter Raleigh, Francis Simon Franke, Hal Samuel Franke, Lonny Elijah Franke, McKensie (Johnathan) Lahrman, Bailey (Nathan) Eckberg, and Remington George; great-grandchildren, Wrenley and Rhett; and sister, Ida Jane Staley.

Visitation will be held at the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Peter in Chains, 325 w. 8th St., on July 10, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. A Mass of Christian Burial will be offered at 12:30 p.m.

Memorials may be made to Madi's House for the construction of the Si Leis Wellness and Fitness Center, a mental health facility serving teens and young adults, at 2360 Kipling Avenue,

Cincinnati, OH 45239.

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