Police Officer Sonny L. Kim | Cincinnati Police Department



Age: 48
Badge: P396
Served: 27½ years
December 13, 1987 to June 19, 2015

OFFICER

Sonny was born September 30, 1966 in Seoul, South Korea and immigrated to the United States during 1973. He attended Carl Shurz High School in Chicago beginning in 1981 and graduating in 1984. He then attended Truman College in Chicago for a year. In 1986 he moved to Cincinnati and attended the University of Cincinnati for a year until 1987.

During January 1985 he took a position as a Security Officer at Makro in Evendale, then at Gold Circle on Ridge Road, and finally at Value City on Winston Avenue until 1987.

On December 13, 1987, Sonny joined the Cincinnati Police

Division in its 70th Recruit Class. He was promoted to Police Officer on May 1, 1988, issued Badge 396, and assigned to District 4 (4150 Reading Road). Officer Kim was rotated to District 2 (3295 Erie Avenue) on September 24, 1989 and remained there the rest of his career.

During 1989, he was commended by a citizen for rapid response and professional action in apprehending a stabbing suspect with his weapon still in his hand. Police Chief Lawrence E. Whalen commended him in 1990 for dedication and initiative resulting in the closures of 15 residential burglary cases.

Even when off duty, in April 1992, when observing suspects breaking into cars, Officer Kim tried to intervene. A fight ensued, the suspects got back to their vehicle, and they fired shots at Officer Kim. Officer Kim returned fire at the vehicle. None of the shots fired took effect, on Officer Kim nor the vehicle's occupants.

Another commendation came from Assistant Police Chief H. Bruce Knox in 1994 for peacefully negotiating with a man who barricaded himself in a building. Police Chief Michael C. Snowden commended him in 1997 for keen observations and professionalism in taking charge of a potentially suicidal situation. Then another commendation came from Acting Police Chief Richard L. Janke in 2005 for rescuing a man who had jumped from I-275 bridge into the Ohio River. During 2013 he received the Department Award for Exemplary Conduct.

Officer Kim was internationally known for his mastery of Shotokan karate, a traditional martial arts form. For two decades, he owned and operated the Japanese Karate-Do dojo on Mason-Montgomery Road in Symmes Township. Some of the students there looked up to him like a father and attributed to him a change in their lives. At the end of every training session, the

students would recite Sensei Kim's mantra:

Seek perfection of character.
Be faithful. Endeavor. Respect others.
Refrain from violent behavior.

Officer Kim was highly respected by his commanders, supervisors, peers, and the communities in which he lived and served. He was a success as a husband, father, police officer, mentor, and sensei. By June 2015, he had served his community 27½ years and earned 21 letters of appreciation and/or commendation.

MURDERER

Trepierre Hummons was born on June 1, 1994 to Ronald Hummons and Khanita Maston. His dad disassociated himself from his mother about 2005 when Trepierre was ten years old. At 17, in 2011, Trepierre Hummons armed himself with a firearm and broke into a home at gunpoint. He robbed the resident of his cell phone and 2004 Chevrolet Cavalier. He served 90 days in juvenile detention. Three months after his release, he violated his probation in May 2012. Regardless, his probation was terminated in February 2013. He then joined the Madisonville Clutch Gang, was cited multiple times for traffic violations and accumulated a few arrests for Disorderly Conduct and Criminal Damaging. On June 18, 2015, he raped one of his girlfriends. Shortly after midnight on June 19, 2015, she filed a Rape charge against him.

Before he went to bed between 2 and 3 a.m. he asked his mother, "How am I supposed to live the rest of my life as a sex offender?"

Almost nine hours later, about 8:55 a.m., Hummons posted on Facebook, “I love every last one of y’all to whoever has been in my life. You’re the real mvp (sic).” He texted his friends with a similar message, “I really love you and thank you for all you’ve ever done for me.

INCIDENT

On June 19, 2015, at 9:03 a.m. Hummons called 9-1-1 and reported, “someone’s walking around belligerent with a gun” at Whetsel Avenue and Roe Street. He gave the Primary Complaint Operator a description of himself and walked out of the house with a semiautomatic pistol, the possession of which for him was another felony. He called again at 9:10 a.m. urging a quicker response. “I just called about a guy with a gun… Please get to Roe and Whetsel as soon as possible.”

The dispatcher sent Officer Kim who was working an off day to increase police visibility in the Madisonville area.

Khanita Maston spoke to her son, but she did not know about the 9-1-1 calls nor that he had a pistol in his waistband. He told her he was going out to sit on the porch.

Moments later, she decided to walk their dog and discovered that he was not on the porch. She spotted him on the street drinking from a jug at Whetsel and Roe and went to admonish him. She said, “let’s go home,” and linked her arm in his as if to escort him home. About that time a Hamilton County Probation Officer that they both knew, who had been listening to his police radio about the ‘belligerent man with a gun,’ pulled up and spoke to Ms. Maston and Hummons. He encouraged Hummons to go home.

Officer Kim arrived on the scene at 9:19 a.m. and immediately

recognized Hummons by the description he gave Police Communications. The Probation Officer pulled forward to the corner.

Hummons pulled away from his mother and handed her his wallet. He then waved to Officer Kim in a “bring it on!” motion, beckoning him over as if he wanted to fight. Officer Kim got out of his car with a Taser in hand. Ms. Maston stepped between the two men and told Officer Kim, “I’ll take him home.”

Hummons drew his pistol. Officer Kim dropped the Taser and drew his pistol and told Hummons to drop his. Hummons said, “Shoot me!” Hummons then repeatedly fired on Officer Kim with Ms. Maston between him and the officer. Officer Kim, having been struck in both arms, could not fire back without hitting her. Then a bullet entered his left side just below his ballistic vest and Officer Kim went down.

Ms. Maston immediately went to Officer Kim on the ground to help him and called for help on his police radio.

Hummons then engaged the Probation Officer who was standing at his car parked near the corner. Apparently out of ammunition, Hummons went to Officer Kim on the ground and wrestled from him his Smith and Wesson M&P 9mm semiautomatic pistol.

Cincinnati Specialist Tom Sandmann arrived on the scene at 9:26 a.m. and immediately took fire from Hummons even before he stopped his car. Sandmann backpedaled to a cover position behind his car and delivered deliberate, well-aimed shots at Hummons, fatally wounding him.

Cincinnati Officers Bob Ahlers and Ron Fuller were next to arrive. They tore Officer Kim’s shirt and vest off and started Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Officer Kim’s condition was clearly dire. A Cincinnati Fire Department Rescue Unit responded

and paramedics with lifesaving equipment took over. They rushed Officer Kim to the University Hospital Medical Center where doctors and nurses worked feverishly to save his life.

DEATH

Officer Kim sustained nonsurvivable internal injuries. He was pronounced dead in the Emergency Room, becoming the first Cincinnati officer killed in the line of duty in fifteen years.

Officer Kim was survived by his wife of 20 years, Jessica Kim, and sons, Timothy Kim, Jacob Kim, and Joshua Kim. They lost their husband and father two days before Father's Day.

At 1:15 p.m., the dozens of police officers congregating in the rain outside the Emergency Room, snapped to attention when Officer Kim's remains were wheeled out and placed aboard an ambulance for transport to Tufts Schildmeyer Family Funeral Home & Cremation Center in Loveland.

A vigil was held later by 200 officers and citizens outside the District 2 station house. Religious leaders prayed for both Officer Kim's and Hummons' families. Officers from around the county and citizens of Loveland also gathered at the Loveland Middle School where his children attended school.

FUNERAL

A public visitation was held from 2 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, June 25, 2015 at the Xavier University Cintas Center. Thousands of active and retired officers, police civilians, and citizens walked by the casket while his family looked on. Queen City Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 69 services were held at 7 p.m.

Funeral services were held at 11 a.m. on Friday, June 26, 2015 at the Cintas Center. The services, procession, and burial services were broadcast live by three television stations. Former Cincinnati Police Chief Thomas H. Streicher, Jr. added commentary on WLWT and retired Lieutenant Stephen R. Kramer, Greater Cincinnati Police Museum Executive Director, did so on WXIX. More than 500 police cars and 200 motorcycles filled the Xavier University campus parking lots and 8000 people attended the services. It was easily the largest police funeral ever in Cincinnati.

At 2:04 p.m., a procession of busses and vehicles emptied from the parking lots for a cortege to escort his remains for 14 miles to the Gate of Heaven Cemetery where, in pouring rain, Officer Kim's body was laid to rest.

EPILOGUE

The Greater Cincinnati Police Museum was open at the time of the murder and immediately created a memorial for Officer Kim and declared a 30-day mourning period on their website and Facebook sites. Within 24 hours, the Cincinnati Police Department and the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office declared a 30-day mourning period and ordered mourning ribbons be placed on their officers' badges. Almost every regional law enforcement officer followed suit. On June 22nd, the Ohio Governor ordered flags to half-staff until the end of the funeral.

Because Officer Kim had technically retired when going into the State's Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP), his family would not receive the benefits typically associated with line of duty deaths. These include free tuition and board for any Ohio State College or University. On June 22nd, University of Cincinnati President Santa One offered to the Kim family free tuition for

all of the three children should they choose to attend college there. By June 22nd, $106,000 had been donated to the Kim family via a GoFundMe.com site.

Officer Kim was added to the Ohio Police Memorial on May 7, 2016; to the Cincinnati Fraternal Order of Police Memorial on May 10th; and to the National Law Enforcement Memorial on May 15.

Ohio state representatives Brigid Kelly (D) and Jonathon Dever (R) indroduced a bill (House Bill 347) in 2017 to name a portion of Interstate 71 "Sonny L. Kim Memorial Highway." Over time, eight more police, fire, and military names were added to the bill for separate portion and the bill was approved. A ceremony officially naming Officer Kim's portion was held on October 24, 2018.

Joshua Kim followed in his father's footsteps as a first responder, becoming a Cincinnati Fire Department Firefighter in 2019.

Last Call

https://police-museum.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/SonnyKimFinalCall.wav

If you know of any information, artifacts, archives, or images regarding this officer or incident, please contact the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum at Memorial@Police-Museum.org.

© This narrative, in anticipation of the 10th anniversary of his death, was further researched and revised on June 8,

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