Police Officer Charles Albert “Mutt” Klug P-673 (1941-2026)

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Officer

Charlie was born October 10, 1941 to Joseph M. (a college book printer at C. J. Krehbiel Printing Company) and Mary Bernice (Carney) Klug of Price Hill. He attended Holy Family Grade School and Elder High School where he played football and was a member of the Vigilantes. The Vigilantes were essentially student police, tasked with supervising the order in lounges, on the grounds, and in the hallways. Vigilantes were sometimes

unpopular with the other students, but Charlie developed a fervor for law enforcement. He graduated in June 1959.

On October 1, 1960, Charlie took a position with the Cincinnati Public Library as a clerk in the Blind Library at 8th and Vine Street. At 19, he followed in his father's profession working for C. J. Krehbiel Printing Company running a printing press.

In April 1963, Charlie married Victoria Ann "Vicki" Eichstadt and by November 1969 they had three daughters, Deborah Ann, Theresa Marie, and Mary Beth.

Having always wanted to be a policeman, at the age of 27, Charlie took an additional parttime job as a Patrolman with the Tri-State Private Police on October 24, 1968.

Charlie joined the Cincinnati Police Division in its 52nd Recruit Class on May 4, 1969. He was promoted to Patrolman on August 17, 1969, issued Badge 673, and assigned to District 2 (314 Broadway). Such was his intensity: Patrolman Klug dressed in his uniform an hour before leaving his home every night. On February 2, 1970, District 2 merged into District 1 (310 Lincoln Park Drive). On February 17, 1971, Officers Klug and his partner were featured in a Cincinnati Post article, A Policeman's Lot. In 1971, District 1 was divided into six sectors and Officer Klug was one of six officers that formed the core of the third shift in Sector Six.

In 1972, the Division determined that revolvers and riot shotguns were no longer sufficient for the evils that law enforcement were facing. Police Chief Carl V. Goodin directed each district to appoint a rifle team leader and the team leader to select premium personnel for the team. The District 1 leader, Sergeant Dale Menkhaus, chose Officer Klug and his partner as the first two, "because they exhibited the best qualities."

In April 1973, Officer Klug and a District 1 investigator headed up a six-week investigation into a spate of downtown robberies and muggings. Over the course of the investigation, twelve West End and Brighton residents calling themselves the “Ace of Spades” gang were identified and rounded up and 45 cases were closed, resulting in an official Chief’s commendation.

In 1974, Officer Klug participated in the intra-Division Guy York Shoots and earned at the end of the year a Sharpshooters medal which he wore proudly for years, even after the Guy York Shoots were discontinued.

In 1975, when he was 34 years old and competing with younger officers, some with military experience, Officer Klug was selected for the Division’s first Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team and served as a sniper.

On December 3, 1979, he and another officer were assigned to the southeast entrance of the Coliseum for the now infamous Who Concert. By the time they were posted, the crowd of mostly late teen and early 20s, most fueled by drugs and/or alcohol, had turned into a mob. Then they turned violent, smashing the glass in several ‘exit only’ doors. Seeing the property damage and probability of physical injury, Officer Klug, without concern for his own safety, waded into the mass with his partner, as people tugged on their night sticks and the revolvers secured in their holster. Outnumbered more than a thousand to two, they repelled the crowd as the Coliseum’s internal security treated those who were injured by jumping or being pushed through the

shards of glass.

Sometime later, they were reinforced with two other officers and reports began to circulate that people were down in the crowd. Again, without hesitation, they forced their way through the crowd again, only to find eleven bodies inside the lobby, at which time he tried to find one or more that could be saved. Each time, the danger was so manifest that at one point Officer Klug's badge was ripped from his jacket. It was found days later on the plaza, smashed flat from thousands of feet and/or vehicles.

The next morning, Officer Klug's image appeared at the center of a half-page photo on the front page of the Cincinnati Enquirer. He was not named, nor were his courage and efforts recognized, nor did he ever desire any recognition.

Two years later, he and 25 other officers were speculatively included in a $26 million lawsuit. There was no evidence than any had failed in the performance of their duties. It was a fishing expedition and Officer Klug was one of the key witnesses. He now had to battle some of the top law firms in the country to save his livelihood and his family's finances. The attorneys did not know who they were up against. Officer Klug refused to answer questions at the deposition, even after being threatened with contempt, until all 26 officers were removed from the lawsuit. Goliath backed down and no police officers were left in the suit.

Soon after the sector system was disbanded, the Police Personnel Section found that Officer Klug had never served in another district, and as was policy, he was rotated to District 3 (3201 Warsaw Avenue) on October 5, 1980. He was assigned to what eventually became known as The Greatest Relief. His reputation preceded him and he quickly became admired for his steadfast

efforts, wisdom, and wit – especially his laugh.

On September 8, 1982, the 13-year veteran was dressed in his uniform well before he left him home and was one of the first to arrive at work. At 11 p.m., Sergeant George Bredestege conducted roll call.

INCIDENT

At 11:17 p.m., District 3 third relief officers were walking down the steps after roll call on the 2nd floor when Police Communications dispatched Officer James Gary Weber (Call No. 302) to a report of Criminal Damaging at the Whippy Dip at 2790 River Road. A follow-up dispatch advised that the suspect was reported to be the operator of a 1968 Chevrolet Malibu parked across the street at 2787 River Road. Officer Klug (Call No. 302X), noting the proximity of the suspect to the complainant, advised that he would also respond.

Upon arrival, the officers spoke to the complainant at the Whippy Dip. They then both walked across the street to the Malibu, which was unoccupied and displayed a temporary license tag. Officer Weber opened the driver's door to write down the vehicle identification number. Officer Klug held a flashlight on the vehicle identification tag.

Stephen Curry James, of 344 Resor Avenue, a Sanitary Engineer for the United States Public Health Service at the United States Environmental Protection Agency, was highly intoxicated and driving his 1972 Chevrolet Corvette inbound on River Road at twice the speed limit, weaving in and out of spaces between other cars, and almost rear-ending a car in the 2900 block of River Road. Just as Officer Weber closed the door on the Malibu, at about 11:35 p.m., James slammed his Corvette into the

officers and the Malibu.

The Corvette carried Officer Weber about 40 feet before running into a utility pole, killing him instantly.

Officer Klug was knocked over the Malibu and landed on the sidewalk with fractures and injuries from his skull to his ankles. His legs were nearly amputated at the knees.

STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE

There was little hope for Officer Klug. An officer on the scene peered into the Rescue Unit while paramedics worked on him. One looked back and shook his head, as if to say, “He’s not going to make it.” Sergeant Bredestege directed the officer and his partner to notify his wife and to take her to the hospital.

Officer Klug hovered near death for weeks but did survive. He was unconscious for five days, spent the next fifteen days with pins through his right leg and the other leg in a cast, and sustained 17 hours of surgeries in the first 20 days. He spent six more weeks in the hospital after that. He endured dozens of surgeries since the crash. Officer Klug tried mightily to regain sufficient physical capabilities to return to the Division as a Police Officer, but after six years and numerous surgeries, he accepted a disability retirement.

He did not leave the job, however. He was immediately rehired as a Police Technician and continued to work at the District 3 Desk until finally retiring on October 23, 2004, with 35 years of service and 14 letters of appreciation and/or commendation.

The Greater Cincinnati Police Museum closed on December 31, 2013 and moved to its current location on Reading Road. Retired Officer Klug joined to assist in reopening the museum, bringing his wife and daughters along with him. When the Museum reopened in February 2015, he began volunteering there two times a week and took over as the manager of the Gift Shop.

Dirt and infection remained in his body – sometimes dormant and sometimes flaring up. On July 13, 2015 Officer Klug had “minor” surgery on his left hand. His infections flared and by July 17, 2015 he was in the critical care unit at University Hospital with three types of infections coursing through his veins, especially around his artificial joints. He endured two more surgeries, another one on his hand and one on his knee, to debride the infected tissue. He came away from these three surgeries with aspirational pneumonitis causing diminished lung function. He was sent home to recuperate for six months on intravenous antibiotics and oxygen. After two months the antibiotics were no longer overcoming the infection in his knee. On September 15, 2015 doctors cut yet again into his leg to remove and replace the artificial knee parts. Before long, after yet another near-death experience, Officer Klug returned to the Police Museum to continue to run the Gift Shop.

On May 5, 2017, Officer Klug was awarded the first ever “President’s Award” at the 50th Annual Hamilton County Law Enforcement Awards.

Due to his mangled and constantly deteriorating spine, doctors were forced to attempt a multilevel spinal fusion in his lower back that was probably not even available in 1982. On August 12, 2019, he underwent his 38th reconstructive surgery (of 61 total surgeries to date) to cut three vertebrae in half and replace

the front halves with porous titanium created using three-dimensional modeling with magnetic resonance imaging. After three days in ICU, on August 15, 2019, he had another surgery to replace the back halves. In severe pain, he spent another three days in ICU. After a couple of weeks in hospitals he returned home, but his rear incision became infected and, on September 22, 2019 had his 62nd surgery to remove and debride infected and/or dead tissue.

In May 2025, after numerous examinations, Officer Klug was further diagnosed with Vascular Brain Disease resulting in significant weight loss, reduced short term memory, and relegating him for a time to a power wheelchair. But by July, he was back at the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum, alternatingly on a walker or a cane, every Tuesday morning.

Then on October 28, 2025, on his way out the door to be driven to the Police Museum, he fell unconscious on the floor outside his condominium. It appeared he suffered an atrial fibrillation episode leading to a mild stroke. Back in the hospital, he was aspirating again with critical lung function and found to have a hole in his heart and another in his lung, widely believed to be attributed to the dozens of years of infections and hard-core treatments for them. Just before Christmas 2025, Officer Klug went home under hospice care.

DEATH

After 43½ years of fighting, Officer Klug lost his final battle, surrounded by his entire family, at 3:33 p.m. on January 3, 2026 at the age of 84. Due to the probable line of duty death implications, the Hamilton County Coroner’s Officer sent an ambulance to pick up Officer Klug and bring him to the Hamilton County Morgue. He was escorted by a District 3 patrol car.

Officer Klug was survived by his wife of 63 years, Victoria Klug; daughters, Deborah Lawhorn, Theresa (retired Cincinnati Fire District Chief Robert) McWilliams, and Mary Beth Ray; grandchildren, A. J. Lawhorn, Amber (C'Jay) Becker, Breanne (Cincinnati Police Officer Connor) Swanger, Green Township Firefighter Brendan McWilliams, Harley Ray, and Daniel Ray; and great-grandchildren Lily Becker, Levi Becker, and Koda McWilliams. He was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph and Mary Bernice Klug, as well as Richard Ray and Kevin Durbin.

A visitation and Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 69 Service were held on Friday, January 9, 2026 at Spring Grove Funeral Home – Blue Spruce Chapel. A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Saturday, January 10, 2026 at St. Jude the Apostle Church in Bridgetown, celebrated by Fr. Steve Angi. Burial followed at St. Joseph (New) Cemetery with a bugler, bagpipes, and the Cincinnati Police and Hamilton County Police Association Honor Guards.

Donations can be made to the Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Museum, 308 Reading Road, Suite 201, Cincinnati, OH 45202.

The Hamilton County Coroner is conducting an intensive review of Officer Klug's medical records to determine the cause of death and whether it is related to his death and therefore a line-of-duty death

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