

# Sheriff Harold Donald “Don” Gabbard (1931-2016)

Don was born in Hamilton County on December 11, 1931 to Burton and Lillian (Sandlin) Gabbard.



He was appointed as Patrolman (Badge 148) with the Hamilton City Police Department on May 5, 1958. During August 1971 he was acting as detective when he tracked down an interstate fugitive hiding in Hamilton and that arrest earned him a commendation from J. Edgar Hoover. He was also an officer in the FOP Lodge 38. He was promoted to Detective (Badge 248) on May 28, 1984. He retired May 1, 1986 with 28 years of service. During 2004, he passed his Hamilton Detective badge onto to his son, Joseph.



Detective Gabbard was deemed the underdog when he ran against incumbent Richard Holzberger for Butler County Sheriff in 1992. He was elected with 53% of the vote. He was reelected twice. During 2000, his Mounted Patrol was invited to Washington D.C. to escort President Bush's inaugural parade. Also during his terms in office he made changes in the jail, saying that "it is not a hotel", and was involved in several progressive programs. During 2004, he announced his retirement and stepped down when Sheriff Richard Jones was elected and installed; with 46½ years of service to Hamilton and Butler County.

Sheriff Gabbard passed away at his home on Monday, May 30, 2016 at the age of 84. Hamilton Police Chief Craig R. Bucheit declared a morning period of 7 days from June 1 to June 8, 2016 saying, "Don Gabbard was a good cop and a great man who will be missed. His legacy of over 40 years in law enforcement is carried on in all those he influenced and inspired along the way, not the least of which is our very own Lt. Joe Gabbard, his son."

He was predeceased by another son, Isaac Gabbard; a granddaughter, Angela Couch; and siblings, Alvin “Duke” Gabbard, Robert “Bobby” Gabbard, Alma Hymer, and Amelia Gabbard. Sheriff Gabbard is survived by his wife, Phyllis Jean (Snowden) Gabbard; children, Shirley (Doug) Smith-Estep, Donna (Roger) Brooks, Pamela (Charles) Couch, Harold Don (Teresa) Gabbard, Jr., Gary (Karen) Gabbard, and Hamilton Police Lieutenant Joseph Gabbard; 13 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren; and a brother, Burton Gabbard, Jr.

Visitation will be held 4 to 8 p.m. on Friday June 3, 2016 at the Brown Dawson Flick Funeral Home, 1350 Millville Avenue. A funeral service will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 4, 2016, at the Fairfield Wesleyan Church, 4685 Anthony Wayne Avenue. Burial will follow at the Rose Hill Burial Park.