

University Law Enforcement Officer James A. Downing (1953-2017)

Jim was born June 27, 1953 in Cincinnati to Lester and Mary (Weber) Downing. He attended La Salle High School and graduated in 1972 with six other men who would make law enforcement their vocation.



Jim joined the University of Cincinnati Police Department in 1979 as one of the first University Law Enforcement Officers in Ohio; a rank established first at the University of Cincinnati by Chief Eugene Ferrara. Since the very early 1980s, Officer Downing was also a Defensive Tactics instructor at the Great Oak Police Academy. He retired from the University in 2002 and became the Rangemaster and Assistant Academy Commander at Great Oaks. “He cared deeply about the academy and the cadets’ training,” according to Commander Michael Wright. Assistant Commander Downing retired from Great Oaks during 2014 due to failing health and after 35 years of law enforcement service.

For decades, Officer Downing battled cancer. He finally lost the battle on October 11, 2017 at the age of 64.

Officer Downing was predeceased by his parents and siblings, Nicholas Schnatz and Leslie Swegman. Officer Downing is survived by his wife of 25 years, Rhonda (Noble) Downing; children, Michael (Jaclyn) Downing, Eric James (Rachael) Downing, and Molly Allison Downing; and granddaughters, Alexis, Ashley, and Ava Downing.

He will have a private family service on October 20, 2017.

Memorials may be made to Carpe Diem USA, PO Box 541121, Cincinnati, OH 45254.