

# Sergeant Handy Lee Matthews S-111 (1927-2022)

Handy was born April 21, 1927 in Indianola, Mississippi to Huriah and Minnie B. Matthews. He attended the Sixth District School where he was Captain of the Safety Patrol. He also attended Bloom Junior High and Woodward High Schools, graduating in 1946.

Immediately after graduation and until November 1950, Handy served as a waiter at the Losantiville Country Club.



Handy joined the Cincinnati Police Division on December 15, 1950 as a member of the Division's 20<sup>th</sup> Recruit Class. On March 15, 1951 he was promoted to Patrolman, issued Badge 621, and assigned to District 1 (1024 York Street). He also joined the Cincinnati Police basketball team in 1951. Not even a patrolman for two months, he and his partner came under fire from 65-year-old man with a shotgun. They rushed him and arrested him before he could reload. One month later, he was already working in civilian clothes at least intermittently. Six months later, while holding four prisoners for disorderly conduct at a call box and awaiting a patrol wagon, one of the prisoners pulled a knife and sliced open a 5" cut on his chest. He was still able to maintain custody. During February 1953, while patrolling Baymiller Street, a nearby funeral home exploded. Patrolman Matthews ran to the location and suffered burns while tearing flaming clothing from two men. After two years in the district, he transferred to District 4 (754 West Fifth Street). While patrolling Smith Street, he witnessed a strong-armed robbery, gave chase, and caught one of the perpetrators. By July 1954, he was working as an investigator in District 4.

During February 1955, he was assigned to the prestigious Highway Safety Bureau (City Hall). On July 22, 1955, when granite pieces of a façade fell onto a Central Avenue sidewalk, pinning a woman, Patrolman Matthews pulled ligaments in his shoulder lifting them off of her. There are numerous newspaper-mentions of his involvement in serious auto crash investigations, drunk driver arrests, and auto recoveries.

On March 15, 1964, he was assigned to the Vice Control Bureau. One month later, he and Detective Paul Allen cracked a \$750,000-a-year numbers racket, the largest such case to that point in Cincinnati Police Division history. During October 1964, he was involved in the prosecution of 24 gaming cases. He then transferred to the Traffic Bureau.

He was one of the first set of patrolmen promoted to the new rank of Police Specialist on February 27, 1966, issued Badge PS-120, and assigned to the Juvenile Bureau (310 Lincoln Park Drive) where he became a division spokesman for juvenile laws and issues. On January 23, 1972, Specialist Matthews was assigned to the Recruiting Unit in the Personnel Section.

He was promoted to Sergeant on May 12, 1974, issued Badge S-111, and assigned to District 7 (813 Beecher Street). During July 1974, he was one of the first officers to arrive at and attend to assassinated Patrolman David Cole. Sergeant Matthews rotated to District 4 (4150 Reading Road) on October 19, 1975. A year later, he transferred back to District 1 (by then at 310 Lincoln Park Drive). He demanded neatness for himself and the personnel assigned to him. He was one of very few employees who retired without ever having had an at-fault, on-duty auto crash. Sergeant Matthews retired March 6, 1980 with 29 years of service and 60 letters of commendation, including six from Cincinnati Police Chiefs. When he retired, a dinner was held in his honor attracting some 300 paying guests.

Sergeant Matthews went on to teach law enforcement at the Queen City Vocational School.

As he aged, Sergeant Matthews was diagnosed with Diabetes and suffered several of the maladies common to the disease. He died on November 25, 2022 at 95½ years old, the third oldest retired Cincinnati Police employee, oldest retired sergeant, last survivor from his recruit class, and oldest employee to have served in the Highway Safety Bureau, Vice Control Bureau, Juvenile Bureau, and Police Personnel.

He was predeceased by his wife of 40 years, Alice Patrice "Patsy" (Davis) Matthews (1988); son, Handy Emil "Boogie" Matthews (2018); grandson, David Matthews; and sister, Luvenia Westbrook. He is survived by his second wife, Patricia Matthews, and sons, Michael Lee Matthews and Rodney David Matthews.

Visitation will be held 5 to 7 p.m. on Friday, December 2, 2022, at New Prospect Church, 1580 Summit Road, followed by a funeral service. FOP and Shriners/Masonic services will be held at 8 p.m. His remains will be interred at 10 a.m. on Saturday, December 3, 2022, at Lakeside Mausoleum in Spring Grove Cemetery.