

# Specialist Leon Locke PS-244 (1953-2024)



Leon was born on October 16, 1953, to Reverend Perry G. and Mrs. Freddie M. (Baskin) Locke. He attended Aiken High School where he was a good athlete in football and baseball and excelled in Chess. He graduated in 1972. He also graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 1975 with an Associate Degree in Law Enforcement Technology.

He worked during the summer of 1971 at the Cincinnati Board of Education's Neighborhood Youth Corp. During his senior year of high school, he worked as a maintenance helper with the Union Light Heating Company.

Leon joined the Cincinnati Police Division in the 6<sup>th</sup> Increment Police Cadet class on July 23, 1972. While attending college, Cadet Locke worked at Police Communications Section (310 Lincoln Park Drive) and Detention Section (City Hall). On August 24, 1975, he was promoted to Police Recruit, and on September 28, 1975, to Police Officer, issued Badge 304, and assigned to District 5 (1012 Ludlow Avenue). Due to financial issues at City Hall, Officer Locke and 123 other officers were laid off on December 5, 1976. During the next 2¼ years, he took a position as Guard at the Cincinnati Workhouse. On April 1, 1979, he was recalled from lay-off and assigned to District 1. On January 14, 1983, he was promoted to Police Specialist and issued Badge PS-244. Still somewhat of a Chess master, in 1987, Specialist Locke entered the Ohio Police Olympics in Chess and earned a Silver Medal.

He transferred to the District 3 Investigative Unit (3201 Warsaw Avenue) on October 16, 1988. On January 17, 1991, a man robbed the Chase Bank of Ohio on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, downtown. Six miles away, Specialist Locke identified the robber by his clothing and made the arrest at 2435 Harrison Avenue. The suspect had recently gotten out of prison for bank robbery in Kansas. In July 1992, Specialist Locke participated again in the Ohio Police Olympics, this time in baseball and this time he and his team won the Gold. On July 30, 1995, Specialist Locke was assigned to the Fraud Squad, Property Crimes Unit. In 1996, he and his partner cracked a \$100,000-a-year ATM fraud gang, which the Hamilton County Prosecutor called "the most significant case I've seen." Eventually, it would only be one of Specialist Locke's top four or five cases. In February 2001, he was assigned to the Financial Crimes Squad, Major Offenders Unit and partnered with Police Officer Richard Judon, specializing in Financial Institution Robberies. The unit solved every bank robbery in 2005 and the two officers received the Hamilton County Police Association's Emil S. Otting Award for Service. Specialist Locke retired on February 12, 2009, with 40 letters of appreciation and/or commendation, including 12 from Cincinnati Police chiefs and one from the Hamilton County Prosecutor.

Even before his deferred retirement day, on May 5, 2008, Specialist Locke took a position as Coroner Investigator with the Hamilton County Coroner's Office. With persistent medical issues, he fully retired on January 2, 2024 after 51½ years of service to his community.

Leon gave back in other ways as well. About 1980, he began coaching little league football in Evanston. He moved the team to North Fairmount where he was joined by Lieutenant Jerry Kyles. One team became two, then three, and by 2000 it was four. Children there no longer called them by their police ranks, but "coach."

Specialist Locke died suddenly on February 21, 2024 at the age of 70.

He is predeceased by his siblings, Perry Lee Meniffee and retired Police Officer James M. Locke. Specialist Locke is survived by his terminally ill wife of 28 years, Marchita L. (Malone) Locke; daughters, Lana Yvonne (Curtis) Locke, Tamera Dionne (Frank) Hollimon, and Kristina Latrice (David) Locke; stepdaughter Philana D. Malone; grandchildren, including District Three Police Officer Maiya Malone; great grandchildren, and a host of other family members including District Two Police Officer Perry E. Locke, a nephew.

Visitation will be held 10 to 11:45 a.m. on Friday, March 8, 2024 at the Vineyard Cincinnati Church at 11340 Century Circle E in Springdale. An FOP service will be held at 11:45 a.m. A funeral service will follow at noon, followed immediately by burial at Spring Grove Cemetery.