

Chief Richard Ernest Atkins (1928-2025)

Richard was born on May 18, 1928 to Thomas W. and Beulah Atkins of Saylor Park. Tom moved his family to Addyston where Rickard grew up. He attended Taylor High School in North Bend and graduated in June 1946.

Within a week, Richard joined the United States Navy on June 8, 1946, with post-World War II conflicts in Greece and Asia. He graduated basic training at the Naval Training Center in Great Lakes, Illinois. He was further trained at the Hospital Corps School in Bainbridge, Maryland. Finally, he was assigned to the National Naval Medical Center as a Ward Corpsman in the Neuro-Psychiatric Division with temporary duty sometimes to a psychiatric unit at Fort Worth, Texas. With United States reduction in forces, Pharmacist Mate, 3rd Class Atkins was honorably discharged after 1¾ years on April 7, 1948 with a World War II Victory Medal.



Richard joined the Cincinnati Police Division in their 23rd Recruit Class on January 27, 1952. Exactly three months later, he was promoted to Patrolman, issued Badge 42, and assigned to District 3 (3201 Warsaw Avenue). A year later, he was rotated to District 4 (754 West Fifth Street). Another year later, he was rotated again to District 1 (1024 York Street). On January 6, 1958, Patrolman Atkins was assigned to the prestigious Traffic Bureau. Throughout his first dozen years, he was mentioned in newspapers dozens of times, usually for traffic enforcement, drunken driving arrests, and crash investigations. By August 1959 he was one of a very few patrolmen operating a new Police Interceptor on the recently completed Interstate 75.

After competing in the first promotional examination for the new rank of Police Specialist (replacing Detective), he was promoted on February 27, 1966, issued Badge PS-81, and assigned to the Juvenile Bureau (City Hall). Six months later, he transferred back to District 3 and served in the Investigative Unit. In February 1968 he was involved in the investigation, search warrant, and arrest of a man and the closure of 35 burglaries in Price Hill, Northside, and Mt. Healthy. On May 9th, he arrested two Courter Technical High School teachers in connection with juvenile delinquency of five children. In December 1973, he was elected Chaplain of the Fraternal Order of Police. His final assignment was District 3 Investigative Unit Collator. Specialist Atkins retired June 7, 1980 with 28½ years of service.



He then began working for the Fairfax Police Department as an Administrative Assistant. In 1985, he was promoted to Sergeant. In October 1987, he was appointed Police Chief. In April 1988, he was also appointed Street Commissioner. After 15½ years with Fairfax, Chief Atkins retired December 4, 1995 with more than 45 years of service to our country and two communities.

Chief Atkins died surrounded by family on July 31, 2025 at the age of 97. Before his death, he was the second oldest retired Cincinnati law enforcement employee and the most senior having been appointed in 1952.

He was predeceased by his daughter, Paula Bennington; siblings, William Atkins, Sr., Annabel (Jack) Benter, Robert (Catherine) Atkins, Sr., Gloria (Buddy) Shinkle, Dutch Wickman, and Edna Sexton. Chief Atkins is survived by his wife of 46 years, Helen "Rose" (Diersing) Atkins; children, Rick (Maureen) Atkins and Jimmy Atkins; step-children, Eric (Michele) Thien, Gary Thien, Troy (Tricia Rist) Thien, and Tasha (Tom) Thompson; grandchildren, Christopher, Jennifer, Patrick, Becky, Ann, Amanda, Erica, Haley, Ciarrh, Kylie, Dominic, and Ellie, 21 great-grandchildren and one on the way; sister, Cleona Wickman; and brother-in-law, Ray Sexton.

A visitation and funeral services were held Friday, August 8, 2025, at Addyston Baptist Church.