

# Captain Thomas Frederick “Tom” Williams (1940-2025)

Tom was born on January 1, 1940 in Cincinnati, the second son born to Frank R. & Helen (Terwilleger) Williams of Norwood. By the time Tom was ten, Frank was a Norwood firefighter. Tom graduated from Norwood High School.

About 1958, Tom joined the United States Army during the beginning of United States involvement in the Vietnam War. He was honorably discharged.

Upon returning home, he worked as a shipping clerk in Norwood.

About 1965, Tom joined the Norwood Police Department beginning what would turn out to be a distinguished 34-year career, and one with heroism, injury, and many successes. On September 22, 1967 he and his partner responded to a disorderly crowd whereupon the crowd of 60 surrounded the patrol car and dragged the officers out and beat them. He was sufficiently injured to be hospitalized. In July 1968, he chased down a robbery suspect armed with a .38 caliber revolver. In March 1973, while on routine patrol, he found, chased, and caught another armed robber based on the vehicle description about 30 minutes before. Before the Hamilton County Police Association (HCPA) established their Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team, Patrolman Williams acted as an impromptu hostage negotiator while a man held a shotgun to his 7-month-old son's head. The man surrendered after an hour. By 1975, he was a canine handler for the Department.

After ten years of these and other stories of pursuits, shots fired, and the like, he was promoted to Sergeant, and apparently acting as a Detective Sergeant, including investigating the murder of the owner of Stan's Pharmacy. By December 1979, he was a Lieutenant and again working as an investigator. Lieutenant Williams was also the representative for wage negotiations. In January 1980, he was shot at by a woman barricaded in bar. By then an official HCPA Hostage Negotiator, he talked her into surrendering.

Later in 1980, he was promoted to Captain and appointed Chief of Detectives and Patrol Commander. In August 1982, he talked a Florida double murder suspect out of committing suicide. Beginning in July 1984, he headed up the task force investigating, capturing, and prosecuting serial murderers Alton Coleman and Debra Brown. He successfully talked down another armed barricaded man in November 1986. Captain Williams served as Acting Police Chief in July 1989, July 1995, and June 1999. In January 1993, he had two more successful barricaded man negotiations, in one night!

On Sunday night, August 4, 1997, he responded to a domestic disturbance. While interviewing three women, the intoxicated man came down the steps and fired four shots at Captain Williams, hitting him once in the arm. Other Norwood officers came to his aid and bravely escorted him to safety. It was the first time a Norwood officer was shot since the 1942 death of Sergeant Anthony Overberg.



Having been Acting Chief for almost seven months in June 1999, the Mayor, with whom he had some professional differences, replaced him with a Sergeant. The rank and file took a confidence vote and he received 48 (of 52) votes, but this was ignored by the mayor. The next month, on July 29, 1999, the original member of the HCPA SWAT team, former Canine Officer, creator of the Norwood drug unit, once wounded, 34-year veteran retired and announced his intention to run for mayor.

Captain Williams was nominated by the Democratic Party for the mayoral race. He lost in 1999 and narrowly 2001 but won in 2003. He won every election thereafter until losing in 2015 by a mere 50 votes.

Captain Williams died on August 8, 2025 at the age of 85.

He is predeceased by brother, Frank Anthony "Tony" Williams. Captain Williams is survived by his wife of 61 years, Mary Ann (DeNoma) Williams; children, retired Norwood Sergeant Tom (Donna) Williams and Lisa (Brett) Cartuyvelles; grandchildren, Emily (Max) Knipper, Thomas Williams, Daniel Cartuyvelles, and Grace Cartuyvelles; and great-granddaughter, Cecilia Knipper.

Visitation will be held at Holy Trinity Church in Norwood, Ohio, on Friday, August 22, 2025 from 9 to 11 a.m. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11 a.m.

Memorials may be made to the Norwood High School Scholarship Foundation, PO Box 12522, Norwood, OH 45212.