



# Minnesota Chapter of COPS

By Paul Gertsen



As a fellow St. Paul City employee, I was very impressed with the Saint Paul Police Department's turnout at National Police Week in Washington, DC last May. It was great to see so many uniformed officers paying tribute to Sgt. Vick and other fallen St. Paul officers. Even though I was proud of the turnout, I was also honored that so many took the time (and expense) to make the trip. I say honored because I am also a law enforcement survivor.

On November 3, 2003, my brother, Moody County, South Dakota Deputy Sheriff William P. Davis, was killed when he was struck by a car while placing a suspect under arrest at an accident scene on Interstate 29, south of Brookings. My brother's death - and life - was the motivation I used in forming the Minnesota Chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors, a peer-support group composed of family members and co-workers of law enforcement officers who have been killed in the line of duty.

Our chapter was chartered in February, 2005, and since then, we have been active in not only supporting family members, but the law enforcement profession as well. We have two yearly chapter events designed specifically to help family members and support law enforcement. In November, we hold

our Blue Light Ceremony at the Peace Officers Memorial on the State Capitol grounds. Designed to promote public awareness about placing blue lights in windows during the holiday season, our solemn ceremony features candles placed for Minnesota's fallen officers and family members and co-workers speaking about those they have lost.

Every May throughout the metro area, we promote distribution of our COPS Blue Ribbons. These ribbons are to be tied to car antennas during National Police Week to remember those who have given the supreme sacrifice, and they also support those who still maintain the watch.

With National Police Week fast approaching, officers and survivors will be gathering again in Washington. You've read about last year's trip in these pages, certainly from an officer's perspective. But I'd like to tell you what it means from a survivor's perspective.

When a survivor sees a uniformed officer - any officer - at Police Week, it's just like a pat on the back or a steady hand under your arm, showing you that the sacrifice of these men and women have not been forgotten. And I can truthfully say there is NO feeling like seeing a uniform from your own officer's agency. If you ever wonder if your own presence at local or national events makes a difference, let me just say you have no idea HOW much difference it makes to surviving family members. Please keep that in mind.

The MN Chapter of COPS has been fortunate to develop a strong working relationship with SPPD, and we hope to continue that well into the future. The help we've received from your department has been tremendous, and we're very grateful for that. If

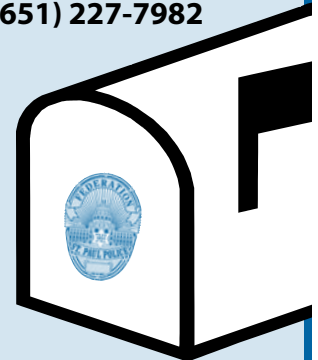
there is anything our chapter can do for you, don't hesitate to contact us at [minncops@aol.com](mailto:minncops@aol.com)

I hope to see some of you in Washington this May and at our Blue Light Ceremony in November. Thank you for all you do for the city of St. Paul.

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