

# BEHIND THE BADGE

## End of Watch



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### Officer Delma Devon Adams End of Watch: February 3, 1980



The home in Randleman, NC, where Sandra (Adams) Spargo lives is a simple, brick ranch with a manicured lawn, two-car garage, and lots of pictures of grandchildren. The thing that struck me most as I walked in the door was the cabinet full of Santa Claus statues that greets guests as they enter the foyer. Sandra began collecting the statues the Christmas after her husband was taken from her and their two sons, Phillip and Marcus.

It didn't take long for Sandra to start telling me about Jimmy and I thought to myself, "Who's Jimmy?" That's when Sandra told me that when D.D. was born, his father was not at the hospital, so his mother made the sole decision to name him after his father. Upon being introduced to his new son, D.D.'s father said he never really liked his own name, so he was going to call his new son "Jimmy" and that was that.

Sandra said they always knew who was calling the house by who the caller asked for: if they asked for Jimmy, it was family; if they asked for D.D., it was the police department; and if they asked for Delma, there was no telling who it was.

Jimmy's homecoming from the hospital was to a farm in the Meadow Community in Johnston County. He was number six of eight children; six boys and two girls. Jimmy was always a devoted son and was especially devoted to his mother following his father's death when he was just a young child.

Jimmy met Sandra while in high school and the two soon became inseparable. At 17, Jimmy gave Sandra a very small diamond that cost him the profits from his entire corn crop that year. It wasn't long after

graduation that Jimmy and Sandra told everyone they were going to the state fair, but they actually eloped to Dillon, SC. The happy couple then settled down in Garner, NC. Jimmy made frequent trips back to the farm in Meadow to look after his mother and make sure that all was well back home.

In 1965, Jimmy went to work with the City of Raleigh as a meter reader. Jimmy's job with the City brought him into contact with police officers on a regular basis, and they soon convinced him to give police work a try. Jimmy was hired by the Raleigh Police Department on September 7, 1967, and he and Sandra moved into an apartment on Bloodworth Street. Shortly after completing the Academy, Jimmy became a patrol officer and later joined the Motorcycle Unit. A warm smile came across Sandra's face as she told me how proud Jimmy was of that motorcycle. She said that without a doubt, Jimmy's happiest time on the Department was the time he spent as a member of the Motorcycle Unit.

In 1975, Jimmy was reassigned as a beat officer on "C" Platoon. There, he established a reputation as a quiet officer who always had a smile and was always willing to help anyone who might need it. Members of his squad were quoted as saying they would often go to Jimmy with questions instead of asking the sergeant. It wasn't long before Jimmy was named as a field training officer. Retired RPD Captain D.C. Poteat was one of Jimmy's last recruits; he remembers his former training officer as "the rock of the squad" and "very mature for his age."

On February 3, 1980, Jimmy was riding alone on assignment in 136C which, at the time, included Walnut Terrace, Wilmington Street, and South Saunders Street. Captain Poteat said that during roll call, an alert was issued about a drunk driver in the area of South Wilmington Street; the alert included a brief description of the vehicle. Jimmy located the suspect vehicle and arrested Cassie Scott Johnson for drunk driving. He placed her in the back left seat of his patrol car. Johnson asked Jimmy for her purse, and ever the gentleman, he got out of the car to retrieve the purse and to assist the people who had been in the vehicle with Johnson in finding a ride home. Jimmy handed Johnson her purse, and he was soon killed by a single gunshot wound to the back of the head as he sat in the front seat of his patrol car.

Jimmy was the second Raleigh Police Department officer murdered in the line of duty, and Sandra told me that as a result, she saw a lot of things change within the Department. For instance, officers began wearing their ballistic vests on both day and night shifts, and check-ins on vehicle stops became routine.

At the time of his death, Jimmy's two sons were 14 and four years old. Sandra described his death as "a ripple in the largest pond you can imagine."

*Original text contributed by Lieutenant D.S. Gillespie and retired Detective D.C. Moore.*