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If it happened, it's news to us



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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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Peterkin's death shocks Hoke

Beloved sheriff is mourned around the state



Peterkin with supporters after winning again in 2018. (File photos)



Talking to reporters during a protest downtown in June, 2020.



Speaking at the funeral for George Floyd—"Enough is enough," he said of law enforcement-related shootings of Black people.



During his first bid for sheriff.

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County Sheriff Dr. Hubert A. Peterkin died Friday night, leaving the community where he was born and raised in shock from the longtime leader's unexpected passing. He was 59 years old, and served as sheriff for

nearly 20 years.

Peterkin had cancer and died from complications during surgery, Hoke County Commission Chairman Harry Southerland said he learned.

"He had cancer and went in for surgery on Friday. While in surgery they found a blood clot," the chairman said.

Peterkin's passing was a "rough blow" for the community he served for decades.

"It was a shock to me. In my opinion Hoke County has been dealt a blow, a rough blow," Southerland said.

The chairman was called into an emergency meeting just before midnight Friday with high-ranking staff members of the sheriff's office, who told him of Peterkin's passing.

"We lost a great servant. He was a friend to everybody. He was everybody's sheriff, always the ultimate professional. He took our sheriff's office to another level, to national accreditation," Southerland said. "He knew what we need to stay safe in Hoke County. He puts Hoke County first and I really respect that about him."

"We're going to get through it. We need everybody to pray for Hoke County and pray for the Peterkin family."

Peterkin's sister, Hazel Peterkin Ware, posted to Facebook, "This is unbelievable. Please keep the Peterkin family in prayer."

A public viewing and walk-through will be held from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Friday, October 29 at Cape Fear Conference B Headquarters, located at 10225 Fayetteville Road. The doors will close at 1 p.m. with a private funeral to follow at 2 p.m., to include family, law enforcement, constituents and others deemed by family. Services are provided by Buie's Funeral Home in Raeford.

(See PETERKIN, page 6)

'Honored to be sheriff here'



In the parking lot, before the George Floyd funeral in June, 2020, Peterkin talked with the News-Journal about the local response to racial tensions around the country, and how he felt about the community:

'It's a beautiful thing here'

"Let me say something about Hoke County. This county is a loving community. We're very diverse.

I'm going to say I've never felt racial tensions between police and law enforcement, the citizens here.

You know, as an elected official, I will say I'm elected by the people, not one community at all.

This community knows how to love people. Having [the George Floyd funeral] here, I'm not concerned one minute about the citizens of Hoke County being disruptive or causing problems.

Yesterday was an example of it, when you saw how those young people protested downtown, how peaceful it was...

You know, I've never been concerned. I'm so happy with this community for how they treat everyone. Now, does it exist? Yes, but it's on a small scale. It's everywhere, but Hoke County as a whole? Nah. I'm so proud of this community.

And I'm proud to be sheriff here—I'm honored to be sheriff here.

It's a beautiful thing here, and I think a lot of these other communities can take an example from us."



Crumpler assumes duties of sheriff pending interim appointment



Crumpler, right, and Newton.

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County Coroner Frank Crumpler has assumed the duties of Hoke County Sheriff until the county board installs an interim in the wake of Sheriff Hubert Peterkin's death.

The commissioners met in emergency session Monday to discuss the situation. Out of respect

for Peterkin, the board chose to wait until after his funeral—scheduled for Friday—to appoint an interim sheriff to serve out the rest of his term.

"In regards to today, we're not going to make a decision about the appointment of a sheriff. To me, and this whole board agrees, that out of respect for the 19 years of service of Hubert Peterkin—it would be disrespectful to appoint

a sheriff until he is laid to rest. So we will not do that," Commission Chairman Harry Southerland said.

The interim sheriff, when one is appointed, will serve through 2022. The office of sheriff will be up for voters to decide next year in a countywide election.

Under North Carolina state statute, Crumpler was next in line to assume the responsibilities

as sheriff. At 87 years old, he is believed to be the longest serving elected official still in office. Crumpler has served as county coroner since 1960, and was most recently re-elected in 2018.

Crumpler said Monday he wants to do everything he can to make sure Peterkin's wishes are carried out.

"Sheriff Peterkin was a number (See CRUMPLER, page 8)

Family, friends, Hoke High students reeling from deaths of two teens

Two teenagers were found dead this weekend in a vehicle parked near an elementary school in Hoke County, with family, friends and the school community left to mourn their passing and seek answers.

Hoke High School students Britany Carolina Munoz-Ramirez, 17, and Ailton Sebastian Tirado-Martinez, 16, died

Sunday, the school system confirmed. The youth were both in the 11th grade.

"This is a great loss for our entire district family. We offer our sincere condolences to the family, friends, and the HCHS community in their time of need," Superintendent Dr. Debra Dowless said.

(See TEEN DEATHS, page 4)



Hoke High School's soccer team displays respect.



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