



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OC Sheriff Public Affairs, 714-904-7042

OC Sheriff mourns the loss of former Sheriff Brad Gates

SANTA ANA, Ca. (October 25, 2024): Please see the attached statement from Sheriff Barnes:

"Orange County has lost a legend and our department has lost one of our most beloved family members. Sheriff Brad Gates passed away this morning at the age of 85.

"Sheriff Gates' six terms in office, from 1975 to 1999, were defined as '24 Years of Progress.' He took the helm of our agency at the age of 35 after only 14 years into his law enforcement career. His accomplishments as Sheriff are too long to include in one memo. Although it has now been over 24 years since Sheriff Gates retired, much of what our department has in place today are a result of initiatives he began.

"He constructed the IRC, expanded Theo Lacy, guided the County-wide Coordinated Communications System, established RNSP, instituted new technologies at the crime lab, expanded the use of civilian job classifications, founded the Sheriff's Advisory Council and Drug Use is Life Abuse, and led the way as the first large law enforcement agency to have video cameras installed in patrol units. The population of Orange County nearly doubled during his tenure and Brad Gates accomplished the task of ensuring one of America's fastest growing counties had a first-class sheriff's department.

"It was this record that attracted so many young men and women to join our department. As a young deputy I remember how much we all looked up to him and his spirit of excellence. We knew he had our backs so long as we did our duty in keeping with the high standards he set. It is the same spirit and standards, which have guided me long after he retired as sheriff.

"I cannot close this memo without recognizing Sheriff Gates' affinity for the West. He enjoyed riding horses, was often spotted in a cowboy hat, and even won his first election as Sheriff with an endorsement by western actor John Wayne. In Old West times, a peace officer was commonly referred to as a 'lawman.' Lawmen like Wyatt Earp are credited with bringing order to the chaos of the Wild West and making the frontier a safe place to live and raise a family. The West was tamed long before Brad Gates became Sheriff, but like the lawmen before him, he ensured a rapidly growing county was kept safe.

"Brad Gates epitomized the best of a lawman, he led with integrity, possessed tremendous strength and stood tall in defense of the public he was sworn to serve. History



ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

books will record Brad Gates as Orange County's 10th Sheriff, but he will always rank as top lawman in the hearts of those he so ably led."

Sheriff Gates is survived by his wife Deedee, son Scott, daughter Deedee Jo, her husband Eddie; grandchildren, Joanna, Emma and Nathan; big brothers Stillman and Robert, and little sister Margaret Lapham. Please keep the entire Gates family in your thoughts and prayers.

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