

Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum

Educational Resources



Memorial: Texas Ranger Stuart Dowell

Written by TRHFM Staff

The following article has been adapted from the former website of the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum.

IN MEMORIAM



**Passing Away of
Ranger Stuart Dowell**

Services for Stuart Dowell, 74, Tyler were held on Saturday, May 20, 2006 at 1:30 P.M. at Burks-Walker-Tippitt Funeral Chapel with Pastor Sherman Mayfield officiating. Burial, with full Military Honors, was held in the Whitehouse Cemetery, Whitehouse, Texas under the direction of Burks-Walker-Tippitt Funeral Home.

Mr. Dowell passed away Wednesday, May 17, 2006 in Tyler. He had been very ill for the last two years.

He was born January 20, 1932 in McAllen, Texas to the late Horton and Stella Peck Dowell. He grew up in Poteau, Oklahoma.

He entered the U.S. Army in 1950 at the outbreak of the Korean War and served 14 months in Korea. He remained in the national guard and retired after 20 years.

He returned to Corpus Christi, Texas to work as a Patrolman with the Corpus Christi Police Department for five years.

He entered the Department of Public Safety in November 1957 and was stationed in Corpus Christi, Hallettsville and Victoria.

He was appointed to the Texas Rangers in 1969 and assigned to Garland, Texas with "COMPANY B". He was transferred to Tyler in January 1972 and served as Ranger until his retirement in March 1987. His wife, Betty, retired the same time from the DPS Crime Lab Office in Tyler where she was Secretary for 16 years.

In the fall of 1988 Dowell went into Private Investigations as Manager and was a Private Investigator until the early part of 2001.

He enjoyed numerous hobbies -putting together airplanes in his shop, shooting with the Rangers, Gun, Knife and Gem Shows, reading, hunting, target practice and most of all hunting Indian Artifacts with his wife, Betty, in East Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Texas, West Texas and other places.

He investigated many well-known cases in his 18 years as Ranger.

He was at Huntsville Prison in 1974 during the Carrasco Siege.

He investigated the Kilgore Kentucky Fried Chicken Murders which occurred on September 23, 1983 where several unknown suspects made their way into the restaurant and abducted five people. The suspects then took the five victims to a rural oil field on Walter King Road where they were shot in the head and left for dead. An oil field worker discovered the bodies the next day. Dowell joined the investigation the day after the murders and was the custodian of some of the evidence collected at the scenes, as well as, during the autopsies which he attended.

Two men are awaiting trial in the case; the first trial is scheduled to begin in August 2007.

In 1984 Dowell interviewed Henry Lucas and Otis Toole, serial killers. In a 2005 interview with the Tyler paper, Dowell said he would not live to see a trial in the one case that continued to plague his mind -the Kentucky Fried Chicken Murders. Lying in bed in his Tyler home, he told the newspaper, "For me, life is minute to minute. I don't think there will ever be a resolution in this case."

William Brown, an Investigator with the Rusk County District Attorney's Office, was saddened at the news of Dowell's death .. "I first met him when I was in college in 1969, so I knew him almost 40 years," he said.

Brown said the first impression one would get of Dowell in the early years was a tough, no-nonsense lawman.

"Back in his heyday he was a big man that would scare you to death. But once you got to know him, you found that he was a nice guy with a gentle heart," he said. Brown said he worked with Dowell over the years and the two became friends. They especially enjoyed quail hunting together.

When asked whether the loss of Dowell was a loss to the law enforcement community, Brown replied, "A man doesn't serve with DPS and be named a Ranger without leaving a legacy for younger generations to follow. I was proud to call him a friend and he will be missed."

He is survived by his wife, Betty Dowell of Tyler; 'daughters Denise Billings and husband Butch of Katy, Texas, Valerie Ford and husband Henry of Whitehouse; step-sons Wayne Todd and wife Debbie, Joe Todd and wife Tina, John Todd and Lee Todd all of Whitehouse; brother Steve Dowell and wife Debbie of Poteau, Oklahoma; three grand children Travis Ford and wife Brandy, Wayne Ford and Erica Ford, Whitehouse;two step-grandchildren Kelly Todd Bailey and husband Phil of Richardson, Texas and Kasey Todd, Whitehouse; several aunts, nieces and nephews.

Pallbearers were Glenn Miller, Wayne Hellen, Rondal Jones, Stan Clark, Travis and Wayne Ford.

Honorary Pallbearers were all East Texas Law Enforcement Agencies.

Special Pallbearers were active and retired Texas Rangers.

The family wishes to extend special thanks to Dr. Royal Becker, Dr. C. Fagg Sanford and Trinity Mother Frances Hospital for their wonderful love, care, kindness and support.

Memorials may be made to the American Heart Association, 3800 Paluxy Dr., Suite 430, Tyler, Texas 75703 and the American Diabetes Association, P.O. Box 2680, North Canton, Ohio 44720.

On-line condolences may be sent at www.burkswalkertippitt.com.

Sources include the Burks-Walker-Tippitt Funeral website, tylerpaper.com article "Retired Ranger Stuart Dowell Dies" by Staff Writer Kenneth Dean, 05-18-2006 and Betty Dowell.

