**POLICE MEMORIAL SPEECH 2011**

Thank you for being here, as we commemorate National Police Week. I am moved to see all of you here today, and whether you are police officers, their family members, or esteemed guests, we are all part of this community, and a community comes together in good times, bad times and times of reflection and acknowledgement.

An ancient Greek philosopher once said, "The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet, notwithstanding, go out to meet it." Today we pay a special tribute to three of our "bravest" all of whom gave their lives in the line of duty: Marshal Richard Mark Clapp, who was the New Richmond Town Marshal, Marshal Lesley Dale Oaks, who was the Waynetown Town Marshal and Lt. Russell Baldwin of the Crawfordsville Police Department. I would like to share a little bit about these three fine officers.

Richard Mark Clapp was a fine man, a loving husband to his wife, Debbie, and

an outstanding father to his son, Aaron. He was also an exemplary police officer. Marshal Clapp's dedication to the citizens of New Richmond was evident to all who knew him, especially his family. So evident was his devotion, in fact, that his son, Aaron was inspired to go into the "family business" as a Montgomery County

Court Security Officer. Fatherhood and fate bound them that day back in December of 2003 as they responded together to a domestic disturbance. Mark Clapp's life was cut short during that incident as he suffered a fatal coronary episode. The events of that day 8 years ago are tragic, and the impact is still felt to this day. Today we are honored to be in the presence of Marshal Clapp's fine family. To Mrs. Debbie Clapp and your son, Aaron, thank you for being here.

It's practically unfathomable to think that it's been nearly 30 years since Marshal Lesley Oaks was killed in the line of duty on May 3rd, 1982. Marshal Oaks was involved in a fatal auto accident while pursuing a suspect on a motorcycle. He had only been with the police force for about a year when he left us, truly in his prime. His was a profound loss that is still felt today by his own family and his law enforcement family.

Lt. Russell Baldwin was shot and killed on August 27, 1974, while attempting to apprehend a suspect wanted for armed robbery. Lt. Baldwin had proudly served

the citizens of Crawfordsville for over a decade. We are honored to be in the

presence of Lt. Baldwin’s sister-in-law, Cheryl Baldwin. Mrs. Baldwin, thank you for

being here today.

It is clear to all who knew these fine men that they were passionate about their

purpose in life and all died fighting to protect the freedom and safety of their fellow

neighbors. For Mark Clapp to have suffered a heart attack while engaged

in a physical struggle clearly demonstrates to us the level of his devotion to his profession. To remember that Lesley Dale Oaks was so focused and intent on his pursuit that day in 1982, reminds us what true commitment is. Lt. Russell Baldwin confronted an armed robbery suspect, without hesitation, which portrayed his level of courage. All of these men honored their responsibilities and placed the well being of others as a priority before their own safety.

Marshal Clapp, Marshal Oaks and Lt. Baldwin died tragically and left behind a huge chasm in the lives of their families, friends, colleagues and all who knew and respected them. As police officers, they had to be vigilant as they turned every corner, and they paid the ultimate price as they jeopardized their lives. A police officer is never really "off duty" as they constantly anticipate the next crisis and response. It is not possible for us to fully comprehend and empathize with the emotions experienced constantly by our law enforcement officers and their loved ones. Although we say, 'Thank You" and offer acknowledgement as often as we can, there will never be enough gratitude expressed for each and every law enforcement officer with whom we all come into contact.

Today we lay these wreaths, feel the emotion of the 21-gun salute and pay special homage to these fine officers as well as all of the other dedicated people who have given their lives for us, but I have to say, I am inspired **every day** by the selfless dedication demonstrated by all who choose to devote themselves to

law enforcement. In 2010, according to the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, throughout the US, 152 police officers were killed in the line of duty, which was up 37% from the prior year. 152 lives were lost. 152 families were shattered. Today is a day of remembrance and acknowledgement, not only of the heroes in our midst who have fallen, but also of the heroes who walk

amongst us every day, to insure our safety in this community and throughout the United States. I invite each one of you to remember and honor the contribution and sacrifices made by law enforcement officers on a daily basis. I would like to close by reading a poem, "The Monument", by Sgt. George Hann L.A.P.D.

I never dreamed it would be me

My Name for all Eternity Recorded here at this hallowed place Alas, my name, no more my face

In the line of duty I hear them say

My family now the price will pay

My folded Flag Stained with their tears

We only had those few short years

The badge no longer on my chest

I sleep now in eternal rest

My sword I pass to those behind

And pray they keep this thought in mind

I never dreamed it would be me And with heavy heart and bended knee I ask for all here from the past

Dear God, let my name by the last.