

Off Duty Police Officers & Friends Rally in Support of Fallen Officer's Family

by Phil Temple

The events that occurred in Oakland, CA. on March 21st of this year, resulting in the loss of four Oakland Police Officers, are still fresh in the minds and hearts of fellow officers, surviving family members, friends, and the public at large. To this end, on just such occasions, it is in part emotionally therapeutic for all involved, when co-workers and friends gather together to assist the families of one of their fallen brothers. Certainly, this was never more in evidence than throughout the days following the tragedy earlier this year.

On one such day recently, Oct. 11, 2009, additional support was given to the Erv Romans Family when, at their Annual OPEN HOUSE, members of the Los Carnales - La Familia MC raffled off the motorcycle previously owned by Sgt. Romans. The club, comprised of active or retired police officers and like-minded civilians, has Chapters throughout the United States, and provides a structured environment for its member bike enthusiasts. Under the leadership of Oakland Chapter President "*Dirty Rob*", arrangements were made with Nicole Romans, widow of Sgt. Erv Romans, to find a new owner for her late husbands' bike. To this end, a raffle format was agreed upon, and tickets went on sale in May. The bike raffle would be concluded with a drawing of the winners name at the Oakland Chapter's Annual OPEN HOUSE.



Los Carnales-La Familia MC Oakland Chapter President "Dirty Rob" and Mrs. Nicole Romans at the OPEN HOUSE.

My attendance at this OPEN HOUSE was two fold; first, to photograph the activities of the day, and second, to document the event in writing. These efforts

were initially made possible with help from Los Carnales' President, "*Dirty Rob*", and La Familia member, "*Daddy-O*".

While the photographs taken better document the day than my written recollections, what is lacking in these photos is the feeling I got when talking with many of Erv's former team members, fellow officers and friends.



Officers Randy Branwood, Evan Frazier, Larry Robertson (Ret.), "A.J. Jones and Tim Martin

In my conversations with officers throughout the day, I asked each, if possible, to recall Erv with one word. Most men questioned immediately answered "*Marine!*" in their responses. One recalled, "*His voice. Like a drill sergeant's!*," and one of Sgt. Romans' training officers and former member of the OPD, Rand Allison, recalled his favorite aspect of their relationship, the good times when "*Working with Erv at Raider games.*" While many tried to maintain their stoic facade during discussions of their fallen friend, it was obvious that feelings for Erv were still very real in these men. These emotions were evidenced by uneasy pauses in conversations, or a crack in their voices when talking about their friend. This writer experienced just such a moment when talking with Sgt. Romans' widow, Nicole. I didn't know Sgt. Romans personally, but for me, this wasn't necessary to feel his loss.

At approximately 4 p.m. that Sunday, the day's activities came to a successful conclusion when the winning raffle ticket was drawn and announced to those assembled. "*The raffle winner, David Huang, is a fireman working with the Alameda County Fire Dept. in Berkeley.*" The announcement of the winner's profession brought groans and *oh's* from some in the crowd, then laughter, and finally applause. A "*hoser*" had won the bike, not a cop! The friendly competition between police officers and fireman was very much in evidence that day.



Officer Mario Bonilla, Mrs. Erv Romans, Officer John Perrodin and Officer Chris Moreno attended the bike presentation.

A week later, on Monday, Oct. 19th, in the driving rain, many of Erv's Team members joined others as an escorted motorcade delivered Sgt. Romans' bike to a firehouse in the Berkeley hills, and it's new owner, Fireman David Huang. In an emotional presentation, with officers from OPD, club members, other agencies and friends in attendance, Nicole Romans turned the keys of her husband's former bike over to it's new owner, bringing closure to yet another chapter in the life of Sgt. Erv Romans.



Mrs. Erv Romans and raffle winner David Huang.
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