

## In this issue:

CSI tech slain

Firearms skills improve

KCPD Motorcycle School

News In Brief

## Events:

July 23  
Board of Police Commissioners meeting (Academy)

The Mission of the Kansas City Missouri Police Department, is to protect and serve with professionalism, honor and integrity.

### Vision

To make Kansas City and the metropolitan area the safest community in the nation as a result of the efforts of the Kansas City Missouri Police Department and its many partners.

The Informant is a publication of KCPD's Media Unit (816) 234-5170 www.kcpd.org

# INFORMANT

The Kansas City Missouri Police Department

July 2013

## CSI tech killed outside Crime Lab

Kansas City Police lost one of their brightest young stars when an allegedly drunk and speeding driver killed him, tearing his car in two outside the Regional Crime Laboratory on July 6.

Ying-An "Michael" Chou, 29, had been with KCPD for two years. His family said he loved his job as a Crime Scene Technician. Coworkers said Chou



Ying-An "Michael" Chou

was bright, enthusiastic and kind. His loss leaves a painful void on the department and at the Crime Lab, especially. Chou had switched to the night shift only days before the fatal crash. He was leaving the lab after his shift ended about 3 a.m. July 6. As he pulled out onto Troost Avenue, 28-year-old Larnear Davis crested the hill at a high rate of speed and slammed into Chou's vehicle. Davis ran from the scene of the crash, but police quickly took him into custody. Responding officers said he smelled strongly of alcohol, according to court documents. Three hours after the crash, his blood alcohol content still was above the legal limit. Davis has been charged with involuntary manslaughter and remains in custody in lieu of a \$300,000 bond.

Michael's younger sister, Katherine Chou, said her

brother died doing what he loved.



The KCPD Honor Guard folded the flag on Chou's coffin at the end of his July 10 memorial service.

brother died doing what he loved.

"This was his dream job," she said.

The Chou family moved to the United States from Taiwan when Michael was 6 years old because of his father's job transfer. They settled in the Chicago suburb of Naperville, IL. Michael graduated from Naperville Central High School and then earned his bachelor's degree in cellular and molecular biology from the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign. He went on to earn

*Continued on p. 3*

## Dept. members improve firearms skills

KCPD members are becoming much better shots, thanks to improved training from the Firearms Training Section.

From 2008 to 2012, primary failures on the annual firearms qualification course fell from 104 to 20, an 81 percent reduction; and remedial training occurrences dropped from 10 to 1. By definition, a primary failure occurs when the initial attempt at qualifying is unsuccessful but the member passes in a subsequent attempt. With a second failed attempt on the same course during qualifications, the member is assigned to the remedial firearms training program.

Becoming a sergeant in the Firearms Training Section and making



Officer Terrence Green practices during an open shooting session. Trainers instituted the sessions to improve skills.

the current program better has been an aspiration of Section Supervisor Sergeant Ward Smith since he joined the department.

Smith said, "When I had the op-

portunity to come here in 2006, helping people shoot better, have more confidence and less stress about shooting was ... on the top of the list."

In 2007, he began reviewing the number and frequency of failures during the annual firearms qualification course. That year, there were 127 primary failures and 14 secondary failures, resulting in a remedial training session. Smith knew something had to change to improve this life-saving skill. He said when an officer fails

the course, the firearms instructor fails, as well.

Feedback from questionnaires revealed department members often

*Continued on p. 4*

## News in Brief

### PAL's 1st 5K raises \$774



The Police Athletic League had 103 participants at their 1<sup>st</sup> Annual 5K Fun Run on June 29 and raised \$774.40. Medals were awarded to all participants who completed the run, and trophies were awarded to the top three male and female finishers in each age category.

### Det. earns FBI certification

Detective Mark Rice, Forensic Computer Crimes Section, has been fully certified as an FBI Computer Analysis Response Team (CART) Forensic Examiner.



Det. Mark Rice

The certification required extensive coursework and testing. Rice works in partnership with the FBI at the Heart of America Regional Computer Forensic Laboratory. According to the FBI, there are just 500 CART examiners in the United States, most of whom are FBI agents. They analyze a variety of digital media—including desktop and laptop computers, CDs/DVDs, cell phones, digital cameras, digital media players, flash media, etc.—lawfully seized as part of investigations.

## “Wheel school” is no easy ride

For more than 100 years, being a motorcycle officer in Kansas City has been a dangerous job. But a highly regarded training program now is ensuring these “wheel cops” stay safe.

KCPD got its first motorcycle in 1909, and unfortunately, it wasn't long until the first officer was killed in a crash. In August 1911, Patrolman Homer L. Darling was responding to a burglary call when he crashed into a buggy and was thrown from his motorcycle.

In the last decade, 77 officers across the United States have died in on-duty motorcycle crashes, according to the National Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Fund. Fourteen of the 119 Kansas City Missouri Police Department officers who have died in the line of duty were killed in a motorcycle crash. It's the second-highest cause of KCPD officer deaths after shootings.

“Being a wheel officer is an incredibly dangerous job,” said Sergeant Jay Atkinson, a 16-year veteran of the Traffic Unit and leader of the KCPD Motorcycle School.

With how dangerous this job can be, it is important for those who do it to get adequate training. Since the 1960s, the Kansas City Missouri Police Department has conducted an 80-hour-long motorcycle school, once, and sometimes twice a year. Because of the school's prestige, police from all over the Midwest come for the instruction.

“It is a very physically demanding 8-hour day,” Sgt. Atkinson said. “You are going to get aggravated with it. You're not going to be able to come out here and be good right away. A lot of guys get down the first week and will quit.”

Sgt. Atkinson says it's a tough course, and participants can't just get out there and muscle an 800-pound bike.

“It takes a while to learn your balance and understand what your bike is going to

do,” he said. “Repetition is key. You have to do it over and over.”

Twelve student riders usually comprise the class. They must master 14 exercises. Then to pass the course, they're assigned to a motorcycle training officer for an additional five weeks. Riders must re-test twice a year.

“There is very little classroom time,” said Captain Mike Wood, commander of the Traffic Unit. “We just get to know the bike.”

The majority of the training in school is the slow-speed stuff.

“Motorcycles are pretty easy to drive fast,” Capt. Wood said. “The slow, tight quarters is what the majority of the training in this school is about.”

Sergeant Tony Sanders of Traffic Squad 802 said he challenges anyone to try the course.

“To make a motorcycle turn left, then right 180 degrees going less than 5

miles an hour and still keep the bike up—that is a challenge,” he said. “Learning how to handle the bike, keep it under control, in all situations... that is what you learn in motorcycle school.”

Police use motorcycles on a daily basis to handle normal traffic control, general traffic enforcement, and to work special events that attract large crowds of people. Motorcycles also are used for dignitary escorts, fires, or for whenever a vehicle needs to get through a congested area.

As dangerous as the job can be, Sergeant Atkinson said the perks are getting to ride all over the city as well as see children's reactions to the motorcycles.

“It's kind of cool because a lot of times, people can be standoffish with the police,” Sergeant Atkinson said. “I think the motorcycles are kind of like the horses and the dogs—everywhere we go, people love to come and talk about the motorcycles and look at them.”



# Officially Speaking...

## Promotions

### To Assistant Supervisor

Stasha Coker

### To Supervisor

Ora Rogers

Erica Harris

### To Sergeant

Jacob Becchina

Blake Brownlee

Benjamin Caldwell

Matthew Fisher

Leslie Foreman

Joshua Gasper

Jeffery Hughley

Jeremie Johnson

Ralph Menhusen

Michelle Mills

Matthew Payne

Timothy W. Smith

Thomas Stonfer

Matt Taylor

### To Captain

Keith Kirchhoff

Derek McCollum

### To Major

James Connelly

Gregory Volker

Eric Winebrenner

Steven Young

### To Deputy Chief

Robert Kuehl

## 25-Year Rings

Captain Scott Caron

Detective Beverly Caver

Officer Curtis Edde

Detective Janna Eikel

Officer Lynda Hacker

Officer Douglas Hopper

Major Robin Houston

Sergeant Jeffrey Hurley

## 25-Year Rings Continued

Detective Herbert Robinson

Detective Stephen Shaffer

Officer John Trainor

Sergeant Sheila Vessar

Officer Bill Witcig

## Retirements

Building Operations

Technician Donnie Bonner

Supervisor Laurence Clark

Computer Services Specialist

Gary Rockwood

## Obituaries

Former Commissioner

James B. Wilson

## CSI TECH KILLED, CONT. FROM P. 1

his master's degree in forensic science from the University of New Haven in Connecticut. While there, he volunteered more than 300 hours with the Meriden State Police Department.

Katherine said her brother always had been interested in police work, noting their grandfather was an officer in Taiwan. Volunteering with the police directed his scientific interests in a law enforcement direction, she said. But he was having a difficult time finding work during the recession, so he carried on with academia. He was accepted to the University of Cincinnati's doctoral program for criminal justice. He had finished all his coursework when he got a call from a New Haven classmate telling him about an opening in the Kansas City Police CSI Unit.

"When Mike heard the news, he jumped at the chance," his sister said. "He was interested in the academic side, but that's not where his heart was. He wanted to work Crime Scene and be hands on."

Melanie Fields served as Michael's supervisor for most of his career. She said he was very energetic, intelligent and learned quickly.

"He was one of those I could always count on giving everything 100 percent," she said.

Katherine Chou said her brother was so proud of his job, he regularly sent his family news clips of stories in which he was in the background processing crime scenes. When he wasn't at work, Katherine said her brother often read books about forensic science.

Given his work ethic and education, Crime Lab Director Linda Netzel told the Kansas City Star, "He could have been running this place in 10 years."

Katherine said Michael once had considered applying to the FBI, and she recently asked him if he would again. He said he wanted to remain with the KCPD.

"He probably would have stayed there forever," she said. "He said, 'This is where I want to be.'"

But Michael Chou wasn't just smart and ambitious, he also was incredibly kind. Supervisor Fields said that since his death, people from across the police department have been coming out of the woodwork to share stories of good deeds Michael had done.

"He never talked about any of it; we had

no idea he'd done so much," she said. "... There's nobody he didn't get along with. In the two years I knew him, I never heard him talk badly about anybody or partake in any kind of gossip."

Further displaying his compassion, Michael agreed three months ago to foster four feral kittens Fields had discovered, even though he'd never had a cat. All four have been adopted since Michael's death. Katherine took one back with her to Illinois, and another went to one of Michael's fellow CSI Technicians.

Fields said Michael's sudden loss has been very difficult for the close-knit CSI Unit.

"To have this happen in such a violent and senseless way right outside of our building has been very hard on people," she said.

Fields said she plans to attend every one of the court proceedings of the man accused of killing Michael.

A memorial service for Michael with police escort, color guard and honor guard took place at the Regional Police Academy on July 10. He will be laid to rest in Naperville.

## Reminder: Informant mailing change

Due to new U.S. Postal Service regulations, the manner in which the monthly Informant is distributed will be changing. We ask those who currently receive a printed copy of the monthly Informant to make a decision on the way they want to receive the newsletter in the future from the following options:

1. Receive the monthly Informant by e-mail. Note: the Department will not use your e-mail address for any other purpose.
2. Continue receiving a hard copy in the mail but agree to the Department providing name and address to a third-party, insured and bonded vendor, who will sign a confidentiality agreement ensuring the information will be used only for mailing the monthly Informant.
3. 'Opt out' of receiving the monthly Informant altogether.

Please e-mail your distribution decision to [informantchange@kcpd.org](mailto:informantchange@kcpd.org) or call the Media Unit at 816-234-5170 if you do not have internet access by **August 1, 2013**.

**If you do not respond, you will no longer receive the monthly Informant.**

## FIREARMS, CONT. FROM P. 1

felt they were either a burden and treated as “dead weight,” by firearms training staff, or they felt the training program was geared to addressing their failure to qualify instead of improving their shooting techniques. Many said they never felt comfortable as shooters from day one as recruits, and continued to struggle.

“Sometimes we didn’t interact with people and treat them as well as we maybe could have,” Smith said.

He encouraged instructors to engage in positive one-on-one interactions with officers who appeared to be struggling.

“It’s a bad catch-22 situation,” he said. “If you’re not really good at shooting and you go for help, and you don’t feel you are greeted with open arms, you find yourself in this loop – you feel badly for how badly you shoot, and you don’t show up for extra help because the message was conveyed that you’re a bad shooter and you’ll always be a bad shooter. . . . It takes a lot for an officer to admit, ‘Hey, I have a weakness,’ and ask for help, but we need to honor that. That’s a big step.”

After observing a shooter for 5-10 minutes, instructors are able to determine what changes are needed.

“We’re just personal trainers for shooters,” Smith added.

Other changes followed the attitude shifts. Practice during “Open Shoot” times was offered, along with creative scheduling tailored to individual’s needs. This resulted in opportunities for veteran officers to shoot, interact and be role models for recruits. More than 120 officers currently participate in additional practice, compared to 20 or so in 2008.

Incorporating fun into training and thinking outside the box also has helped eliminate some anxiety. One example Smith shared is shooting playing cards in half. Officers proudly display the cards in their cubicles or mention how cool their kids think it is. For the first time in their careers, members were not avoiding a trip to the range but enjoying it.

As an added incentive to remain sharp, officers who shoot with 100 percent accuracy are encouraged to return and participate in a three-leg Challenge Course. Perfect accuracy in the course is rewarded with a Distinguished Shooter Challenge coin stating, “Accuracy, Speed, Discipline.”

---

**Kansas City Missouri Police Department  
1125 Locust  
Kansas City, MO 64106**