

**\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\***

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**March 19, 2021**

**Justin R. Schaffer**  
**Commissioned – September 16, 2014**  
**End of Watch – March 24, 2020**



The Washington State Patrol's thirty-first line of duty death occurred on March 24, 2020. Trooper Justin R. Schaffer was a friend to all who had the privilege of knowing him and his death occurring near his family's home was especially heart wrenching.

Many of the first responders called to the aftermath of a multi-county high speed chase on I-5 near Chehalis were crestfallen to learn that the trooper intentionally struck by the fleeing robbery suspect was their own Justin Schaffer. Additional heartbreak occurred as the recently imposed gathering restrictions necessary to combat the Covid pandemic delayed services and honors for the young man for almost 5 months. A community, a state, and a law enforcement and first responder industry mourned the loss of the 7 year WSP veteran known for his hard work and infectious spirit. We remember...

## **BIO**

Justin Robert Schaffer was born on Jan. 30, 1992 in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, to Glenn and Sheila Schaffer. He and his younger brother, Brandon, spent the majority of their childhood in Colorado before the family moved to Chehalis, Washington, in 2006. Schaffer went on to graduate from Adna High School in 2010, continuing his higher education at Centralia College where he earned an Associate of Arts degree in Criminal Justice in 2012.

Justin worked at the Grocery Outlet in Chehalis while earning his degree, where he met his fellow co-worker and future wife, Sandra. They were married in August of 2013. Inspired by his father, the Chief of Police for the Chehalis Police Department, Schaffer began his own law enforcement career in the Washington State Patrol in November 2013. He was assigned to the WSP Property Management Division in Tumwater where he assisted in preparing decommissioned patrol cars for auction before joining the 27<sup>th</sup> Arming Class in January of 2014.

Trooper Schaffer graduated with the 103<sup>rd</sup> Trooper Basic Training Class and was commissioned on Sept. 16, 2014, assigned to Morton. After just two years working the road, Schaffer took on additional responsibilities as a Drug Recognition Expert. This training led to gaining a partner in the form of narcotics K9 Frankie in November of 2018. Schaffer and Frankie transferred back home to Chehalis on Dec. 13, 2018.



*Trooper Schaffer and K-9 Frankie accept congratulations for work well done from WSP Chief John R. Batiste in 2018.*

## **END OF WATCH**

Trooper Justin R. Schaffer died in the line of duty on Tuesday, March 24, 2020. A pursuit of a robbery suspect began in Thurston County that afternoon and was heading toward the Chehalis detachment along Interstate 5, reaching speeds over 100 miles per hour. Trooper Schaffer and K-9 Frankie were at the Chehalis office completing paperwork from a drug arrest earlier that day when they heard the pursuit approaching. The pair got into their patrol car to position themselves for spike strips on the shoulder of Interstate 5 just south of an onramp.

The fleeing driver, 39-year-old William David Thompson, was barreling toward them and intentionally steered his vehicle, a Ford F150, toward Schaffer. Schaffer was struck and thrown 120 feet as the driver continued, striking a second patrol car and injuring a second trooper. Thompson later crashed and was taken into custody after a 1 ½ hour standoff. Schaffer suffered life threatening injuries and was tragically pronounced deceased.

Thompson was arrested but was later found not competent to stand trial.

Schaffer's official memorial service was postponed five months due to pandemic restrictions. Restrictions did not stop the community he came to know and love from honoring him however. Shortly after his death, hundreds of people gathered for a parade of vehicles, touring the county he served holding signs to support Schaffer's grieving family. Justin is survived by his lovely wife, Sandra; parents, Glenn and Sheila; brother, Brandon and his wife, Samantha; and many other loving family members. His K9 partner, Frankie, was retired and lives with Sandra and their other dog, Katie.

The Washington State Patrol will forever honor the bright young man with the contagious smile. We will forever hold his family dear and share with them the pride in this courageous public servant, husband, son, brother, and friend. As Chief Batiste said with simple eloquence at Justin's memorial, "Justin Schaffer was a fine young man." We will remember...

## **Washington State Trooper Justin Robert Schaffer**

**End of Watch – March 24, 2020  
Gone But Never Forgotten**