

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

Captain Neil Weaver  
Government and Media Relations

**Chris Loftis, Communications Director**  
Office (360) 596-4013  
Cell (360) 485-3983  
[Chris.Loftis@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:Chris.Loftis@wsp.wa.gov)

**May 24, 2021**

**Glenda D. Thomas**  
**Commissioned – December 5, 1984**  
**End of Watch – May 24, 1985**



The Washington State Patrol's twenty-first member to lose her life in the line of duty was Trooper Glenda D. Thomas. Trooper Thomas was the first female to die in the line of duty in the agency's first 100 years of service. She was killed on May 24, 1985, just six months after receiving her commission as she responded to a multi-vehicle collision on Interstate 5 near Seattle.

A Tri-City area native, Trooper Thomas had successfully served in several challenging roles in the Patrol before being commissioned. She left behind a husband, two small children and loving parents. She was 29 years old. We remember...

## **BIO**

Glenda Thomas was born on October 28, 1955, in Pasco, Washington, to parents Glenn Wallace Votendahl and Ruth Warner. She attended schools in the Tri-Cities area, graduating from Columbia High School in Burbank in 1973.

In 1975, she married Stephen Curtis; the couple divorced two years later. In 1980, she married Larry Thomas and then became the proud mother of two children: daughter Jessica and son Jason.

Glenda's family had a history of service and fighting the good fight; her father had served in the United States Navy during World War II where he had also been a boxing champion. Glenda began forging her own path fighting for the opportunity to serve her community when she joined the Washington State Patrol on July 18, 1983. First serving as a Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Officer in Yakima, she transferred to Yakima Communications four months later, and again to the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Weight Control in Kennewick on January 3, 1984.

Her career lead to being reassigned to the Kennewick Vehicle Identification Lane in March 1984. Each move put her one step closer to her true calling - becoming a Washington State Trooper. That opportunity came on August 11, 1984. Just nine years after the agency began hiring female troopers, she became a member of the 60th Trooper Cadet Class receiving her commission on December 5, 1984. Trooper Thomas was then assigned to the Seattle Freeway.

## **END OF WATCH**

On Friday, May 24, 1985, Interstate 5 was packed with the bustle of Memorial Day Weekend traffic.

Trooper Thomas had been called to the scene of a multi-car collision on the north Seattle freeway. She was standing between two vehicles at the collision scene when another car rear-ended one of the vehicles involved in the earlier collision, pinning her between two automobiles. She was transported to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle where she later succumbed to her injuries. She was 29-years-old.

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On May 16, 1997, Trooper Glenda D. Thomas was posthumously awarded the Washington Law Enforcement Medal of Honor.

The honor was accepted on her behalf by her children.

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The Washington State Patrol holds the memory of Glenda Thomas close to our hearts. Glenda's parents, Glenn and Ruth passed away in 2008 and 2014, respectively but for the remainder of their lives cared for their grandchildren, Jessica and Jason, ensuring their own path to honorable adulthood.

Trooper Thomas had served as a trooper for less than six months at the time of her passing but in that time had walked proudly through doors of service that had been closed to women only a few years prior. Part of a generation of pioneers in service, she is remembered for her commitment, her drive, her compassion, and her sacrifice.

She was our trusted friend and valued colleague. And we remember...

## **Washington State Trooper Glenda D. Thomas**

**End of Watch – May 24, 1985**

***Gone But Never Forgotten***

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