



For Immediate Release

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Washington State Trooper Line of Duty Death **32nd Member to Die in Service to State**

Olympia, WA – With heavy hearts, fond memories, and enduring regard, the Washington State Patrol confirms the loss of Trooper Detective Eric Gunderson #823.

Detective Gunderson died in the early morning hours of Sunday, September 26 after a courageous battle with the Covid 19 Virus contracted while in service to the state of Washington. He was 38 years old at the time of his passing and had served the Patrol for nearly 16 years. He died peacefully surrounded by family, friends and love. Eric is survived by his wife Kameron (Kami), and son's Blake (13) and Braden (10).

Eric is the 32nd member of the Washington State Patrol family to die in the line of duty in the agency's 100 years of service to this state. WSP Chief John R. Batiste remarked, "Eric Gunderson was a respected trooper and public servant. His is the first line of duty death since we commemorated our first century of service to this state just a few weeks ago. How I had hoped our second century of service would be more forgiving." He added, "But serving the public, as we do, has inherent dangers and this pandemic has been a foe to our agency and indeed our state and nation."

Eric began working for the Washington State Patrol on October 24, 2005, and was commissioned on April 16, 2008. Eric was the Technology Liaison in the Criminal Investigation Division (CID), located in District 1. In his role he helped all CID detectives, Field Operations Bureau (FOB) Collision Technical Specialist (CTS), Collision Reconstruction Troopers, and the Crime Lab Division (CLD) Crime Scene Response Team (CSRT) with technology questions, training and troubleshooting. Eric was also a member of the WSP Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team.

Eric was well regarded for his understanding and embrace of available technologies in law enforcement. An early adopter and enthusiast of unmanned aerial technology, his work with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) has been chronicled in media stories across the nation. His pioneering work has allowed the state to shorten the time of road closures during collision investigations and of specific note, his work after the 2017 Amtrak passenger train derailment in DuPont gained wide acclaim and appreciation for its precision and value. Eric traveled around the country representing the WSP as the premiere agency in the world for UAV usage. He contracted Covid when he was on one of these trips.

Planning for memorial services will be underway following the guidance and wishes of the family and will be announced when appropriate in the days to come. "We will show our fallen hero the respect and honors his service to our state and agency deserves," said Batiste. "For now, we simply will hold one another close as we grieve the loss of our dear friend."

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