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Sad farewell to rookie Rio Rancho police officer






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By Gary Herron / Rio Rancho Observer Staff Writer

PUBLISHED: Friday, October 31, 2014 at 12:05 am

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Rio Rancho officer Anthony Haase funeral 10/30/2014



Rio Rancho rookie police officer Anthony Haase was someone who always had a smile and enjoyed life, recalled family, friends and colleagues at his funeral service Thursday morning at Santa Ana Star Center.

More than 1,000 mourners – more than half of them from the law enforcement world – attended the 70-minute service, which included a touching photo montage of Haase’s life, accompanied by the song “I Just Want You to Know Who I Am” by Iris.

His casket was taken by hearse and escorted by a large police motorcade across town to Vista Verde Memorial Park, where he was interred.

The 24-year-old former baseball star at Rio Rancho High School died early Sunday morning en route to a call in northern Rio Rancho. His patrol unit left the roadway, and he was killed in the crash at about 3 a.m. The cause of the accident is unknown, and the investigation is continuing.

When he learned of Haase’s death, Rio Rancho Police Chief Michael Geier – like Haase still in his first year on the job – said his immediate thought was, “Anthony, we hardly knew you.

“Some questions just don’t have any answers,” Geier said.

Regarding the risks of being in law enforcement, “Anthony knew this and yet he still loved his job,” Geier said. “He accepted the risk His lack of experience he made up with compassion and conviction.

“Anthony did not lose his life – he gave it,” Geier said.

Haase also gave his all to the Rams’ baseball team in the 2007 season when he was the winning pitcher in the Class 5A state semifinal game and again the next day in the championship game. He was drafted following his graduation in May 2008, but opted to attend and play for Cochise Junior College in Douglas, Ariz., where, Geier said, “He was the greatest pitcher in Cochise College history.”

And, Geier said, the attributes that made Haase a successful pitcher – he was drafted by the Texas Rangers in 2010 and pitched two seasons in the minor league organization – erased any doubt he wouldn’t be a good police officer: “Teamwork, fair play, integrity, loyalty and leadership.”



HAASE: Accident still under investigation (Jim Thompson/Albuquerque Journal)

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Geier said Haase's goal as a cop was "to change people's perception of police officers."

"He enjoyed life," one of the handful of speakers at the service said of Haase, who married his soul mate, Nichole Hetes, in September 2013.

His final text message, sent before he received his last call, was simply "I love you."

Nichole Haase grew up as the daughter of a lawman, Ron Hetes, and knew the risks inherent of that profession. Her husband and her brother, Michael, also a former Ram baseball player and five years older than Anthony Haase, went through the law enforcement academy together and were sworn in the same day last May.

Flags flew at half-staff Thursday by executive order of Gov. Susana Martinez.

Haase's ceremonial end-of-watch dispatch was sent over the police frequency at 12:36 p.m. Thursday.



A line of Rio Rancho police officers waits for the hearse carrying the casket of Rio Rancho police officer Anthony Haase. Haase, 24, was killed in a car crash responding to a call Sunday. (Maria Brose/Albuquerque Journal)

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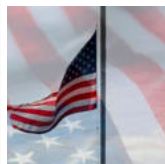
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