

Hundreds mourn slain Locust Grove Officer Chase - Newnan Times-Herald, The (GA) - February 20, 2018

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Hundreds of residents lined both sides of the street in downtown McDonough, some holding signs and flags, while others placed their hands over their hearts, to show their respect and gratitude for Officer Maddox.

By Chelsea Prince - The Henry Herald, McDonough

McDONOUGH — It was a morning of juxtaposition, the solemn ceremony befitting a police officer's funeral set against the vibrancy and humor that characterized Chase Maddox's life.

Stories were told at the service of how Maddox never missed an opportunity to fidget and that no supervisor's desk toy was ever safe; the colors are presented to his widow. Family remembered Maddox's entrepreneurial spirit that got him in trouble more often than it made him money as a kid; Taps is played. Or how Maddox, despite being the first officer hired by the Locust Grove Police Department straight out of the academy at the tender age of 21, milked his seniority over older, more experienced recruits; the end of watch call for unit 216, Officer Chase Maddox, is played over a loud speaker.

Hundreds of mourners filled pews, hallways, and overflow rooms at Glen Haven Baptist Church to honor and remember Maddox Saturday morning. More lined the roadways from Locust Grove to the McDonough square and outside the church, standing to salute the fallen officer as local and greater Atlanta law enforcement escorted his ashes by motorcade.

The 26-year-old Locust Grove officer was killed Feb. 9 while assisting two Henry County sheriff's deputies attempting to serve a warrant at a St. Francis Court home. The two deputies, Sid Callaway and Mike Corley, were wounded and are both recovering. Callaway has not been officially discharged from the hospital after taking a bullet to his stomach, but it didn't stop him from attending Maddox's memorial service in a wheelchair with ambulance team waiting.

Locust Grove Police Chief Jesse Patton struggled to maintain composure as he remembered hearing the "officer down" call come over his police radio that day. Maddox was responding to a request for backup when he was shot three times by 39-year-old **Tierre Guthrie**, with the fatal shot sustained to his head. Guthrie was shot and killed at the scene, but not before rounds hit Corley's bullet-proof vest and Callaway's abdomen.

Guthrie was wanted for failure to appear in Locust Grove Municipal Court on a city code issue.

"At the door of the residence, my worst fears were confirmed," Patton said of responding to the scene. "As we worked, we prayed, holding back tears, anger, asking each other, 'Why?' I'm here to tell you today, the answer to why is called evil. Evil tries to destroy good."

Maddox gave his life so that others could continue theirs, Patton said, so that evil would not win out. "Chase Maddox is a hero."

He leaves behind a wife, Alex, and two sons. Their youngest, Bodie Allen Maddox, was born Tuesday, four days after Maddox was killed in the line of duty. Family remembered him as a doting father and loving husband who expressed his affection readily.

"If my love for that man could have kept him alive, he would have lived for eternity," Alex Maddox said in a letter read by her brother, Coleton Segars. "And if the love that we've experienced today from all of you from our community could keep him alive, he would live forever."

Segars said his sister didn't believe in soul mates before she met Chase, but she knew from the start she would either "marry that man or he's going to be my best friend." Segars said Alex Maddox was lucky — she got both.

"I just didn't think love like that existed, until you're holding it," Maddox said in the letter.

Family and fellow officers described Maddox as a good-humored tease who appreciated a laugh. Lt. Matthew Long said Maddox's brand of humor was "unique," but that's what made him a perfect fit for the Locust Grove Police Department.

He told of the time the chief called a "very green" Maddox into his office after a picture surfaced online of Maddox in a compromising position — floating down a river in an inner tube while wearing a Speedo, striking a very confident pose. The same photo was shown larger-than-life in a slide show running over two screens during the service.

Maddox was nervous he was in trouble, Long recalled. But when a stern-faced Patton used the opportunity to poke fun at Maddox's expense, Long said Maddox knew he was at home among the officers of the Locust Grove PD.

When it came time to get to work and focus his free-wheeling energy, Maddox was a fine police officer, Patton said. He read out a letter of condolence from a father of a 21-year-old Warner Robins man to whom Maddox had issued a super speeder ticket. The father credited the officer for the professionalism and courtesy shown to his son, who says now he respects Maddox for helping him to change a dangerous driving habit.

This wasn't out of the ordinary for Maddox. Patton said the officer had an "uncanny ability" to reach reach resolutions that resulted in thanks from all parties involved.

"Chase accomplished more in five years than most officers do over their entire career," Patton said.

Five years is too short for a young police officer's promising career. Twenty-six years is not enough time to love a family.

Maddox's fellow officers, along with nearly a thousand more who traveled to McDonough to pay

their respects, watched on as the final rites and honors were bestowed upon Maddox and his family. As the service drew to a close, mourners left the church to the words of Johnny Cash's "Man in Black," a somber call to action for the men and women who will continue to protect and serve in Maddox's place.

Ah, I'd love to wear a rainbow every day

And tell the world that everything's okay

But I'll try to carry off a little darkness on my back

Until things are brighter, I'm the Man In Black

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