



26th Annual PINELLAS COUNTY Fallen Officer Memorial

At first, it was just a stone. When it was etched with the names of the 25 Pinellas County fallen law enforcement officers and topped with a patriotic bouquet of red, white, and blue flowers, it became a memorial.

More than 200 elected officials, executives and staff of Pinellas County law enforcement agencies, their families, friends, and supporters gathered on the front courtyard of the Sheriff's Administration Building at 10 AM Wednesday, May 13th, for the 26th Annual Pinellas County Fallen Officer Memorial to commemorate those who have died in the line of duty.

"Their mission and purpose of public service has been handed down through generations of Pinellas County law enforcement officers," **Sheriff Bob Gualtieri** said to the audience. "Though they no longer walk among us, we know they are here."

Sheriff Gualtieri then introduced guest speaker **Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi**, who delivered a heartfelt speech thanking past and present law enforcement officers and encouraging the public to show them the respect and gratitude they deserve.

"Say thank you to everyone you come across wearing a uniform and badge," the Attorney General said, "because that person is risking their own life every day for the safety of you and your community."



Tarpon Springs Police **Major Barbara Templeton's** remembrance speech about fallen Tarpon Springs Police **Officer Charles Kondek**, who was killed while on duty and responding to a noise complaint, reminded attendees that although his death has left a lasting effect on the public, it will be his vibrant life and legacy for which he will be remembered by all who knew him.

"Our hearts will never be the same," Major Templeton said. "However, we will honor Charlie and his family's sacrifice, and his name, by striving to serve and protect our community as he did: with kindness, humor, and a warrior spirit."

Pinellas County law enforcement agencies' honor guards performed the posting of colors and presented a wreath donated by the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #43 as PCSO **Assistant Chief Deputy Sean Jowell** listed the names of fallen officers to the somber crowd. Then, a moment of silence.



The ceremony ended with a 21-gun salute, "Taps," and a bagpipe performance of "Amazing Grace" by PCSO **Corporal Shawn Pappas** and **Deputy Ashley Brinton**. In his closing benediction, PCSO **Chaplain John Ekers** led attendees in prayer for the continued safety of our current officers, comfort for grieving law enforcement families, and peaceful rest for our fallen officers.

"It is up to us to keep their memory and sacrifice alive," Sheriff Gualtieri said. "They have touched our lives, and we will always keep them close to our hearts."

