

HONORING A FALLEN POLICE OFFICER

Parkway connector renamed for cop killed in line of duty

Sarah W. Walker , Register Staff 06/24/2003

State and local police canine units march along Route 1 Monday in honor of one of their own, slain Milford policeman Daniel Wasson. The Milford Connector was dedicated in his honor. Mia M. Malafronte/Register MILFORD — The soulful sounds of bagpipes playing Amazing Grace drew tears to the eyes of many who stood in the commuter parking lot off the Milford Parkway Connector as the road was officially renamed Monday in honor of Milford's only officer killed in the line of duty, Daniel S. Wasson. The bagpipers from the Emerald Society New Haven County Firefighters played before hundreds who turned out to honor the 25-year-old officer who was gunned down 15 years ago in a traffic stop gone bad. Trooper One, the state police helicopter, circled above the lot midway through Amazing Grace, drawing the misty eyes to the blue sky. Mayor James Richetelli Jr. said that the song moved him. The renaming ceremony kicked off at 5 p.m. when officers from around the state marched with local dignitaries and the Wasson family from the Milford police station on Boston Post Road to the commuter lot. Canine units from around the state were also on hand to pay their respect to Wasson, who was a dog handler. Even the weather was on board for the event, as days of relentless rain gave way to blue skies, sunshine and warm temperatures Monday. Officials unveiled a green sign that bore the words, "Daniel S. Wasson Connector," officially declaring the road renamed. "We pray that we never have to do this again," Richetelli said to the crowd after thanking the lawmakers who sponsored the bill to rename the connector. The proposal to name the stretch of highway that connects the Merritt Parkway, Route 1 and Interstate 95 for Wasson was co-sponsored by state Reps. Raymond Collins, R-West Haven, and James Amann and Richard Roy, both D-Milford, and state Sen. Win Smith Jr., R-Milford. Amann, a former alderman, recalled Monday how Wasson had checked in on city officials during night meetings. "I knew Officer Wasson. He was a good man," said Amann, "We [city officials] always felt secure knowing Officer Wasson was around. He was a great officer." Smith said that in his career, "to be able to help to honor someone who has helped all of us," is a most honorable and memorable thing for him. "You never know when a problem may occur in our neighborhood, on our block," said Roy, "To them - the men and women (of the police force) - I say thank you." Ray Wasson said he was surprised by the decision to dedicate the connector to his brother. "I was kind of taken aback by it a little," Ray Wasson said, adding that after seeing the support it generated, he knew it was the right thing for his brother's memory. Daniel Wasson was killed during a traffic stop on the Boston Post Road near the Orange line. Wasson and his police dog, General, were on patrol that morning and pulled a car over. Wasson was shot in the chest with a .44-caliber handgun. Thomas A. Hoyeson, formerly of Bridgeport, was caught in Bridgeport a short time later. He pleaded guilty to capital murder charges, avoiding a possible death penalty sentence. Hoyeson was sentenced to life in prison without the chance for parole. The General Assembly in May passed the bill that renamed the Milford Parkway Connector, also known as Route 796, as the "Daniel S. Wasson Connector."