

## Road naming honors slain policeman

By DIRK PERREFORT

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The area's finest came out in force Monday as Daniel S. Wasson, the only Milford police officer slain in the line of duty, was remembered at a ceremony to rename the Milford Parkway Connector in his honor. Dozens of local officers as well as brethren from Trumbull, Bridgeport, Monroe, Greenwich, West Hartford and the State Police paid tribute to Wasson and his family, crowding the Boston Post Road commuter lot near the base of the connector to help christen the highway the "Daniel S. Wasson Connector." Wasson was fatally shot on April 12, 1987, by a Bridgeport man he pulled over on the Boston Post Road in Milford. His police dog, General, was with him at the time. Family and friends were joined by more than a dozen officers who brought their canine partners to the ceremony. "Everyone driving through the connector can now remember the sacrifice Danny made and the dangers that all police officers face every day," said Milford police Sgt. Melissa Dempsey, who was Wasson's fiance at the time of the slaying. Dempsey said she met Wasson while they were attending the Police Academy together. "I know that Danny would be very honored, but he would also be a little embarrassed because he was a humble man," she said. Dempsey described Wasson as a sweet, warm and loving man who took his job seriously. After the ceremony, she hugged friends and fought back tears. Jeff Wasson said his brother always wanted to be a police officer. "He definitely had a sense of duty," said Wasson. Wasson's father, Edward, also attended the ceremony. "Being a police officer was something he really wanted," he said, adding that the loss of his son is still difficult at times. "It's something you never really get over." Police Chief Thomas Flaherty said he was pleased by the turnout of officers. "It's wonderful to see so many officers here to show their support and remember Danny," said Flaherty. "My hat goes off to Officer Tony Vitti and the Police Benevolent Association, which organized this effort." State Sen. Win Smith and state Reps. James Amann, Richard Roy and Ray Collins, who spearheaded the legislation to rename the connector in Wasson's honor, also attended the ceremony.