

# Tribal Elder hangs up badge for the final time

By Paul Daquilante

Yamhill Valley News-Register

Deputy Buddy White, who worked his final shift the last week of October with the Yamhill County Sheriff's Office, escorted an inmate from the jail to Judge Cynthia Easterday's courtroom for a probation violation hearing.

White seated her in the jury room until the proceeding took place. After it finished, he returned her to jail.

As a member of the court security staff, it's the kind of work White's been doing for more than 16 years.

White began his law enforcement career in January 1974 as an unpaid reserve with the Willamina Police Department. Five months later, when a full-time patrol position opened, Chief Bill Hale added White to the force.

"I rode with him for one day," said the 77-year-old White, who also is a Grand Ronde Tribal Elder. "He showed me how to write a ticket. I bought a gun from my brother and learned on my own. I look back on that time and say, 'Good grief.'"

White underwent 280 hours of training as part of the Bureau of Police Standards and Training class No. 52.

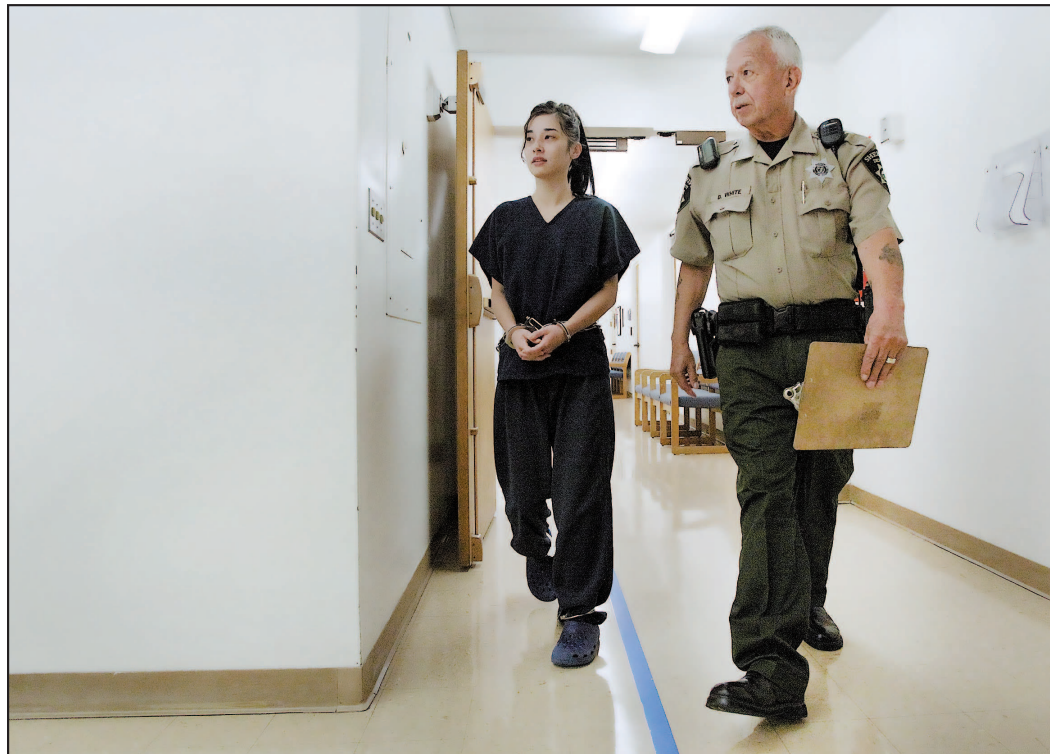
New officers are introduced to more formal and extensive training nowadays. The Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, successor to the BPST and headquartered in Salem, requires 640 hours of training.

However, on-the-job training worked for White. His career spanned 41 years, the last 37 with the Sheriff's Office, where he worked patrol and then court security.

White was born in McMinnville. He was raised in Grand Ronde by his grandparents, Sam and Clara Riggs.

His grandmother instilled a strong work ethic, something White has always appreciated and respected.

"I've worked my entire life," White said. "I was in the berry



Courtesy photo by Rockne Roll/News-Register

**Yamhill County Sheriff's Deputy Buddy White, who is also a Grand Ronde Tribal Elder, escorts an inmate to her probation hearing at the Yamhill County Courthouse in McMinnville on Wednesday, Oct. 28. After working in law enforcement for 41 years, White retired the last week of October.**

fields when I was 6 years old."

White was born into a law enforcement family. His father, Orrin, worked for the Salem Police Department. A brother, Murch, worked for the Port of Portland Police Department and the Portland Police Bureau.

White attended Grand Ronde Elementary School and Willamina High School. He dropped out at 17 and enlisted in the Air Force.

After serving four years, White returned to the West Valley and worked at a variety of jobs, never staying in any very long.

"I was bored in a plywood mill," White said. "I went into city hall, I think to pay a water bill, and the chief was there. He was looking for reserve officers."

White went on to serve the Willamina department for four years.

During that period, White held the rank of sergeant and even interim chief. However, those were working positions, not desk jobs, so he spent his days on patrol re-

gardless.

"He was a natural community policing officer before that catch phrase was even around," said Capt. Jason Mosiman, who coordinates court security in conjunction with his job as jail commander.

White said he was talking to Sgt. Jim Wager, who encouraged him to apply for an opening in the department. Then-Sheriff Bud Mekkers, one of six sheriffs White has worked under, hired him in May 1978.

"Patrol was my niche," said White, who, like all deputies, worked throughout the county that was divided into quadrants at the time. Deputies rotated from one quadrant to another.

Retired Sheriff Jack Crabtree said White had a big heart for the West Valley – Grand Ronde, Sheridan and Willamina.

"His real strength, and I think he would confirm this, is that he loved working the West Valley," Crabtree said. "He felt best out there. It was a strength of his, working the West Valley."

White spent one year with the detective division, which consisted of one sergeant and one deputy at the time. Its scope has expanded greatly since then.

This is White's second retirement. Early retirement initially occurred on Dec. 31, 1998.

At the time, Deputy Steve Manley was helping the Sheriff's Office launch the court security program. So, White put his uniform back on and returned to work.

Court security deputies transport inmates to and from other facilities, escort them to and from court appearances and monitor them during courthouse visits. Their office is a control room on the first floor of the courthouse.

White definitely loved his years spent on patrol and thoroughly enjoyed the years he served on the court security staff.

"I enjoyed meeting people (on patrol). They're not all bad. I like helping people. I don't know if I could do it today. It's almost scary out there. You stop someone and

you just don't know."

White said he enjoyed the daily interaction with court security.

Mosiman said White's "perfect demeanor" enabled him to function at a high level as a court security deputy.

"I supervised that unit when I came back as an administrative sergeant," Mosiman said. "He has the perfect personality. He's low key, talks to people calmly, is aware of what is going on and reacts quickly. He's sharp and aware of his surroundings."

Mosiman said White had the ideal mixture of exhibiting a restrained personality while remaining tactically aware of what's going on around him.

"He's been a great guy to have up there," Mosiman said. "He's been a staple."

Chris Schlegel, former commander of the Benton County Jail in Corvallis, recently retired from the court security staff.

Sheriff Tim Svenson said a decision has already been made on Schlegel's replacement and he is moving to replace White, too.

"It wouldn't matter what day it was, he was always there," Svenson said of White. "Rarely did he miss a day of work. You knew in the morning he was going to be there, no questions asked. He did an excellent job. He was a dependable employee."

Svenson said White always interacted well with the courtroom staff, which includes judges John Collins, Easterday, Ronald Stone and Ladd Wiles, and their judicial assistants.

Svenson's predecessor, Crabtree, said White has been discussing wrapping up his law enforcement career for quite a long time.

"Whenever I'd see him, he would tell me, 'I'm about to retire,'" Crabtree said. "I'd say, 'I think you should retire, as soon as I leave.' He was a steady hand. He always had a calmness and cool head to him. He never looked for any more trouble than he had to have."

Parole and Probation Officer Lisa Settell walked into the control room on the morning of one of White's last days on the job.

"Buddy's got a lot of life stories," she said, after giving him a hug.

Deputy Bill Lane, retired from the Federal Correctional Institution in Sheridan, is a member of the court security staff.

"You want some stories on Buddy?" Lane said. "They don't have to be true, do they?"

White said his decision to retire "feels like I'm doing something wrong."

He and his wife, Anna, have been married 32 years. They have five children, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He'll surely have more time to spend with all of them now. ■

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Thank You!

The sponsoring Tribes of the Gathering of Oregon's First Nations event in Salem have decided to discontinue the January Powwow. We want to thank everyone who helped make our event a success. Thank you for 7 wonderful years of support!






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