Thin Blue Line of Michigan

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Succor: To provide or give assistance in time of hardship or distress.

Volume 1 Issue 10

The Thin Blue Line of Michigan welcomes its newest payroll donation departments!

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Denials and Perseverance!

In the early morning hours of May 6, 2005 while investigating prostitution activities in the City of St. Paul, Minnesota with his partner, Sgt. Vick was fatally shot by one of two suspects upon leaving a neighborhood bar. Sgt Vick, age 41, left behind his spouse Connie, his son Clayton and daughter Amanda.

The death of Sgt Vick was the first line of duty death St. Paul Police Department had experienced since 1994. The City administration moved forward with what they thought was a routine death benefit claim with the Department of Justice, Public Safety Officer's Benefits Office.

Following Sgt. Vick's death the Thin Blue Line of Michigan, Executive Director, Laurie Reinacher had been invited to present the notable Line of Duty Death Benefits program to the statewide Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association. Ms. Reinacher was approached by several St. Paul Minnesota Police Association representatives about Sgt. Vick's death and what was required to file benefits with the Department of Justice, Public Safety Officers Benefits Program.

Executive Director, Laurie Reinacher detailed what was required to file line of duty death benefits at the federal level and offered assistance.

Some nine months later on February 1, 2006 the original claim filed by St. Paul Police Department for death benefits for the Vick's family was **denied.** The St. Paul Police Association contacted the Thin Blue Line of Michigan Offices on February 17, 2006 requesting assistance on filing the administrative appeals and the conducting of hearings to advance the case for the surviving family. This decision by the St. Paul Police Department to request assistance with the legal appeals from the Thin Blue Line of Michigan was made following multiple contacts with numerous national police groups.

Thin Blue Line of Michigan representatives filed the appeal for a hearing 5 days later and the case was assigned to a hearings officer at the DOJ, PSOB Program with a subsequent hearing being held with legal staff and witnesses on September 22, 2006. After subsequent legal brief filings the hearings officer ***issued a devastating denial*** on October 9, 2007.

The subsequent denial was appealed to the Director of the Public Safety Officers Benefits Office by Thin Blue Line staff. New information was submitted with the PSOB Director approving the claim for death benefits for the surviving family on October 28, 2008 a little more than 3 years after the death of fallen Sgt Gerald Vick.

The Thin Blue Line of Michigan has recorded more than 10 years of filings on the Federal, State and local levels for death benefit claims. Filing for benefits not just for Michigan's law enforcement but for other states as well when asked. The experience of the Thin Blue Line of Michigan has shown the claims process to benefit families of the deceased or catastrophically injured even when the case is unclear or inimitable can be successful. Due to the complexities of the lengthy and costly appeals process this collective experience of the Thin Blue Line of Michigan has shown that this organization can successfully prevail on federal and state death benefits even after many lengthy years!

It is with great pleasure that the Thin Blue Line of Michigan with great resources and experience was able to assist the Vick's family and the St Paul Minnesota Police Department in this final decision.

Thin Blue Line of Michigan

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