

## **SHERIFF'S OFFICE LOSES RETIRED K-9**

A Sheriff's Office internal communication e-mail made the announcement official, but word of mouth made it somewhat more tolerable: K-9 "Canto," the department's most recently retired patrol dog, and a favorite amongst many, had to be euthanized last week, almost one year after retiring from active Sheriff's patrol duty.

"Canto's illness was originally believed to be minor and he was showing signs of improvement," said Deputy Jay Kent, Canto's handler. "However he took a sudden turn for the worse over the weekend. An examination by his veterinarian led to a diagnosis that his condition was more serious than expected."

A dog of the German Shepard breed, Sheriff's Office staff don't know Canto's date of birth, although he was thought to be between 13 and 14 years of age. He was purchased from a private citizen in Tacoma.

What Sheriff's personnel do know is that Canto became well known, with the general public, during his more than eight and one-half years of police service to Kitsap County, from Sept. 1, 1993 until April 7, 2002. Canto was credited with more than 460 arrests during his career. The number of incidents where Canto was "applied" also is not known exactly, but best guess is more than 1,000 times.

And, it seems, everyone has their favorite Canto story to tell: patrol deputies, 911 radio dispatchers, children... even suspects who were at the "professional" end of Canto's determination, although their comments are probably less flattering. He was known as the police dog with the gold tooth: a dental crown inserted to replace a tooth that was knocked-out when he pursued a fleeing suspect off of the roof of a building.

But his handler best relates the essence of the numerous stories: “How can I describe a partner whom I’ve worked with, on patrol, for more than eight years?” said Deputy Kent. “We could read each other’s actions and responses well. When start of shift rolled around, he knew it was time to go to work... and he was all business. He has, literally, saved my life. I probably would not be alive today were it not for Canto.”

Canto was officially retired from active service during a recognition and awards ceremony at the courthouse on May 1, 2002, and he continued to live in the Kent household afterwards.

“I was hoping that Canto would be able to enjoy one more summer, as he seemed quite content in retirement,” Deputy Kent said. “His sudden and unexpected passing was a shock. Canto was very important to my family and he will be missed very much.”

Missed, but not forgotten by those who knew him and the public whom he served.

Perhaps the English poet William Cowper (1731 – 1800) may have unintentionally penned the most befitting tribute for Canto:

“His head,  
Not yet by time completely silvered over,  
Bespoke him past the bounds of youth,  
But strong for service still, and unimpaired.”

*(The Task)*

**-End-**

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