



# DENVER POLICE MUSEUM

## Overview

2025 has been a busy year for the Denver Police Museum, from holding fallen officer memorial services, to planning the remembrance of the anniversary of the United Flight 629 bombing and the October International Association of Chiefs of Police conference. The DPM has planned and hosted award ceremonies, created new challenge coins and collected new artifacts. We have a lot to share with our members. The Fall edition of the Denver Police Museum newsletter highlights the events taken place so far and highlights what we still have to look forward to for the rest of the year. •

## Message from the Board

The board would like to thank everyone for their continued support for the Denver Police Museum this past year. We appreciate all of the many hours of volunteer service. The museum would be unable to function without this critical component. We are honored to be involved in the Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Annual Conference and Exposition which is being held this October at the Denver Convention Center. We are taking full advantage of the opportunity to share the Denver Police Department's rich history with Conference attendees. We are placing several of our historic vehicles throughout the convention center and will have a number of old uniforms, mannequins and photos displayed during the conference.

We are excited to announce that we have a new board member joining the DPM Team. Former Denver Police Officer Ralph Barocas, joined the museum board in September. Ralph will bring a lifetime of service and experience to the museum leadership. Ralph served as a paratrooper in Vietnam and a Special Forces officer in both Panama and



Afghanistan. He served as a Denver Police Officer from 1977 to 1981. He has an extensive background in financial investment management including RBC Wealth Management, AG Edwards and Sons, Prudential Bache Securities, Boettcher and Company and Hanifen Imhoff. Ralph has numerous civic affiliations including: Wishes and Heroes Board Member, Senior Housing Options Board Member, Blue Hat Foundation, Colorado Professional Fire Fighters Foundation Board Member, Boy Scouts of America Unit Commissioner, Boy Scouts of America Assistant Scout Master and Merit Badge Counselor. Look for additional museum leadership changes in 2026!

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- The Denver Police Museum Board**
- Michael Hesse, President
  - Sgt. Dean Christopherson (Ret.), Past President and Advisor
  - Linda Remley, Secretary
  - April Overman, Treasurer
  - Sgt Christopher Hoag (Ret.)
  - Ralph Barocas      Rosie Siemer



## Fallen Officer James Shannon's 100th Anniversary

Patrolman James Shannon, 26, was shot and killed at 11:15 pm on Saturday, April 4, 1925, in front of a house at 3357 Williams Street. Two witnesses heard the shot, saw a person run away, saw Shannon lying on the sidewalk and notified the police. He had been shot once in the left side with the bullet traveling into his heart. He died almost instantly. He had last checked in from the call box at 34th and Franklin at 11:01 pm and then resumed walking his beat along 34th Avenue.

Investigators had little to go on, but did connect the shooting to a report that someone had attempted to hold up a streetcar nearby a few minutes before the murder. Thirty minutes later

three men came to the central police station downtown to report their Ford coupe had been stolen at gunpoint at 33rd and Race. They said a young man had accosted them, jumped into the car and forced the men to drive eastbound. The young man told the witnesses that he had just shot a cop and had to get away. At Madison Street he ordered them out, got behind the wheel and continued eastbound. After reporting the theft the three men left the police station at about 12:20 am, and remarkably, saw the suspect walking ahead of them on Larimer Street. They called out to Patrolman Roy Campbell who, with Patrolman Baer, arrested the suspect without further incident.

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

*Continued from page 1*

We are also pleased by the outstanding response we have received from officers as we have unveiled our America 250 Colorado 150 commemorative badge. Sales have been brisk and officers will be allowed to wear the special badges throughout 2026. The 2026 museum challenge coin will also be a special recognition of America's Anniversary.

We continue to make progress on our efforts to build a permanent home for the museum at 4700 Brighton Blvd. We are very appreciative of the outstanding leadership we have received from Lance Nading, the son of fallen Denver Police Officer Merle Nading. Lance's business acumen and leadership has been essential to achieving our ultimate goal

of a physical location across from the Denver Stock Show Complex. We also wish to recognize Leo Branstetter, the previous landowner, who shares our commitment to the development of the historic museum! ●

## FALLEN OFFICER JAMES SHANNON'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

*Continued from page 1*

The suspect was identified as Albert Dorchak, 18, who lived at 3754 Delgany Street. Chief Candish questioned him and got a full confession. Dorchak blamed moonshine liquor for his actions. He was on parole for burglary, larceny and receiving stolen goods from a case in January. He had spent three days at the state reformatory in Buena Vista before he was released on two years of probation. Shannon apparently saw Dorchak staggering on Williams Street. He searched him and removed a gun from his pocket. However, Dorchak was carrying two guns. He pulled the second gun and ordered Shannon to give up both his and Dorchak's guns. Shannon did so but immediately grabbed Dorchak's wrist and was shot in the side, leaving powder burns on the officer's clothing. Dorchak then ran south before accosting the three men and stealing their car. He stated that he drove out in the county for some time before going back downtown and abandoning the car at 15th and Larimer where he was arrested. Three guns were found in the stolen Ford coupe, one of which was Shannon's.

James E. Shannon was born in Colorado on January 17, 1899. He was the fifth of seven children born to Thomas and Anna Lyons Shannon who were born in Ireland. He grew up in north Denver and joined the Denver Police Department in March 1920. He married Philomena (Minnie) F. Losasso on May 10, 1924, in Denver and they lived at 1533 W. 34th Avenue. His wife had a premonition that evening and begged him not to go to work. They were just five weeks away from celebrating their first wedding anniversary. He was survived by his wife, parents, several siblings and many friends. Recitation of the rosary was held the evening of April 7 at the home of his parents at 1729 W. 38th Avenue. Requiem mass was held the next morning at St. Patrick's church at 33rd and Pecos, with burial following at Mount Olivet Cemetery. Police pallbearers were Sergeant D. J. Sullivan and Patrolmen George Nagor, Fred Pizzichino, Charles Quinlan, John O'Donnell and A. Pyles.

Dorchak was charged with Officer Shannon's murder and entered a not-guilty plea. The trial began on April 27 and he was convicted two days later. It took the jury 21 ballots to finally recommend a life sentence and not the death penalty. His appeal was denied and he arrived at the state penitentiary on May 17, 1925 as Prisoner 12955. He was paroled July 23, 1937 but his parole was revoked by Governor Teller Ammons on October 11, 1938 and Dorchak was returned to prison on October 18, 1938. He was paroled again on March 11, 1952 and died in Denver on January 19, 1966 at age 59.

On Friday, April 4, 2025, Officer James Shannon was honored on the 100th anniversary of his sacrifice with a Memorial Sign ceremony. ●

### Museum Membership Benefits:

- Coins for levels
- E-news Monthly
- Print Newsletter
- Annual Reports
- Free Tours





## Update: Sadie Likens' Badge

This June, the Denver Police Museum successfully acquired the original badge of Denver's First Police Woman Sadie Likens. This is a significant addition to the outstanding badge collection the museum currently holds in the

museum archives. Thank you to retired Denver Police Sgt. Dean Christopherson for his careful research and efforts to capture this important part of DPD History! ●



## Outstanding Contributions: Susan Berdine

On March 27, 2025, the late Susan Berdine was honored for her outstanding contributions to Forensic Science at the Denver Crime Laboratory. ●



## Officer Dale Coski Included On the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial

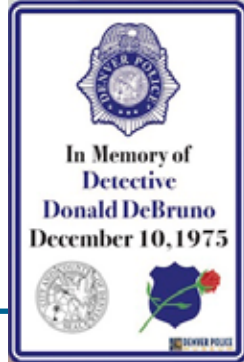


Thanks to the hard work of retired Denver Police Sgt. Dean Christopherson, we were able to add the late Denver Police Officer Dale Coski to the national, state, and Denver Police Department memorials. Dale was severely injured in a traffic accident in the tunnels of the old Stapleton Airport on September 12, 1983 which rendered her a quadriplegic. She later became an outspoken advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities. Coski passed away in September of 2024. At the formal memorial ceremony Council members Kevin Flynn, Jamie Torres, and Chris Hinds read an emotional proclamation honoring Officer Coski for her service to the citizens of the City and County of Denver. They also unveiled a memorial plaque which will be placed in her honor near the site of the accident. ●



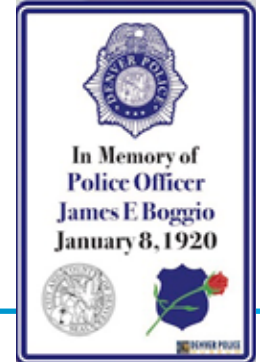
## Recognizing the 50th Anniversary of Sacrifice of Donald DeBruno

The DPM is planning to honor Fallen Denver Police Detective Donald DeBruno on December 10, 2025 at 11 AM. This will be the 50th Anniversary of his death and allows us to recognize his outstanding service and sacrifice to the Citizens of the City and County of Denver. We will be replacing his memorial sign (at 17th and Broadway) and plan to have Detective DeBruno's daughter and grandson participate in the ceremony. ●



## Recognizing the 106th Anniversary of Sacrifice of James Boggio

On January 8, 2026 we will honor the one hundred and sixth year anniversary of the EOW of Denver Police Patrolman James E. Boggio. We have found members of his family who will join us for the ceremony! We will be placing a memorial sign at the location where he lost his life and conduct a special graveside service at Mt. Olivet Cemetery that morning. Please join us as we acknowledge his service and tragic death at the age of 25 years. ●



## DPM and Crime Lab Partner to Add Memorial Plaque of First Crime Lab Director Captain Moomaw

The Museum and the Denver Crime Lab partnered to place a memorial plaque at the Denver Police Crime Lab honoring Denver's first crime lab Director, Captain Joseph Fredrick Moomaw. Captain Moomaw was a brilliant innovator who founded the crime lab in the 1940s. He set a standard that allowed Denver to become internationally prominent in the field of Forensic Science. This

stellar reputation continues today with Dr. Gregory LaBerge and the outstanding staff of the crime lab. The memorial plaque acknowledges the naming of the firearms collection in honor of Captain Moomaw. We would like to thank council member Amanda Sawyer for the proclamation she read at the lunch honoring the leadership and many contributions of Captain Moomaw. ●



# Youth Programs Impact Report

The Museum's mission is to help create safer, stronger, and more vibrant communities in Denver and beyond. A focus area of our programs is to build community bridges, particularly with youth.

Thanks to the outstanding leadership of Denver Police Museum Treasurer and Museum Youth Coordinator, April Overman, the Museum continues to have great success with our many youth programs. We've received encouraging feedback from students and enthusiastic testimonials from partners on the positive impact of our youth programs. A big thank you to April and the many volunteers who have driven our success over the years and continue to help the Museum make a significant impact on the lives of Denver youth. ●



## News

Several events sponsored by the Denver Police Museum were covered by local news channels.

### Retired 911 Dispatcher Continues To Serve Community Through Youth Programs

Denver7 News — After three decades answering 911 calls for the Denver Police Department, April Overman found a new way to serve: helping middle schoolers fall in love with science and meet the people behind the badge.

Overman, a retired Denver police dispatcher, now coordinates youth programs for the Denver Police Museum. Since 2019, she has volunteered hundreds of hours building hands-on lessons. The museum's most recent program was during forensic science week. Students rotated through stations to dust for fingerprints, analyze fibers and ink, and conduct basic blood-typing as they work to solve a mock "diamond theft."

### Forensic Science Day

Denver7 News covered the Museum's Forensic Science day on September 15 at the District One substation. Students from two Denver schools learned about fingerprint dusting, blood sample testing and fiber testing from the Denver Police Crime Lab Scientist Dustin Smith.

### 100th Anniversary of Officer James Shannon's Sacrifice

On April 4, Denver7 News covered the Denver Police Museum's unveiling of a new memorial sign for fallen Officer James Shannon. The sign was installed at the intersection of Williams Street and Bruce Randolph Avenue, where Officer Shannon passed. ●

### United Flight 629 Memorial

Denver7 News highlighted the Denver Police Museum's efforts to hold memorial events to mark the 70th anniversary of the tragedy and to introduce the United 629 challenge coin. The donations from coin sales will be used to fund a memorial to honor the victims.

### Hispanic Heritage Trailblazer Award

9News covered the presentation of the 2025 Hispanic Heritage Trailblazer award to retired Commander Rudy Sandoval. Over the course of his 50 years of service to the department and the citizens of Denver, Commander Sandoval supported several units and made District 4 feel like home to those who lived and worked there. His legacy continues on and 9News was able to capture the highlights of his impact and the testimonials delivered at the award ceremony.

### African American Trailblazer Award

On February 24, 9News covered the presentation of the 2025 African American Trailblazer award to retired Officer Robert Simmons. During his 34 years of service, Officer Simmons served as a Patrol officer in District 3, a member of the Special Crime Attack Team, the High Crime Burglary Unit, Vice, the Organized Crime Unit, the Intelligence Bureau, and the Front Range Task Force. Officer Simmons was also the first African American officer to be assigned to the Mayor of Denver's security team and mentored several other officers in the department. ●



## Hispanic Heritage Month September, Trailblazer Award

The Denver Police Museum is honored to present this year's Hispanic Heritage Trailblazer award to retired Denver Police Commander Rudy Sandoval. Commander Sandoval was well known and appreciated by the staff and community members of District 4, where he was assigned. During his 50 year career, he also supported

several other units within the department, including the Gang Unit, Mounted Patrol, the Auto Theft Team, and the Broncos Security team. Commander Sandoval's work and legacy continues and the Denver Police Museum would like to thank him for his service and congratulate him on receiving this well-deserved award. ●

## United Flight 629

**O**n Tuesday, November 1, 1955, United Airlines Flight 629 departed Denver's Stapleton Airfield en route to Portland, Oregon, with 39 passengers and five crew members. Eleven minutes after departing, the plane exploded eight miles east of Longmont, killing everyone aboard. The bombing was the first confirmed case of sabotage against a commercial aircraft in the U.S. The subsequent investigation set new standards for forensic science in airline crash investigations and ultimately found that John Gilbert Graham of Lakewood, Colorado, placed dynamite in his mother's suitcase to collect insurance money from her death.

The tragedy led to a landmark decision by the Colorado Supreme Court that allowed the trial to be televised and paved the way for greater media access to courtrooms. It also dramatically changed security arrangements for air travelers. And, of course, the tragedy shocked the American people.

On Friday October 31, 2025, at 8:00 pm, Church in the City will host a non-denominational memorial service honoring victims and first responders.

On Saturday November 1, 2025 at 11 am, special activities include a memorial for the victims at FlyteCo Tower (the old Stapleton Tower) which is open to the public. Susan Morgan, who lost both of her parents on the flight when she was 12 years old, will be a guest speaker.

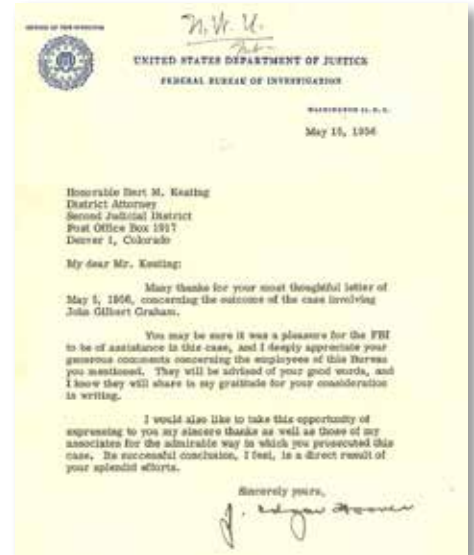
Also on Saturday November 1, 2025 at 7 pm join us at Wings Over the Rockies Museum to mark the tragedy's 70th anniversary, the Denver Police Museum is honored to host a symposium with University of Denver's Adult Enrichment Program and Wings Over the Rockies. The symposium will explore the enduring legacy of this horrific event while serving as a tribute to those lost. This is open to the public.

Special presentations are planned by guest speakers and former Denver District Attorney Mitch Morrissey, who will share the event's background and trial. Additionally, Marian Poepelmeyer, daughter of Flight 629 victim Marion Hobgood and author of the book Finding My Father, will discuss the ripple of tragedy and trauma and the importance of forgiveness.

Mitch Morrissey was elected district attorney of Denver in 2004 and was sworn into office in 2005. He is recognized internationally for his expertise in DNA technology, applying that technology in criminal prosecutions and working to ensure that DNA science is admissible in court. A veteran prosecutor, he introduced the first DNA evidence used in a criminal trial in Denver.

Special thanks to Jeffery Burke, Diane Degenhart and Linda Remley for their hard work to help plan the memorial activities associated with the 70th Anniversary of the flight. Burke has successfully built family trees for all of the victims' families to attend the memorial events. We have been contacting the surviving victims' families. Burke also built family trees for key players in the tragedy including Roy Moore and Donald Sebesta, the lead FBI agents who were successful in getting Graham to confess, and Bert Keating, District Attorney. Those families will be joining us for anniversary activities. After Moore's successful work on Flight 629, he was sent to Mississippi to open the first FBI office there, declaring war on the Klan. The movie, "Mississippi Burning" is about Roy Moore.

In addition to the Denver Police Museum, sponsors for the memorial activities include: History Colorado (which currently has a public display recognizing the victims and is open through January 2026), The CELL (Museum that focuses on terrorism), Wings Over the Rockies (aviation museum), The Weld County Memorial Group, and University of Denver Adult Enrichment Program are all expected to attend the events. In early June 2025, the family of late FBI agent Don Sebesta joined us at the FBI's Regional Headquarters to see two special case files that were donated several years ago by the Sebesta family to the local office. Agent Sebesta had put together news clips on both major cases he was involved in, including United Flight 629 and the Coors kidnapping. We are in the process of digitizing both case files for historic preservation. In mid-June, the Regional FBI Office in Denver hosted Mike Hesse, Susan Smith (Christian Anschutz Foundation), and Diane Degenhart for a presentation to approximately 125 FBI employees about the bombing of United Flight 629. We greatly appreciated the opportunity and wish to thank Special Agent In-Charge Denver, Mark Michalek, the FBI Public Affairs Director, Vikki Migoya, and retired agents John Epke and Heather Hobson for their assistance. The retired FBI agents received recognition at a presentation in February. ●



# Shop/Donate

## Museum Challenge Coin

As a proud member of the Denver Police Museum, you'll receive a limited-edition 2025 challenge coin honoring the service of our Denver Police Officers during the particularly violent time of the 1920s. The 2025 challenge coin acknowledges the sacrifice of the thirteen Denver Police Officers who lost their lives during the decade. The reverse side of the coin celebrates the Denver Police Department serving as the host of the International Police Chiefs Conference in October of 2025—the third time Denver has played host to the conference including in 1975 and 2009.

As we look forward to the hope and promise of 2025, we hope you will consider continuing your membership or becoming a member of the Denver Police Museum. Your tax-deductible gift ensures our continued success and your support allows future generations to better appreciate the real stories of our law enforcement



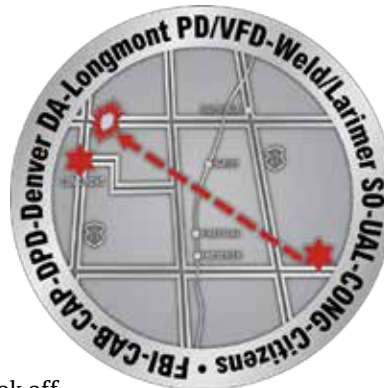
heroes, their struggle, along with their daily lives and sacrifice. We invite you to join us in our mission to help create safer, stronger, and more vibrant communities in Denver and beyond!

Your contribution directly supports the museum's educational programs, community outreach exhibits and preservation of our historical collections.

## United Flight 629 Challenge Coin

We are raising the money for the United Flight 629 Memorial through donations. Those who give \$30 or more will receive a limited edition Flight 629 Memorial Challenge Coin as our gift to you. All the funds raised will go toward the memorial. Please help us correct this oversight and help us honor the victims of this tragedy with your donation.

The Flight 629 Memorial will serve as a permanent marker to preserve the history of the tragic event of Flight 629—the first plane bombing over U.S. soil—and will honor the 44 passengers and crew who were killed in the explosion and crash. Your donation will directly support the building of a memorial at the old Stapleton Tower from where the plane took off.



## Denver Police Museum 2025 Christmas Ornament

For the last several years the Denver Police Museum has produced a holiday ornament honoring various Denver Police Department badges worn by our officers throughout the 167-year history of the department. This year we are recognizing the badge worn from 1896 to 1915 three variations of this badge had the star center, Colorado State seal, and City & County of Denver seal. A minimum donation of \$30 is required per ornament. Ornaments may be obtained by making a donation to the Denver Police Museum via the enclosed envelope and form, through our website at <https://denverpolitemuseum.org/shop/>. We want to thank retired Denver Police Sgt. Dean Christopherson for his work to help design these collectible ornaments and we appreciate the opportunity to highlight the rich history of the Denver Police badge.



## Special DPD Police Badge 250/150

2026 marks the 250th Birthday of our great country and the 150th Anniversary of the State of Colorado. The Denver Police Museum was tasked by Chief Thomas to design a special Denver Police Badge marking this important occasion in our nation's history! Officers will be permitted to wear the badge throughout 2026. Retirees will also be permitted to purchase the commemorative badges. Sales will be handled through the Museum. Badges will be slated to be delivered in December. A limited number of the badges will be produced. See the rendition of the approved badge below.





The Denver Police Law Enforcement Museum, Inc.  
P.O. Box 9140  
Denver, CO 80209-0140

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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DENVER, CO  
PERMIT NO. 336

## Highlights from Police Week 2025

**P**olice Week 2025 was another big success with a number of special events and tributes to our fallen officers and legacy project for Denver Police Families and innovators. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Blue Hat Foundation and the Denver Police Foundation for their support of the lunch following this

year's formal memorial ceremony in the courtyard of Denver Police Headquarters.

Thanks to the hard work of Denver Police Museum Secretary Linda Remley, over 35 fallen officer family members attended the reception hosted by Chief Thomas, and participated in the formal ceremony afterwards. Fallen Officer James Shannon's family attended the ceremony for the first time. We recognized Officer Shannon in April on the one hundredth anniversary of his end of watch on April 4, 1925.

We would also like to acknowledge the Denver Office of Special Events for lighting the Denver City and County Building blue for Police Week. The lighting of the building was designed to honor the nearly 8,000 individuals who have served our city as Denver Police Officers and the 78 officers who have fallen since 1859. ●



### Honoring Powers Family Proclamation

The Museum was honored to recognize the one hundred and forty years of multi-generational service that the Powers family has given to the citizens of Denver and the Denver Police Department. Beginning with Michael Powers in 1920, and following with his sons William, Thomas, and James and then his grandson Patrick, all have proudly donned the Denver Police uniform. A special thank you to Councilmember Flynn who read a special proclamation honoring the Powers family at the City Council as well as at the luncheon.

### International Police Chief Conference

This October, Denver will host the International Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Conference and Exposition. This is the third time our city has been chosen to host this important international event. We previously hosted the event in 1975 and 2009 and are honored to host it again in 2025! Over 18,000 police officers throughout the world are expected to participate in this conference. It is a great opportunity to see the latest technology and training techniques available to officers and police departments throughout the world. Planning has been going on since last year's very successful conference in Boston. The Denver Police Museum is honored to be included in the Conference. The Museum will display Denver Police Department artifacts at the Convention Center along with our auto collection, including the 1930 Model A, the 1964 Ford Galaxie, the 1978 Chevy Nova and the 1998 Crown Victoria. ●