



## CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

# PAX 501

Garry F. McCarthy, *Superintendent of Police*

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### Message from Superintendent McCarthy Concerning Bigsby Parole Hearing

It is with both a heavy heart and utter disappointment that I relate this information concerning the release of a convicted cop killer. On 25 June 2015, Joseph Bigsby, convicted murderer of Police Officer Edward L Barron #14571, was granted parole by the Illinois Prisoner Review Board, thereby allowing the early release of an individual found guilty of several heinous crimes.

Let me be clear: I do not support this decision and I will not stand for any outcome that so flagrantly discredits the noble efforts and grave sacrifices made by officers in service to society. Yet, let this decision ring forcefully as an affront not just to law enforcement, but to the righteous members of all our communities who stand for peace and justice.

As with law enforcement across the nation, members of the Chicago Police Department selflessly perform their duties as they unwaveringly engage those dangerous individuals who brazenly threaten the welfare of our citizens. And so it was with Officer Barron and his partners on 28 September 1973, as they responded to a radio assignment of a robbery in progress in the 004<sup>th</sup> District. As the officers arrived in the area, they observed a subject, now known as Joseph Bigsby, matching the description of the wanted offender. The officers announced their office and ordered Bigsby to halt. Instead of complying, Bigsby willfully turned and fired a handgun which struck Officer Barron in the head. After repeatedly firing at other officers on scene, Officer Barron's partner discharged his weapon and struck Bigsby in the shin. Bigsby was subsequently taken into custody by responding officers as he attempted to flee the scene.

PO Barron was transported to South Shore Hospital where he would succumb to injuries sustained during the incident. Bigsby was found guilty of his crimes by Judge Porter on 29 May 1975 and sentenced to 100-200 years for the murder of Officer Edward L. Barron.

Today, Officer Barron's murderer finds himself a free man. Despite the protestations of over 23 uniformed police officers, representatives of the Fraternal Order of Police and Chicago Police Memorial Foundation, Officer Barron's former partner, and his family, the Illinois Prisoner Review Board voted to grant parole to a convicted cop killer. Joseph Bigsby was successfully granted an early release and given the second chance that was never afforded to Officer Barron. As a result of their incomprehensible decision, Bigsby will now be able to enjoy the freedoms and pleasures of life, things which he readily denied Officer Barron when he murdered him. Again, the early release of murderers, like Bigsby, contradicts the efforts of law enforcement. I have advocated for policing which enhances the public trust and places officers in a position of solidarity with other community stakeholders. As such, this should be viewed as a setback by everyone as there is no room for a decision which tears at the very fabric of a dignified and just society

Despite this injustice, and in light of the recent public scrutiny directed at our profession, it is understandable why some Department members may sense uncertainty or resentment. However, it is this same scrutiny that only validates the importance and consequence of our vocation. As I have previously stated: Let us look at this moment not only through the eyes of obligation or resentment, but as an opportunity to continually showcase why we are, without exception, the finest police department.

  
Garry F. McCarthy  
Superintendent