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Remembering Officer Chris Jones

Paying respects to a hero

Thousands of mourners waited in line for up to four hours at the viewing of Middletown p

By **MATT COUGHLIN**
STAFF WRITER

Friends, family, co-workers and strangers began the process of saying goodbye to Middletown police Officer Chris Jones Wednesday.

Nearly 2,000 people waited in line at Our Lady of Grace church in Penndel for up to four hours to pay respects to Jones. The 10-year police veteran was killed last week on Route 1 after a car struck the officer and climbed inside, pinning him beneath it.

Co-workers called him a great cop. Residents said he made a difference in their lives. But it wasn't just Jones whom Jones affected.

Dave Gardner, a former janitor at the police station, said Jones went out of his way to make a police officer's life easier. "How many cops brighten up your morning when you see them?" Gardner said as he stood in line Wednesday night.

Numerous residents gathered along parts of Trenton Road, Bellevue and Woodland avenues and a horse-drawn hearse from the Dougherty Funeral Home to Our Lady of Grace church Wednesday afternoon in the parking lot of the church for the viewing.

"I just wanted to show my respects," said Debbie Butler of Middletown. "They put their lives on the line for us."

Butler, a nurse in the Pennsbury School District, said she didn't know Jones but like many others she respects a cop killed in the line of duty.

"Even though I never met him I came today because he gave his life to protect us and the least I can do is pay respects to him," Lower Makefield resident Joan Monk said as she waited outside the church in the lot. "I know Terry Field of Middletown knew Jones."

She said she saw Jones moments before his death. The Parks and Recreation Department employ the township building to pick up supplies for Chief Frank McKenna's retirement party. She passed Jones a hello.

"Everyday he came to work he always made sure he came around and made everybody smile," said Gardner. "For having known him, he was an awesome dad, amazing husband and a great friend."

As temperatures dropped and the line grew longer, members of the Philadelphia Police Explorers, who have become cops, ushered mourners into a series of heated tents lining the church.

As he waited outside one of the tents, former Penndel police Chief Stephen Burke called Jones a "100 percent family man."

"Personally he's done so many things for us, for our department that I can't do enough for him and his family."

Inside the church, mourners lined the aisles, waiting several hours to offer condolences to Jones' family. Mourners took to the pews for a prayer service led by the Fraternal Order of Police and ending with a eulogy over the coffin.

Gardner said that he and Jones would try to make one another laugh when they ran into each other. "I moved through the line inside the church, Gardner glanced at several photo displays of Jones and his family."

"I never knew he was a Navy man," he said. "I wish I would have known that; it's something else I would have talked about."

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Family and friends gather around Suzanne Jones (left rear) at Our Lady of Grace Church in Pennel as the body of fallen Middletown police Officer Chris Jones, arrives on a horse-drawn hearse from the funeral home. BILL FRASER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



The body of fallen Middletown police Officer Chris Jones is taken to Our Lady of Grace Church in Pennel for W to rest today at Resurrection Cemetery in Bensalem. BILL FRASER / **STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**





People solemnly watch as the coffin of Middletown police Officer Chris Jones is carried into the church.





(Below) A horse-drawn hearse carries Jones' body from the funeral home to Our Lady of Grace Church Wedne
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER