

Press



Release

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Honorary Police Chief White Recognized At City Council

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The Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department is paying tribute to the last surviving member of the original nine black police officers who joined the Savannah Police Department in 1947.

Recently at the Savannah City Council Meeting, Chief Julie Tolbert presented Retired Lt. John A. White with an "Honorary Police Chief" badge. The 89-year-old was then praised by Mayor Edna Jackson and members of council.



Honorary Chief White served on the department for 38 years. He was called a "Policeman's Policeman" by other officers and has received many national accolades over the years. He received an award from former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover for arresting a serial killer. In 1984 he was honored by former President Ronald Reagan and in 2012 he received a Congressional Gold Medal for his historic service in the U.S Marine Corps.

Chief Julie Tolbert said, "It was an honor to present White with his 'Honorary Chief' badge. I am glad we could recognize this living legend for his service and sacrifice and let him know how much he means to us."

When White joined the department, he was not allowed to arrest white people and could only patrol the black parts of town. But White and his colleagues proved themselves and cleared the path to make the department what it is today. White was not only one of the first black officers in Savannah, but in the State of Georgia and the deep South as well.

The other officers who joined the department with White were Howard Davis, Alexander Grant, Jr., Milton Hall, Stephney Houston, William Malone, Frank Mullino, James Nealy, and Leroy Wilson. Honorary Chief White attended the Police Memorial Day service on May 19 and will attend several other department functions throughout the week, concluding at the Chatham County Commission meeting on May 23.