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# News Release

## Arkansas City Police Department announces retired K-9's death

*'Lee' passed away Jan. 23 at age of 11; retired from service Aug. 21, 2018*

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (January 24, 2020) — "Lee," a retired K-9 officer of the Arkansas City Police Department, passed away Thursday at the age of 11.

Lee served the department for eight years, but was able to spend the last 16 months in retirement.

"Heaven gained a guardian K-9 today," ACPD Master Police Officer Jeremy Samson said Thursday.

"I adopted Lee after retirement. I am so thankful and blessed to (have) become a part of (his) life."

Samson said he considered Lee to be a partner, friend and family member. "(Lee) will be missed and never forgotten," he said.

Lee, a Belgian Malinois, was born in October 2008 in the Netherlands. He was trained to detect illegal drugs, and began his tour of duty with ACPD in 2010.

In February 2010, ACPD Sgt. Eric Mata and former police chief Sean Wallace traveled to Hill Country Dog Center in San Antonio, Texas, to select a dog for the department's new K-9 program.

They returned with Lee, who was 2 years old at the time. His first handler was Mata, who served in that capacity until 2015.

Mata and Lee together attended a 10-week K-9 school conducted by the Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP), where they learned tracking and drug-detection skills.

Mata was not the only officer who put in for the special detail, but he was Lee's only other partner in the department until Samson took over for him in mid-2015.

Samson and Lee also attended KHP's K-9 Drug Detection training program together in 2015. The training included running 2 miles every day, as well as drug detection scenarios and obedience training.

**For immediate release**

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This training was supplemental for Lee, but represented a brand-new set of skills for Samson.

"The training was very intense," he said in a 2015 interview with The Arkansas City Traveler. "It was the most intense training I have undertaken as a police officer."

Continuous training occurred in the form of KHP K-9 maintenance training twice per month.

In addition to drug detection duties, Lee was an integral part of the DARE program and the department's many community outreach efforts. The duo gave many demonstrations during their partnership, showing off their skills to USD 470 students and teachers.

Lee's retirement was announced at a City Commission meeting on Aug. 21, 2018, when he was commended for a decade of dedication to his profession and saluted by Police Chief Dan Ward.

"Typically, K-9s retire around their seventh or eighth birthday. Lee is an exceptional dog and made it a couple of (more) years," Ward said during the meeting.

"We all wish him well in his retirement and many treats without having to catch a bad guy first."

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