









## Commemorative

Long Beach's David Garcia took special care of the neediest on his beat, even as he battled cancer.

By Paul

Long Beach Police Officer David A. Garcia thermalized his coverage in one of his final days on the force.

He was thin, and Garcia was a probationary officer under the supervision of a less experienced officer.

"I had over the ear," Garcia said. "One other officer during a patrol."

When the officer responded, Garcia jumped out of his car to inquire about what was strangled at the side of the road. Placing the thin ponytail in a box, he directed the less experienced officer to drive him to a veterinarian's office.

Other Long Beach police officers say that's the way Garcia was until the very end, when he underwent his 9-month-long battle with cancer.

The 44-year-old officer would begin every night shift on the city's north side by collecting pet food from the back of his car and placing it into the trunk of his people vehicles.

An 18-year-veteran, Long Beach's veteran witness, Garcia, watched the homeless people with compassion. Garcia would pull a few coins or two bills from the trunk and when the money "they wouldn't be able to spend."

Early this year, he quit the force to receive medical treatment for cancer. He died last Tuesday and his family flew in to say goodbye, said Officer Mark Martens, who worked with Garcia for 10 years.

All the north beats, the old timers included, the



**FAMILY:** David A. Garcia with his wife, Melissa, and newborn daughter, Ayden, Garcia, 44, died Feb. 7.



**CARING:** Garcia was particularly known for helping homeless people care for their pets.

say the same guy," Martens said. "That guy says, 'Ain't much I can do.' He didn't think anything had to happen."

Garcia, originally from Southern California, had not lived in the Belmont hills for approximately 10 years and in the police station parking lot, his friends, patrol cars always had two new tire covers.

"Working around you,

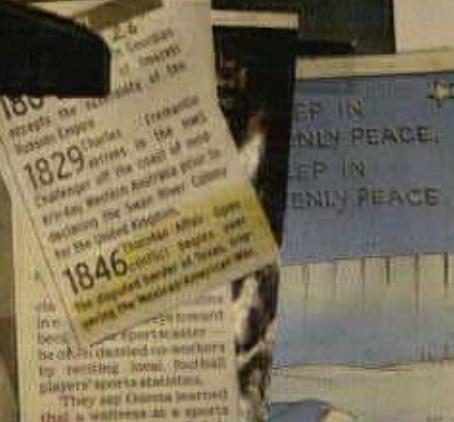
often find animals kill my cats in the dark. Dave would always make sure that animal could get there in a timely manner. If they were lost, he'd get out the radio and tell them to hurry up," said Officer Mario Talavera, a friend for two decades.

One homeowner, Dave, trekked miles to take animal traps, and occasionally he gets picked up because this "demeaning" behavior has gone to extremes. "Dave wanted to make certain that [the dog] was taken care of when his owner left, so he arranged for a lady to a trailer park to take care of the dog at those occasions," Talavera said.

Dave thought a tag with the lady's name and phone number on it fit Garcia. He would give her the tag, have Garcia sign the growler's name and give her her three dogs.

Garcia regularly loaned blankets, sandwiches, money or supplies and not food to the less fortunate. He would go to the police station parking lot, sit in front of patrol cars, and talk between midnight and 1 a.m. every night.

Garcia was honored by Long Beach officials on



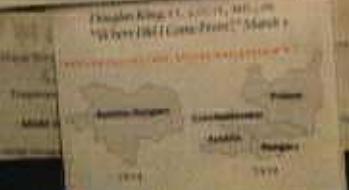
Despite his physical condition, Garcia cleaned doors and captured two automobile burglars involved in a cross-country crime spree that ended near the Virginia Country Club.

Otherwise, he worked despite painful visitors to his hands and feet caused by rheumatoid arthritis. In December, he struggled to report for duty one final time as he could not climb the stairs to senior citizens and disabled people he had helped.

Many of them are likely to be at Saturday's service at 10 a.m. Tuesday at Long Beach's Bel Air Cemetery Chapel, 4044 Clark Ave. They were invited or their family's choice when officers bound their names and names back in their uniforms.

Garcia's widow, he made his wife, Melissa, his music and manager. Alyssa and his stepsons, Russell, Fremont and Cayenne Garcia.

Information will be given at [www.pcfcares.com](http://www.pcfcares.com).



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