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Officer slain in 1967 honored

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Nearly 40 years after his death, Council Bluffs Police Officer John Stephens was honored Sunday by having his name added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.

Stephens was 32 years old in 1967 when he was found shot to death in the office of the Club 64 restaurant along with the body of the club's manager, 51-year-old Paul Rayer. The case has never been solved.

The popular steak house was located north of the area where the Fareway now sits, and Stephens was working off duty as a security guard when he was killed. About \$1,500 cash was missing from the club, leading some to speculate the deaths may have occurred during a robbery.

Carolie Heyliger, a research associate with the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, said Stephens' name was submitted to the organization by the Council Bluffs Police Department.

"We honor officers who died in the line of duty, period," she said. "People contact us all the time."

Names of officers to be considered must be officially submitted by their department with supporting documentation, such as newspaper articles, death certificate and police reports, Heyliger said. "We review each case on an individual basis."

Sunday's ceremony honored 145 officers who died during 2006 and a total of 382 officers. Some of them were considered historical deaths, Heyliger said, and no distinction is made between those who died during the past year and those who had not been honored previously.

Stephens' name was read at the ceremony during a candlelight vigil, and his name has been engraved on panel 19 East, Line 25 of the memorial. A total of 17,917 names are now on the wall of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial at

Judiciary Square in Washington, D.C.

Sunday's candlelight vigil was just the beginning of the observance, and Heyliger said a formal ceremony is planned for Tuesday.

Ed Dougherty, Stephens' half-brother and a retired police officer, lives in Arizona and planned to attend the Washington ceremonies.

"I feel extremely honored," he said. "It's something myself and his son have been working on for a couple of years now."

Dougherty said he hopes the recognition will bring some closure regarding his brother's death, and he hasn't given up on seeing the case solved.

"There may still be someone out there who knows something about it who may be able to, at least, solve it or give some answers," he said.

Council Bluffs Police Lt. Monty Montagne said the department will honor Stephens and the other officers during a 7 p.m. Ceremony on Thursday at St. John Lutheran Church. The service will be followed by a march to the courthouse and a 21-gun salute.

Officers then will march back to the church for an additional ceremony honoring current officers.

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