

POLICE MOURN A FALLEN OFFICER MEMBERS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY COME FROM AROUND THE NATION TO GRIEVE

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On a picture-perfect morning, law enforcement officials from across Michigan, the nation and Canada stood at attention Thursday, bidding farewell to one of their own.

The sun beamed on their shoulders with the warmth of a hug, and a breeze dried their tears.

More than 3,000 officers paid final respects to Detroit Police Officer Shynelle Mason, who was gunned down last Friday at a west side gas station. The gathering at Greater Grace Baptist Church in Detroit was the emotional peak of what Detroiters viewed as a senseless killing.

Those who loved her said Mason fulfilled her dream -- she became a Detroit police officer. She grew up on the same city streets where she spent her last two years as a patrol officer in the 2nd (Schaefer) Precinct.

Mason, 21, was shot off-duty after an argument at a gas station at Fenkell and Schaefer. Police say **Jason Pinson**, 21, blocked Mason and her two companions. When she asked him to move his car, a fight ensued and **Pinson** shot her, police say. He has been charged with open murder and other felonies.

The Rev. Al Hamilton of John Wesley AME Zion Church in Detroit said in his eulogy of Mason: "She lived to make peace, and she died trying to keep the peace."

During the 75-minute service, tears flowed. Wails radiated through the large church as Mason's silver casket was closed and draped with an American flag.

Detroit Police Chief Benny Napoleon told the mourners that he was angry with a criminal justice system that allowed Mason's alleged killer to slip through the cracks. **Pinson** had drifted in and out of legal trouble, often catching breaks on charges.

"I'm angry that the freedom of thugs is valued over the life of its citizens," Napoleon said. "I am angry that a criminal justice system will not punish people carrying guns until someone is the unfortunate victim of its use."

Mason's sister, Shantelle Mason, said she seeks solace in the fact that she and her younger sibling expressed their love to each other daily. The two women lived together, along with Shantelle Mason's daughter, Courtney.

"I think the hardest thing for me is that I always tried to prepare myself for that phone call," Shantelle Mason said. "She will be missed, but she'll never be gone -- never, ever."

Friends said the slain officer was a courageous, feisty woman who put family first.

Deputy Mayor Freman Hendrix called Mason a daughter of Detroit. Mayor Dennis Archer was out of the country and could not attend the funeral.

As the officer made the journey through her city streets one last time, residents and business owners lined 7 Mile to watch the procession. A small boy in a Michigan State T-shirt waved as officers rolled by, then offered a shaky salute.

The procession stretched more than two miles. Officers lined up with red, white and blue lights flashing. At Telegraph and Curtis, the procession passed a billboard advertising for the city's finest to become officers.

A Dearborn Heights motorcycle officer, helping direct traffic, injured a knee in a collision with an interloping sports utility driver at Ford Road and Beech Daly.

Mason was buried in Plymouth, where wildflower fields and trees lined a two-lane road leading to the Beechwood United Memorial Garden.

"Today marks her final roll call with us, but I take comfort that her next roll call will be in heaven," Napoleon said.

Mason, who wore badge No. 852, was the 208th officer slain in the city's history. She is survived by her mother, Marcella Mason; sister, Shantelle; and brother, Dione Mason.

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Caption: Photo WILLIAM ARCHIE/Detroit Free Press

Shynelle Mason was gunned down off-duty.

Police stand at attention Thursday while the body of Detroit Officer Shynelle Mason is carried into Greater Grace Church. Detroit officers escort Mason's flag-draped casket from the church. Black band on badge shows mourning. Marcella Mason, mother of slain Detroit Police Officer Shynelle Mason, is flanked by the Rev. Charles Ellis III and Rose Thompson.

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Correction: * A front-page article Friday about the funeral of Detroit police officer Shynelle Mason should have said services were held at the Greater Grace Temple of the Apostolic Faith.

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