

Detective Hugo Becker

September 2, 1935 ~ June 25, 1966



Detective Hugo Max Becker, Jr., 30, became the first Police Officer to die in the line of duty in the forty-one year history of the Hialeah Police Department, when he was killed in a police car accident on June 25, 1966.

In 1953, Hugo graduated from high school in Brooklyn, New York, and joined the United States Navy. He served for four years as a Navy Airdale (ABH), serving on the USS Coral Sea, and was last stationed in Newfoundland. In 1957, after completing four years of service, he returned to New York and married Cora Louise Weeks on April 21, 1957. He worked for a textile mill in 1960, when the company moved him and his family to Florida. He joined the Hialeah Police Department on October 1, 1961.

In the spring of 1961, the Dade County Grand Jury recommended that all law enforcement officers be trained in a countywide academy. Hugo and five other probationary officers became the first Hialeah policemen to complete the academy operated by Miami Police Department. Hugo graduated from the "Dade County Police Academy" on May 25, 1962. He was promoted to Detective in 1964. He was often mentioned in the Home News, a local newspaper serving the Hialeah area, and received several letters of recognition from local citizens.

On June 25, 1966, Detective Becker and his partner, Detective Steve Nagel were traveling west on Okeechobee Road, to serve as a back-up for Metro-Dade Officers. Due to a slick roadway caused by heavy rains, and a balding right rear tire, the police car went out of control and hydroplaned as it went across the railroad tracks on Okeechobee Road and W 21 Street. The car skidded sideways and struck a utility pole near the railroad tracks between 21st and 23rd Streets. Upon impact, the driver's door popped open, throwing Steve Nagel and Hugo Becker out of the car through the open door.

Hugo's fatal injury was caused by a piece of chrome metal stripping that was exposed in the opening of the driver's door due to the caved-in top of the car. This piece of metal severed Hugo's spinal cord, which caused him to die instantly. Hugo also had a wound on his forehead that resulted from hitting the horn of the steering wheel and a fracture to the right wrist from hitting the shift lever. Detective Hugo Becker was pronounced "Dead on Arrival" at Hialeah Hospital.

Hugo was survived by his wife, Cora, an 8 year old daughter; Ann, a 6 year old son; Curtis, and a 2 year old son; Stephen. On June 29, 1966, after a Rosary Service at the Carl F. Slade Funeral Home in Hialeah, a Burial Mass was held at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, where

Hugo's children also attended school. Hugo received a full police funeral with a police procession from the church to Vista Memorial Cemetery.

The following poem was written by Stephen Becker, Hugo's youngest son for a school English assignment:

A Man I Hardly Ever Knew

*When I was around two or three,
my father's life left our family.*

*Even though it was the death of my dad
I was not all that sad.*

*The death of my dad probably meant a lot,
to those that really knew him,
but yet I hardly ever knew him.*

*The death of my dad was shown
in the paper when from a car he was thrown.*

*The death of my dad lies in my head
and how I wish he was not dead.*

*My mother showed me a picture of my dead dad,
and "Who is he" is what I said.*

*I feel kind of weird the way I feel,
but yet I hardly ever knew him.*

