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Widow of slain Toledo detective thanks community for support



Keith Dressel's widow Danielle Dressel speaks at a morning news conference in Toledo. (WTOL CHANNEL 11)

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By [CLYDE HUGHES](#)
BLADE STAFF WRITER

The wife of a slain Toledo police officer — struggling to fight back tears — said this morning she was thankful for widespread support from his fellow officers and the city, and that she was honored her husband's memory would be preserved.

"I just want to thank everybody in the community for their tremendous support," Danielle Dressel, 32, said during a news conference with Toledo's mayor and police chief.

"I can't tell you how much it's helped me," she said. "I can't tell you how much it means to me his memory is bring honored as it is"

The teenage boy accused of killing Detective Dressel faced a judge yesterday. Lucas County Juvenile Court Judge James Ray ordered Robert Jobe, 15, of 1530 North Michigan St., held in the county's juvenile detention center while he mulls over a motion by prosecutors to have the youth tried as an adult

Mayor Finkbeiner said Detective Dressel's life "was taken in a very senseless way."

The mayor said the city would provide health insurance for Mrs. Dressel and her two children, ages six and four, until coverage from the state became available for the family.

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Police Chief Mike Navarre said the city would find a way to preserve Detective Dressel's memory, such as a scholarship fund or other tribute.

"We are going to come up with an idea, Chief Navarre said. "Several

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ideas have already been discussed ... We are going to find a way his name lasts forever.”

Family members and friends would make up the team deciding how to honor the slain officer, the chief said.

The chief said he admired the family’s courage after the tragedy.

“I’m amazed and I know Keith is looking down right now equally amazed,” he said.

Toledo police said the Jobe teen and Mr. Powell were standing on a sidewalk in North Toledo when Detective Dressel and two other undercover officers drove up next to them in the dense fog early Wednesday morning.

After a brief conversation, the detectives identified themselves as police officers and the two youths ran in opposite directions. While Detectives William Bragg and Todd Miller captured Mr. Powell, Detective Dressel chased the 15-year-old, police said.

Chief Navarre said Detective Dressel grabbed the suspect’s clothes and a brief struggle ensued before the teenager allegedly fired a 38-caliber handgun, fatally striking Detective Dressel in the heart.

A teenage boy accused of killing a Toledo police officer stood in court yesterday facing a judge.

His mother held him, held him tight when he walked into the packed courtroom, but she couldn’t help him.

Lucas County Juvenile Court Judge James Ray ordered Robert Jobe, 15, of 1530 North Michigan St., held in the county’s juvenile detention center while he mulls over a motion by prosecutors to have the youth tried as an adult.

The charge filed against him — delinquency in connection with aggravated murder with a gun specification — sounds more complex than it is.

Police and prosecutors say he shot to death police vice Detective Keith Dressel in the 1400 block of Ontario Street shortly before 2 a.m. Wednesday.

If convicted, the Jobe youth could spend the rest of his life behind bars.

His alleged accomplice, Sherman Powell, 19, of 722 Bush St., made his initial appearance yesterday in Toledo Municipal Court, where Judge Robert Christiansen set three bonds totaling \$55,000 on various charges connected with the case.

Mr. Powell remained in the Lucas County jail last night.

While Judge Ray contemplated the fate of the Jobe youth, some experts scratched their heads trying to remember a younger person accused of murdering a police officer.

There are a number of examples around the country of youths as young as 11 accused of murder, but only a handful accused of killing a law enforcement officer.

Charles Patrick Ewing, a professor at the University of Buffalo Law School and an author of two books on the subject of juvenile homicides, said police murders at the hands of juveniles are rare.

“I don’t think anyone knows the answer to the youngest person [accused of killing a law enforcement officer],” Mr. Ewing said. “I haven’t personally heard of anyone younger. Killing a police officer is still fairly rare, thank God.”

Toledo police said the Jobe teen and Mr. Powell were standing on a sidewalk in North Toledo when Detective Dressel and two other undercover officers drove up next to them in the dense fog early Wednesday morning. After a brief conversation, the detectives identified themselves as police officers and the two youths ran in opposite directions.

While Detectives William Bragg and Todd Miller captured Mr. Powell, Detective Dressel chased the 15-year-old, police said.

Police Chief Mike Navarre said Detective Dressel grabbed the suspect’s clothes and a brief struggle ensued before the teenager pulled out a 38-caliber handgun and shot Detective Dressel once in the chest.

He said Detective Dressel, 35, managed to fire his weapon six times after he was shot, with three of the bullets hitting two houses and a parked car.

Dozens of fellow police officers swarmed the scene within minutes, caring for the fallen officer and searching for the shooter.

The police officer was taken to St. Vincent Medical Center where he was pronounced dead at 2:36 a.m. Jobe was caught in a nearby apartment a few hours later.

Chief Navarre said investigators determined that the boy gave a gun to a friend who took it to an area near the Willis B. Boyer museum ship moored along the east bank of the Maumee River across from downtown Toledo.

The friend, who Chief Navarre declined to name, led police to the gun, a 38-caliber Smith and Wesson revolver believed to be the murder weapon.

The chief said he did not anticipate any charges being filed against the friend because of his cooperation, but the final decision will rest with Lucas County Prosecutor Julia Bates.

The gun is being tested at the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigations regional crime lab in Bowling Green.

Chief Navarre said the gun had four live rounds and one spent casing. He said the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms is working to determine to whom the gun is registered.

“Obviously, juvenile access to guns is a huge issue,” Mr. Ewing said. “Probably 80 percent or more of juvenile killings are with firearms. You put a firearm in the hands of a 15-year-old kid and you’re

looking for trouble. That's a recipe for disaster."

At a press conference yesterday, Chief Navarre said he did not see any remorse from the suspect when he was with him yesterday, but the chief admitted he spent minimal time with the 15-year-old.

He said the boy did not speak in his presence, but he was able to view a portion of his interview with detectives.

The mother of Mr. Powell attended the hearing for her son, sitting in the front row of the crowded courtroom.

After the brief hearing, Tracy Scott renewed her claims leveled Wednesday that police officers beat her son when he was captured minutes after Detective Dressel was shot and killed.

She also refuted allegations by police that there was a drug transaction in progress when the detectives stopped and began questioning her son and the other teen.

Chief Navarre stood solidly behind statements made Wednesday that detectives believed they drove up on a drug deal in progress.

"It's our firm belief that there was a drug transaction that was about to occur, and the detectives who rolled up ... were mistaken for the people they were expecting," Chief Navarre said.

Contact Clyde Hughes at: chughes@theblade.com or 419-724-6095.

Memorial scholarship fund established

A memorial scholarship fund has been established at St. Francis de Sales High School in the name of the Toledo police vice detective slain in the line of duty Wednesday in the north end.

The West Toledo school — where Detective Keith Dressel graduated in 1989 — also is offering a full tuition scholarship to the officer's youngest son, Noah, to attend the school when he reaches high-school age.

Detective Dressel's police academy classmates asked to establish the Keith Dressel Memorial Scholarship Fund at the school. It will be an endowed fund generating scholarships in perpetuity. The beneficiary of the memorial scholarship will be a St. Francis student interested in a career in law enforcement.

Alumni and friends wishing to make a donation to either cause should sent gifts to St. Francis de Sales Endowment Fund, 2323 West Bancroft St., Toledo, OH 43607. The phone number is (419) 531-1618.

The gift should be designated either Keith Dressel Memorial Scholarship or Noah Dressel Scholarship Fund.
