

**Memorial Foundation Dinner Speech**  
**Chief John Batiste**  
**April 16, 2005**

I want to thank everyone tonight for coming as we gather together to honor and pay tribute to those officers who have lost their lives while serving the State of Washington. I want to thank the Washington State Patrol Memorial Foundation for their outstanding support and efforts in not only putting on this function, but in the incredible work they do. Since it was formed in 1983, this foundation has provided over \$900,000.00 in assistance and support to WSP families, including emergency assistance and educational grants and scholarships.

We come to work each day to improve public safety and the quality of life in Washington. Law enforcement officers do so willingly and at great risk to their own safety and well being. Every year hundreds of law enforcement officers lose their lives while serving the citizens of our nation. Since 1921, troopers of the Washington State Patrol have served the citizens of our state with unceasing dedication and great pride. In these 84 years, 26 officers have lost their lives in the performance of their duties.

We are here to pay tribute to our fallen comrades and to remember their loyalty and dedication to this agency, our mission and the people of this state. We pay respect to their memory here today, and every day we come to work, and must continually dedicate ourselves to honor their memory by never forgetting, or abandoning the oath we all have taken as officers. To do so would dishonor their memory and tarnish what they stood for and believed in so deeply.

We must also never forget those who survive these fallen officers. Their families and friends are left with a loss that can never be filled or replaced. Today we pay tribute to those who survive the fallen and to their never ending search for peace and understanding. We must remember to support and help them in the grieving process. Their search for comfort is something that must not be forgotten. Our time on this earth teaches us many things. We learn that loss, pain and grief are a part of our human existence. Yet we learn too that so is healing, hope and love. It is love and hope that sustains us.

Our attendance at this memorial dinner is a public statement that we will never forget the price these officers paid for something they believed in so strongly. This lighted candle and their photographs are a symbol of this statement. As you view them, reflect on your personal dedication to our noble profession and what it means to our society.

This memorial dinner serves as a constant reminder to all that these officers were dedicated to something they believed in so strongly, they willingly placed themselves in harms way to protect the rights and freedoms of those they did not even know.

As their names are read and the bell sounds, remember them individually, but more importantly what they stand for and represent collectively. We must always remember that what we do as members of the Washington State Patrol matters greatly ---- even though it sometimes comes at the ultimate price.

In the years to come, as we gather together again to remember and pay tribute to these 26 officers -- I pray that no new names will ever be added.

I thank each and every one of you for participating in this important memorial for those who have gone before us. We will never forget them! Thank you.