



Dwight "Spike" Helmick Class of 2013

Dwight O. "Spike" Helmick was born in Beeville, TX and moved with his family to Oroville when he was a young boy. He grew up on Southside, attended Burbank and Central Schools and graduated from Oroville High School (OHS) in 1962. At OHS, he played basketball, boxed, was a member of Block O for three years, and acted in the junior and senior class plays. He earned membership in the academic hall of fame and was the OHS representative to Boys State.

While at OHS, Spike also found time to work at Gilbert's Men's Store in downtown Oroville and credits owner Bill Gilbert Sr. with much of the success he experienced in his law enforcement career. Spike spent his other free hours volunteering at the Oroville Fire Department.

Following his graduation from OHS, Spike earned his AA degree from Yuba College and his BA degree from Golden Gate University, where he graduated summa cum laude. Later in his career, he graduated from the FBI's National Executive Institute, a prestigious program for law enforcement officials.

In 1965, he enlisted in the Army National Guard and was selected for Officer Candidate School. He graduated from the Army Advanced Officer School at Fort Binning, GA and rose to the rank of Captain. During his 13 years of duty, he was the recipient of eight medals for exemplary service. Spike received his honorable discharge in 1977.

Spike officially began his 35 year career with the California State Highway Patrol (CHP) in 1969. He was valedictorian of his CHP class and promoted to sergeant in 1974 and then assigned to Sacramento, CA in 1975. The ensuing years also saw him doing duty in several other locations throughout the state. For ten years, he served as the CHP representative to the California State Legislature. 1977 saw Spike rising to the rank of Lieutenant and four years later he was named Captain. From Captain, he rose to Deputy Chief and was responsible for supervising eleven state CHP offices. In 1989, he was appointed by then Governor George Deukmejian as CHP's Deputy Commissioner and served six years in that position. In 1995 he made it to the top when then Governor Pete Wilson appointed Spike as State Commissioner of the CHP. He was only the fifth officer in the history of the CHP to rise all the way through the ranks to the top position in the state.

As CHP Commissioner, Spike supervised a department of 12,000 employees and a 1.2 billion dollar budget. He honorably served as state commissioner during the terms of three different governors

During his distinguished CHP career, Spike was honored many times. He was named CHP officer of the year in 1970 and 1974. In 1973, he received the Boy Scouts of America Life Savings Award and in 1989, 1995, and 2004, the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Award. The year 2004 also saw Commissioner Helmick receive the Congressional Award and in 2001, was named the winner of the J. Stannard Baker Award, the International Chiefs of Police highest award for innovative highway safety programs.

Spike was actively involved in legislation to increase Driving Under the Influence (DUI) penalties, as well as implementation of the seatbelt, motorcycle helmet, and child safety restraint requirements. He drafted the legislation which raised the California speed limit law from 55 miles per hour to its current limit of 65 miles per hour. Following 9/11, he established California's first Homeland Security Office.

Upon his retirement, Spike taught at California State University, Long Beach and consulted for a variety of traffic safety organizations. Community Service is still a large part of his life as he is a board member of a variety of charity organizations and does volunteer work at the CHP Academy Museum. He is also very active on the Survivor Outreach Program Board that assists families of CHP officers killed in the line of duty. Spike's younger brother CHP Officer John Helmick was killed when on duty.

Spike has always loved old cars and hotrods. He started the successful "Cops and Rodders" Car Show at the CHP Academy in 1997. Over the years, the profits from the show were donated to different charities. He currently volunteers at three Concours events in El Dorado Hills, The San Francisco Presidio, and the Capitol in downtown Sacramento.

He currently resides in Gold River, CA with his wife Deb.