

The Abraham Vega/Danny Simmons Foundation

Scholarship Application



The Abraham Vega Foundation is honored to award a financial scholarship in memory of Crane County Sheriff Danny Simmons and Lynn County Sheriff Abraham Vega. Both Sheriffs were dedicated public servants who believed deeply in second chances and took great pride in their law enforcement careers.

This scholarship provides financial assistance of **\$2,500** to the first-place recipient and **\$1,250** to second place, **\$750** to third and **\$500** to fourth place recipients. It is open to graduating seniors from **Central High School, Lakeview High School, and Lynn County High Schools**. Award funds may be applied toward enrollment at an **accredited college, university, trade school or law enforcement academy**.

Four scholarships will be awarded to applicants who submit a **complete application and required essay** by the stated deadline. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by a panel of judges comprised of DPS and police officers who have volunteered to participate in the selection process.

Please read all instructions carefully before completing the scholarship application. **All directions must be followed, and every item requested must be fully completed** for the application to be considered complete and eligible for review. **Incomplete applications will not be accepted.**

Applicants are also required to read the attached biographies of **Sheriff Vega and Sheriff Simmons**, as this information is necessary to complete the application.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name (Last, First, MI): _____

Name and address of school you are attending or planning to attend:

Your current mailing address (Street, Apt. #, City, State, Zip code): _____

Telephone #: _____

E-Mail: _____

Essay Requirements:

Both Sheriff Simmons & Sheriff Vega impacted their community in a positive way and are both remembered as people who anyone could count on for help or good advice. Reference the attached Biography's and write a one to three-page essay describing yourself relating to some or all the questions listed below. Essay's will be scored based on applicants' recognition of the ultimate sacrifice made by strong leaders in their communities and the legacies they leave behind.

Reflect on the following bullet points in your essay:

- How will you make an impact on your community?
- How will this scholarship help you achieve this goal?
- Has anyone in Law Enforcement had a positive impact on you?
- What does law enforcement mean to you?
- How will your personal life goals positively impact yourself or others?

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

High School: _____ Graduation Date: _____

GPA: _____

Name of College/University/Trade School/Law enforcement academy you have been accepted into:

***If not decided, please note you must provide an acceptance letter to an accredited college/university/trade school/law enforcement academy to receive scholarship.*

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Student ID #: _____

College Major: _____

Tell us about a personal accomplishment you achieved:

Are you a first-generation college student:

How will this scholarship help you?

Do you have any family members in law enforcement? Yes No

If yes, who and what department: _____

Are you interested in a future in law enforcement: Yes No

If yes, why: _____

Eligibility:

- This scholarship will be awarded to a high school senior accepted into an accredited college, university, trade school or law enforcement academy. Students must be seniors in good standing at a Central High School, Lakeview High School or any Lynn County High School.
- To be eligible, candidates must submit a 1–3-page typed essay
- Candidates must be current seniors with a GPA with at least a 2.7

Requirements:

To apply, candidates must submit the following by 5:00pm on March 12, 2027:

- 1) A completed application which can be found on our Facebook page and your high school counselor.
- 2) A personal essay (described above)
- 3) Attach most recent High School transcript

Award:

- Scholarships are to be used exclusively for college, university, trade school or law enforcement academy tuition or related academic expenses.

- First place award amount is \$2,500 to be paid out in one semester. Second place will be awarded \$1,250; third place \$750 and fourth place will be awarded \$500. Checks will be made payable to the award recipient's college, university, trade school or law enforcement academy with proof of enrollment.
- Recipients are expected to submit receipts in accordance with IRS regulations.
- Award recipients will be notified of the selection on or about April 16, 2027

Submission:

Completed application and materials should be mailed to:

Mark Vega
Simmons/Vega Foundation
5209 Valleyview Ct.
San Angelo, TX. 76904

Note: This application and supporting material must be received by March 12th. Notification of the scholarship award decision will be made on or around April 16, 2027.

CERTIFICATION:

The undersigned scholarship applicant hereby grants permission to use his/her name and to quote his/her essay (in whole or in part) or use his/her Entry (in whole or in part) in all promotional and other activities related to the scholarship, including, but not limited to, publication in written materials, posting on websites and other social media, and use in radio and television broadcasts.

Any taxes on scholarship are the sole responsibility of the contestant.

I hereby certify that the information I have provided on this Application Form and in any attached material is true and complete.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

SHERIFF VEGA & SIMMONS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

ABRAHAM VEGA

LYNN COUNTY SHERIFF

EARLY LIFE & CAREER BEGINNINGS

At only 19, he began his law-enforcement journey starting as a part-time dispatcher with Lynn County Sheriff's Office under then-Sheriff Jack Miller. Over the years, Vega worked in nearly every facet of county law enforcement: jail administration, communications, deputizing, and more. He also served for a time with Tahoka Police Department, spent several years as a deputy sheriff under various sheriffs, and became the first Chief of Police for Tahoka Independent School District (Tahoka ISD).

In 2001, he returned to the Lynn County Sheriff's Office (LC-SO) this time as Lieutenant, and eventually as Chief Deputy under successive sheriffs.

BECOMMING A SHERIFF & HIS ROLL IN THE COMMUNITY

In January 2017, Abraham Vega was sworn in as Sheriff of Lynn County the culmination of a long career in law enforcement. He was re-elected for a second term in 2020. By becoming sheriff, he made history as the first Hispanic sheriff in Lynn County.

As sheriff, he was widely respected not only for his professionalism and commitment, but also for his kindness, community involvement, and empathy. During his time, he was known for bridging law-enforcement duties with community service, appreciating the human side of policing, and building trust across the county.

HIS DEATH & FUNERAL

In early July 2020, while still actively serving as sheriff during the height of the pandemic, Vega contracted COVID-19. He was hospitalized in Lubbock for two weeks, nine of which were spent on a ventilator.

When his condition worsened, he was airlifted to a Dallas medical center, where on July 11, 2020 he died at age 48. His death shook the community.

What was meant to be a somber, dignified farewell turned frightening and chaotic shortly before the service was to begin, a high-speed police chase ended with a stolen vehicle crashing near the stadium.

According to reports:

- Early that morning, a stolen SUV triggered a pursuit by law enforcement, starting about 30 miles south of town and ending in the vicinity of the stadium in Tahoka.



- The chase weaved through town, and just about 30 minutes before the start of Vega's funeral, the stolen vehicle crashed bringing the chase to a sudden and violent end at the very spot where the community was gathering to pay respects.

The dramatic almost tragic twist of a criminal chase ending in crash at the very stadium where people had gathered to mourn him only deepened the poignancy of his story. It underscored the unpredictability of life and the inherent dangers faced by law-enforcement officers even in moments of remembrance.

REFLECTION: WHO ABRAHAM WAS AND WHAT HE MEANT

The arc of Abraham Vega's life from a 19-year-old dispatcher to a respected county sheriff, and finally a community icon is, in many ways, a portrait of dedication, humility, and service.

Even in his grieving of loss, his family fought for change recognition for fallen first responders during a pandemic showing that his legacy went beyond policing. His story became part of a broader conversation about honoring all risks that come with protecting a community.

Above all, Vega is remembered as a man who cared deeply: about his community, about justice, about people. Thousands came together to honor him; years later, the walls of a memorial stand bearing his name. Blessed are the peacemakers.





DANNY SIMMONS

CRANE COUNTY SHERIFF

EARLY LIFE & CAREER BEGINNINGS

Danny Simmons served in the United States Air Force from 1975 to 1979 a period during which he trained and prepared for a career in public service.

His military service laid the foundation for a lifelong commitment to law enforcement and community safety. After his Air Force service, Simmons entered civilian law enforcement. He worked at Portland PD and in Crockett County as the K-9 officer with his partner, Grimm; his German Shepherd. Grimm would follow him to the city of Crane, serving along side him for the Police Department there. Simmons would later advance to the departments Sgt Detective before his experience and leadership led to him being elected as the towns sheriff in 1996.

Over 25 years as sheriff, he would have overseen law enforcement, county security, jail operations, and community safety for Crane County a long tenure that reflects deep trust from his community.

Simmons's career illustrates a steady progression: from military service to patrol work to leading an entire county's law-enforcement agency.

SERVICE ABROAD: CONTRACTOR & INTERNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT WORK

After his tenure as Crane County Sheriff, Simmons continued his dedication to public safety internationally. According to memorial sources, he worked as a contractor under the U.S. Department of Defense.

In that capacity, he reportedly served in Iraq and Afghanistan as head of the Baghdad Police Academy College and performed work involving IED (Improvised Explosive Device) investigations.

This phase of his career shows that his commitment to law enforcement extended beyond Texas contributing to security and training efforts in conflict zones abroad.

DEATH & LEGACY

Danny Ray Simmons passed away on January 14, 2021 in San Angelo, Texas, at the age of 65.

According to memorial acknowledgements, his death was due to complications related to COVID-19, placing him among many first-responders and law-enforcement officers who lost their lives during the pandemic.

In recognition of his decades of service both domestic and overseas former colleagues, community members, and law-enforcement organizations honored him as a dedicated public servant.

WHAT DANNY SIMMONS REPRESENTED

Danny Ray Simmons's life tells a story of long-term commitment to public safety. A few themes emerge clearly from his biography:

Service & sacrifice from military enlistment to decades of law enforcement service; from local patrol to county sheriff to international roles.

Leadership & stability 25 years as sheriff is a long tenure in law enforcement, indicating leadership stability, community trust, and sustained public service. Adaptability & dedication transitioning from local policing to working in challenging international environments shows flexibility and a deep sense of duty.

Legacy of protection both for his local community in Crane County and broader international efforts, through training and security work. Danny loved his country, Texas and his family.