**07-20-1973 KY – Denver E Tabor - LEO GW Drowned Attempting Rescue**



**Denver Tabor**

On July 20, 1973, Officer Denver Tabor drowned in the Ohio River in Crittenden County while attempting to save the life of a 10 year old child who had fallen overboard from a boat.

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| [Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky](http://www.odmp.org/officer/13074-conservation-officer-denver-earlington-tabor) | [**Conservation Officer Denver Earlington Tabor**](http://www.odmp.org/officer/13074-conservation-officer-denver-earlington-tabor) Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, KY EOW: Friday, July 20, 1973 Cause of Death: Drowned |

[https://www.odmp.org/officer/13074-conservation-officer-denver-earlington-tabor](https://www.odmp.org/officer/13074-conservation-officer-denver-earlington-tabor%20)

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| Conservation Officer Denver Earlington Tabor | Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky | [Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky](https://www.odmp.org/agency/1962-kentucky-department-of-fish-and-wildlife-resources-kentucky) |

#### **Conservation Officer**

### Denver Earlington Tabor

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky  
  
End of Watch: Friday, July 20, 1973

#### **Bio & Incident Details**

**Age:** 35

**Tour:** 8 years

**Badge #** Not available

**Cause:** Drowned

### DENVER EARLINGTON TABOR

Conservation Officer Denver Tabor drowned while attempting to rescue a boy who had fallen overboard from a boat in the Ohio River, near Dam 50.  
  
Officer Tabor and another conservation officer had taken the other officer's grandson on their boat. The boy was thrown overboard when the boat struck a floating stump. Officer Tabor dove into the water and was bringing the boy back to the boat when both got caught in an eddy and were dragged below the surface. Both bodies were recovered the following day.  
  
Officer Tabor had served with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources for eight years. He was survived by his wife, daughter, son, mother, and two siblings.

[](https://www.odmp.org/media/image/officer/13074/orig/cropped-1973-TABOR-Denver.jpg)**Conservation Officer Denver Earlington Tabor**

<https://www.odmp.org/officer/reflections/13074-conservation-officer-denver-earlington-tabor>

[Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky](https://www.odmp.org/agency/1962-kentucky-department-of-fish-and-wildlife-resources-kentucky)*Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky*

End of Watch Friday, July 20, 1973

### Reflections for Conservation Officer Denver Earlington Tabor

Denver Tabor was known to me as “Uncke Den”. What the end of watch doesn’t tell you about him is that he and his partner were working on the Ohio River. His partner’s grandson was with them. Their boat hit something in the river and the boy was knocked overboard. Without a moment to think, my uncle went into the river to retrieve the boy. As his partner held out an oar, and my uncle, with boy in his grasp, reached for it, an eddy sucked him and the boy down under the water. My uncle could’ve saved himself, but he wouldn’t release the child and they both drowned. My daddy told me that when they were found the next day, my uncle still had the boy in his arms. My Uncle Den left behind the love of his life, Linda, and two young children. He left a hole in our family that still exists 47 years later.

*Natalie McPherson  
Niece*

*July 20, 2020*

[**Tribute**](https://www.supportingheroes.org/memorial/tributes.php?hero_id=735&action=add)

<https://www.supportingheroes.org/memorial/hero.php?hero_id=735>

**LEFT BY CHARLES MICHAEL DRIVER ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1ST, 2020**

I only had the privilege of working directly with Officer Denver Taylor a few times. Our assigned areas were 2 to 3 counties apart. However, Denver had such an impact on me that I am compelled to write this tribute. As a former U. S. Marine, Denver exhibited the highest standards. He was a giver. His positive attitude was contagious. I was 10 to 15 years younger than he, so it was natural for me to view him as a mentor. Fish and Wildlife officers give up a lot of time away from home, if they do their job properly. Denver helped me see my responsibilities more clearly. First night that we patrolled areas under our watch, we were talking when I noticed on his key chain was a small tool that was made like a key, but instead of having teeth, it was a handy screwdriver. I commented that I liked it and before I could blink, he popped it off his key ring and handed it to me. I protested, but he laughed and said that he never used it and preferred that I have it. For the past 50 years, I have cherished that screwdriver key. After serving as a Fish and Wildlife Officer for a year, I was in debt. Nobody told me that Wildlife Officers had to have second jobs in order to make a living. My father approached me and offered me double my salary, a vehicle to drive and all insurance and health care to return to the family business. I had to accept. The week after I fulfilled my notice with the Wildlife Dept., Denver and Haskell Chambliss grandson drowned in a freak accident. Haskell told me that Denver's last words were, "I'll get him, Hack." With no thought of his own safety, Denver dove into the dark water of the Ohio River.

I still have that key. I still weep at the loss of a child and such a great man. I will soon pass that key on to my son. I'll tell him about one of the finest men I have ever know...

Retired U.S. Marine, Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement Officer Denver Tabor. Semper Fi, Salute.

**Department of Fish and Wildlife**

<http://migration.kentucky.gov/Newsroom/kdfwr/05192014.htm>   
**Memorial dedicated for Kentucky’s fallen conservation officers**

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| **Press Release Date:** | Monday, **May 19, 2014** |
| **Contact Information:** | Kevin Kelly 1-800-858-1549, ext. 4414 |

**FRANKFORT, Ky. –** Denver Tabor was active with the Boy Scouts, cared for the elderly and was quick to help the less fortunate.

More than once the Kentucky conservation officer surprised his wife, Linda, by coming home with a stranger in need of a home-cooked meal or a hot shower.

Stacy Tabor Hardin grew to know her father from such stories.

“Mom has told me that he was the kind of person that if he gave a ticket sometimes people would thank him before it was over,” she said.

Denver Tabor gave his life in 1973 trying to rescue a boy who had tumbled overboard from a boat on the Ohio River, and is one of six Kentucky conservation officers killed in the line of duty since 1918.

A new memorial honoring their sacrifice was dedicated in Frankfort Saturday afternoon, May 17.

“To know that this will be here forever and appreciated by future generations is so humbling,” Linda Tabor said. “Denver would be so thankful, and proud.”

Located on the campus of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, the centerpiece of the keyhole-shaped memorial designed by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife graphic artist Obie Williams and constructed by Searcy Monument Company of Carrollton is a bronze statue of a saluting officer by Indiana sculptor David Kocka. Benches placed around the statue represent the state’s nine law enforcement districts.

Images of conservation officers Elijah Roberts, James R. Claxton, John C. Martin, Tabor, Robert C. Banker and Douglas W. Bryant are etched on stone tablets atop stone pedestals lining either side of a brick pathway leading to the statue.

The Kentucky Conservation Officers’ Association (KCOA) led the drive for the memorial and financed its construction through sponsorships and other fundraising activities.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Conservation Sgt. Scott Herndon chaired the group’s memorial committee and said Saturday there are plans to establish a Kentucky Fallen Officers Memorial Scholarship Fund.

“This memorial honors the six officers who gave the ultimate sacrifice,” Herndon said, “but also the conservation officers who worked before us and those who are going to work here in the future.”

Saturday’s ceremony featured the Louisville Police Pipes and Drums, a rifle salute by representatives of the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Honor Guard, the playing of taps by Anderson County Middle School student Noah Medley and flag presentations to family members or representatives of the fallen officers.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife conservation officers and Kentucky State Police assembled in rows, shoulder to shoulder behind the families during the ceremony.

The six officers now forever memorialized serve to remind the public of the dangers Kentucky conservation officers face every day, said Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Gregory Johnson.

“They make all of our lives better by protecting our fish and wildlife resources that richen the landscape and the quality of our life in this great Commonwealth,” he said. “This memorial should always remind us of those who picked up the standard from their fallen comrades and carried on those tasks.

“Our fish and wildlife family recognizes the impossibility of ever repaying our debt to these six men. As humans, we strive to express our gratitude to them.”

Following the ceremony, Sherry Bryant clutched the flag given to her and made her way to the pedestal honoring her late husband.

Douglas Bryant was killed in May 2003 when his patrol truck was intentionally struck by the car of a man he was pursuing on Interstate 71/75 in Fort Mitchell.

“The people that will come through here now will ensure these officers will not be forgotten,” she said. “You continue through life and you move on, but something nobody will ever take away is the memories. They’ll live forever.”