

'A man who would give you the shirt off his back' - police mourn colleague who drowned trying to save daughter

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/man-would-give-you-shirt-off-his-back-police-mourn-colleague-drowned-trying-save-daughter>

Dec 1, 2016 Source: 1 NEWS [Video on Site](#)



Manawatu police are mourning the death of Sergeant Mike Toon after he died coming to the aid of his daughter who was trying to rescue their family dog from the Manawatu River last night.

A dog walk with his daughter ended in tragedy for Sergeant Mike Toon's family and his colleagues.

Central District Commander Superintendent Sue Schwalger has told media outside Palmerston North Police Station that Sergeant Toon, a police prosecutor, was a respected officer and a loving father.

Sergeant Toon's body was recovered at 9.30am today.

Police say the river was at an increased level and Central District Commander Superintendent Sue Schwalger praises Sergeant Mike Toon, who died helping his daughter rescue the family dog from the Manawatu River.

Sergeant Toon had gone in to save his daughter, who tried to rescue their family dog.



"I have been with Mike's family today and our hearts are with them at this tragic time," Superintendent Schwalger said.

Sergeant Toon had just celebrated 28 years in the force.

Colleagues today had the difficult task of recovering his body.

"Mike has been described as a professional - a generous man with his time, a loving family man, a man who would give you the shirt off his back," Superintendent Schwalger said.

Family asked to be allowed to grieve in private.

The man had gone missing after entering the Manawatu River to save a dog.

His daughter was rescued from the river and taken to Palmerston North Hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

The dog made it safely to shore, police say.

Search teams have started the mission in search of a man believed to have gone into the river to rescue his dog.



Tributes flow in for drowned Palmerston North police prosecutor Mike Toon

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/87165140/tributes-flow-in-for-drowned-palmerston-north-police-prosecutor-mike-toon>

December 4 2016 PAUL MITCHELL



A simple tribute at the Manawatu River when Mike Toon drowned.

David Unwin

Memorials have sprung up and tributes are flowing in from far afield as people try to come to grips with the death of police prosecutor Mike Toon.

Toon died while saving his daughter from a "treacherous" river after a dog rescue went wrong in Palmerston North.

His body was found by members of the police national dive team in

the Manawatu River about 9.30am on Friday, having gone missing in the river overnight.



A make-shift cross placed near where police prosecutor Mike Toon drowned after saving his daughter.

DAVID UNWIN/FAIRFAX NZ

On Saturday, memorials were on the river bank where Toon was found, and tributes from as far afield as the United States have been posted on Facebook.

READ MORE: [Police prosecutor drowns as he saves daughter](#)

Palmerston North Fire Brigade and Palmerston North Community Patrol also posted their condolences, and animal welfare group Paw Justice called Toon a hero for his courageous rescue of a family member.

An American law enforcement support group, True Blue Warriors, shared a link to a news article on Toon's death with the message "Rest In Peace True Blue! (so sad) NZ". Palmerston North mayor Grant Smith said Toon's loss would be felt throughout the community, and he was privileged to have known such a remarkable man.



02122016. NEWS. SUPPLIED. Police prosecutor Sergeant Mike Toon, who died after jumping into the Manawatu River to save his daughter.

Police

"We were on the Hokowhitu School board of trustees together, and our children went to school and grew up together."

He recalled Toon as a forthright man who loved his sport and didn't suffer fools gladly – a man to count on whenever things got tough.

Smith said both he and his family offered their deepest sympathy and support to the Toon family.

"All the good people go too soon. He will be terribly missed."

Allan Alach, a former principal of Hokowhitu School, got to know Toon as he served as chairman of the school's board of trustees from 2002-2006. He said he was still very shaken by Toon's death. He had heard the helicopters overhead on Thursday night, and when he read the next day what had happened he got a sinking feeling in his gut.

Even before a name appeared in the paper, Alach thought it might be him, he said. "I knew where Mike lived, and I knew he had a daughter and a dog. I was dreading the confirmation [but when it came] I was gobsmacked."

Alach said Toon was extremely principled and always willing to do what needed to be done, that was just the kind of man he was.

"He was very open, what you saw was what you got. A real straight shooter." Toon applied that attitude and work ethic to everything he did, Alach said. "Mike was the best chairman I worked with in 20 years."

"The school was a real mess when he came on board ... it was virtually broke at that stage, and he helped me turn it around."

The pair became friends over a shared interest in motorsports, particularly Michael Schumacher and Ferrari, and one of Alach's fondest memories of Toon was watching the New Zealand Grand Prix with him at Manfeild in 2006.

Although they'd slowly fallen out of touch over the years, Alach said he still felt the loss of a good man and offered his condolences to the Toon family.

Police said the 49-year-old Toon got into the river, which was "at an increased level and was flowing reasonably fast", to help his daughter rescue the family dog from the water.

Toon's daughter and the dog are said to be recovering well but the family is in shock following the tragedy.

Hero cop Mike Toon farewelled in Palmerston North

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11762375

Wednesday Dec 7, 2016

Loved ones gathered in Palmerston North today to farewell the hero cop who died while saving his daughter from the Manawatu River.

Mike Toon, a 49-year-old police prosecutor, was walking with his daughter and their dog last week when the dog went into the water.

Toon's daughter went in to save the dog, and Toon jumped in to rescue his daughter. While the daughter and dog survived and made it out of the river, Toon did not. His body was found the next day.



Daughter Kelly Toon thanked her father at his funeral today, saying: "You saved my life, dad", Fairfax reported.

"You are, and always will be, our hero."

Hundreds of people showed up to farewell Toon, Fairfax reported.

Toon's son, Joel, also spoke at the service, saying his parents' marriage was a great example for him and his sister.

"They showed Kelly and I what love really was."

Inspector Anthony Reilly said Toon was born to be in uniform, and would dress up as a policeman from the age of 10.

Toon was also first to put his hand up to help following the Christchurch earthquake.

Sergeant Stu Oram said Toon "died helping to free one of the most important people in his life."

"Job done, Tooney. You can rest in peace now."

At the end of the 90-minute funeral service, officers and police dogs formed an honour guard as Toon's body was taken out, and AC/DC's *Thunderstruck* played.

The flag at the Church St Palmerston North police station was at half mast since early this morning.

Mike Toon, swept down Manawatu River, New Zealand was trying to save daughter - VIDEO

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_BQt0J8ZUs

