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Assistant City Attorney John Tanner dies after car crashes

PUBLISHED: October 8, 2008

DEARBORN - Assistant city of Dearborn Attorney John W. Tanner III died Monday following an automobile accident in Dearborn.

The accident occurred about 11 p.m. Monday on southbound

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Military near Kensington in Dearborn. The Dearborn Police Department's initial investigation indicates that Tanner was driving a 2008 Mercury southbound on Military when the vehicle left the roadway and struck a tree in the median.

Funeral arrangements had not yet been finalized as of the Press & Guide's deadline Tuesday.

"This is a terrible tragedy and a great loss for everyone who knew John," said Mayor Jack O'Reilly. "Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends, including his colleagues here at City Hall."

A Dearborn resident for the past 45 years and Edsel Ford High School graduate, Tanner, 54, practiced law for more than 24 years. He joined the city's Legal Department in 1993, specializing in zoning issues and matters related to the Building & Safety Department.

Before that, Tanner worked in private practice and served in the United States Army for four years, and later in the Army Reserves.

"It is such a profound loss for his family, the city and this office, not only because of his legal talent, but his wonderful sense of humor and good-natured approach to his work," said City Attorney Debra Walling. "He served and gave to this community in so many ways."

Tanner received a bachelor of science degree in physics from the University of Michigan-Dearborn and his law degree from the University of Detroit School of Law.

In 2001, he was awarded the highest possible legal rating — an "AV" rating — by Martindale-Hubbell, a 140-year-old company recognized as the authoritative

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resource for information on the legal profession. An integral part of the firm's services to the legal community is the Lawyer Rating System, which evaluates attorneys in the United States and Canada.

"He was a real professional and he did a great job representing the interests of the citizens of Dearborn with firmness and compassion," said 19th District Judge William C. Hultgren, before whom Tanner often appeared in legal proceedings.

Active in the community, Tanner's volunteer service included being a member of the board of directors of the Dearborn Goodfellows and the Smoke on the Grill charity organization. He was also active in Scouting and served on the board of Dearborn Village Community Credit Union. He was also active in Dearborn Lions football and the Elks Club. He also served on the board of the Dearborn Village Community Credit Union.

Tanner is survived by his wife, Beverly, and their children: Alison, Jennifer, Katherine and John Tanner IV.

Any witnesses are asked to contact the Dearborn Police Accident Investigation Bureau at 943-2275.



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