

Blessed Are the Peacemakers: The God-Honoring Legacy of Colorado Officer Dead After Mass Shooting

The hero of the tragic Colorado mass shooting Monday afternoon is former officer Eric Talley, 51, who died in the line of fire defending King Soopers grocery store goers.

Rest In peace Officer Eric Talley. Your service will never be forgotten #BoulderShooting

– Boulder Police Dept. (@boulderpolice) March 23, 2021

He was a family man to seven kids ages 7-20 years old, a dedicated Christ-follower and an advocate for those in need. "Above all else, he loved his family and his Lord Jesus Christ," Homer Talley said of his son, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

Police Chief Maris Herold spoke of the sacrifice Talley made during his 10 years of service in the Boulder Police Department. "He felt a higher calling and he loved his community," she said.

Prayers and thoughts for Talley's family flooded in as news broke.

Eric Talley died a hero.

When others ran for safety, he ran towards the violence.

Our police are always willing to put their lives on the line for us & we should always thank every officer we see for their service.

May God comfort his family & heal their broken hearts.

– Lauren Boebert (@laurenboebert) March 23, 2021

Talley's alma mater, Ball State University, issued a heartfelt statement detailing his heroic story of leaving the comfort of a desk job in information technology to brave the frontlines for his city.

Please join us in mourning the loss of a CICS alum gone too soon and leaving behind a family who is forever changed. Our hearts ache for those who he left behind. As a first responder in Boulder yesterday, Officer Talley is rightfully being called a hero, we echo that completely and mourn this tragic loss deeply.

"For years, Eric Talley had a stable job in information technology that provided for his children and his wife, who educated their seven children in their Colorado home.

But in 2010, after one of his closest friends died in a DUI crash, he quit, left behind his master's degree and enrolled in the police academy at 40 years old, according to his friends and family.

"It was remarkable to me that somebody would go to law enforcement from IT," Jeremy Herko, who is now a lieutenant with the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office, told The Washington Post. "He lost pay. He lost time away from his family. He joined the police academy without a guaranteed job."

Herko, a friend of Talley's, said of the slain officer, "He was a devout Christian, he had to buy a 15-passenger van to haul all his kids around, and he was the nicest guy in the world. I've known him since we went to the academy together, and we talked all the time. Please keep his wife and kids in your thoughts."

RIP Boulder PO Eric Talley, . 3/22/19, & the victims of the Boulder shooting. PO Talley, 51 & the father of seven, was

first on scene & went to save lives. No greater love. Rest in the Lord's eternal embrace. Always Honored, Never Forgotten. #boulder #PAPD #PAPDPROTECTSNYNJ

– Port Authority PBA (@PAPD911) March 23, 2021

The Boston Police Detective Benevolent Society urged Americans to use this horrific event to mend the country's divide and come together in prayer. "While the natural instinct is to run from danger, these brave men and women ran into the gunfire, risking their lives in an attempt to stop the loss of others," the statement reads. "At a time when this country remains divided, we encourage everyone to come together and say a collective prayer for the people of Colorado."

Boulder County District Attorney Michael Dougherty said Talley's life was "cut much too short," and said a "painstaking investigation is already underway."

Authorities identified the other victims as Tralona Bartkowiak, 49; Suzanne Fountain, 59; Teri Leiker, 51; Kevin Mahoney, 61; Lynn Murray, 62; Rikki Olds, 25; Neven Stanisic, 23; Denny Strong, 20; and Jody Waters, 65. {eo}

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