

## Celebration of the Life of Jim Pearson

By: B. Michael Thurlow, Fire Chief

As has been widely reported in the news over the past couple weeks, a long-time member of our community, Jim Pearson, was senselessly murdered outside his own home and family business. Since that tragic day on December 15<sup>th</sup> our community has mourned his loss and prayed for his family, and many friends.

This tragedy hit our public safety family particularly hard, since many of us knew Jim either personally, or through his daughter, Sergeant Mary Pearson, who has been a friend and colleague for the past nearly 32 years. Jim instilled that spirit of public service in Mary by serving as a reserve police officer himself during the early days of the formation of the Scarborough Police Department. Similarly Jim's son Robert served by enlisting in the US Navy, retiring as a Commander after twenty years of service to our country.

In addition to enjoying working with Mary for her entire career, I personally have fond memories of the Pearson family that date back to the Simpson's days. Jim's wife Nancy helped run her family's business that used to be located by the old Mammoth Mart (what is currently the Maine Health campus at 301 Route 1 for those of you new to town). It was always a special treat when my parents would bring me to Simpson's for a cheeseburger on a steamed bun, many years ago.

As tragic as this senseless act of violence was, it has once again brought out the best in our community. I'm so proud of our public safety team and their response to one of their own. First responders starting with the dispatchers that handled the call, to the EMS providers, and patrol officers all of whom did everything they could to try and save Jim's life.

Under Chief Moulton's leadership, the Scarborough Police Department immediately asked for assistance from the Maine State Police with the investigation, and due to the tireless work of dozens of state, county, and local officers and investigators from multiple agencies, they were able to identify the suspect, arrest him, and promptly arraign him on murder charges. That effort has helped to bring some closure for the family and comfort to the greater community.

Although shaken, our community came together to provide support and comfort to the Pearson family and our first responder family. We were inundated with well wishes, food, compassion, and encouragement from all over town as well as from colleagues from other agencies across the state.

Jim's family has reached out through social media to thank the community for its support. They are very appreciative of the love and thoughtfulness that they have received over these difficult few weeks. The family has organized a Celebration of Jim's life which will be held at the Winslow Homer Auditorium at Scarborough High School on Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-4:00. They invite the community to attend and share fond memories of Jim.

In order to honor Jim's long-time career in education, the family has also established the Pearson Family Memorial Fund, a non-profit that will provide scholarship assistance to deserving students pursuing higher education in horticulture, forestry, the trades, or an education degree. Donations to that fund can be sent to: Beech Ridge Farm, C/O The Pearson Family Memorial Fund, 193 Beech Ridge Road, Scarborough, ME 04074.

Rest in peace Jim. Thank you for your service to our community. Thank you for the impact you made to the hundreds of students you taught and mentored over your career. Thank you for being that one-of-a-kind pillar of our community who was quick with a helping hand, or some sage advice whether you thought you needed it or not!