



# ***PRESS RELEASE***

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date:** August 17, 2011  
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### **RETIRED RIVERSIDE POLICE OFFICER HONORED**

*Officer worked with the police department's first K-9 in 1958*

**RIVERSIDE, CA:** On Tuesday, August 23, 2011, Riverside Police Chief Sergio Diaz will honor Loren Mitchell for his distinguished service as the first K-9 Handler for the Riverside Police Department. Loren began his career with the Department in 1956. He was an avid fan of the legendary movie dog, Rin Tin Tin; as a result, he developed a keen sense of the potential value of service dogs in police work. In 1958, a homicide suspect was able to elude capture by hiding in an area heavily overgrown with vegetation. Loren recognized that a properly trained police dog would have been able to more safely, and far more efficiently, search the area. Use of a trained canine would likely have resulted in the capture of the suspect.

Loren set his mind to convince the Department, including Riverside Police Chief Jack Bennett, that Police dogs would be a great benefit to the Department and the community. At the time, Lee Duncan was a resident of nearby Fairmount Park. Mr. Duncan was a World War I veteran and a renowned dog trainer. He had trained Rin Tin Tin for his movie adventures. Duncan was a strong supporter of the concept of police canines and donated one of Rin Tin Tin's offspring puppies to Mitchell to become the Department's first canine crime fighter.

Officer Mitchell and his canine partner, Pal, worked the streets together until 1960 when funding shortfalls forced the department to abandon the program. Ownership of Pal had remained with Duncan, but the strong bond between Officer Mitchell and the canine was obvious and Mr. Duncan allowed Mitchell to keep him as his own.

Chief Sergio Diaz will honor former Officer Mitchell for his unique and distinctive place in the history of Riverside. The presentation will take place in the City Council Chambers located next to Riverside City Hall at 3900 Main Street. The presentation will commence at 6:30 p.m. Please join the Riverside Police Department, members of the current RPD Canine Unit, and the entire City of Riverside in honoring Loren Mitchell for his service to the City as the first Canine Handler with the Riverside Police Department.



# RETIRED POLICE OFFICER RECOGNIZED FOR SERVICE

## *Loren Mitchell and K-9 "PAL"* *Riverside Police Department* *Circa 1958*



In 1958, Loren Mitchell was the first police officer to work with a K-9 in the police department's history.

Chief Sergio Diaz will recognize Loren on Tuesday, August 23, 2011, at 6:30 p.m. for his role and involvement with being the department's first K-9 Handler. The presentation will be held at Riverside City Hall in the Council Chambers.

