

Frank “Butch” Crampton, Deputy Sheriff
Washtenaw County Sheriff’s Office
1958 to 1970

Frank Crampton was born 1909 in Jackson, Michigan. As an adult, he moved to Ypsilanti Township to work at Ford Motor Company. In 1958 he began work at the Washtenaw County Sheriff’s Office. During the summer Frank liked to sit on the front porch of his Ruth Street home and sip ice tea. When Clare Laferier, former Washtenaw County Undersheriff, was looking for his son, Joe, he could always find him sitting with Frank listening to police stories.

Everyone called Frank Crampton “Butch.” Clare Laferier said, *“I never worried about Joe. I could always find him on Frank’s front porch. Frank would always call when Joe began to walk home to make sure he arrived safely. He was an all-around good human being.”* Between his father’s service at the Washtenaw County Sheriff’s Office and Frank’s police stories, Joe Laferier was influenced to pursue a career at the Washtenaw County Sheriff’s Office as well.

Frank served on the Road Patrol and was the desk officer at the Willow Run Village Station on Stamford Road, a small station with a front desk and a holding cell. The village was a three thousand unit apartment complex with a movie theater, barber shop, and government office originally built to accommodate workers at the Willow Run Bomber Plant during World War II.

On Sunday’s Frank would conduct warrant pickups because everyone was home. It would take two trips to jail to empty out the holding cell. He was well respected by Deputies and suspects alike. No one was concerned when Frank Crampton was their back-up Deputy. Eventually Frank went to work in the jail which he preferred over road patrol, and became known for his knowledge and skill in jail operations.

Frank had a big heart when it came to his family. Many times the Crampton’s would host picnics at their home for neighborhood and work friends. His sense of humor and jovial way made him popular with everyone. Family friend Bill Dapprich stated that when “Butch” remodeled the basement of the Crampton family home, it became the place to go to have refreshments and watch Lions football games on television.

Bill Dapprich, a family friend, was just beginning to drive and liked fast cars. Following an encounter with the Michigan State Police, Frank made it a point to caution the young Mr. Dapprich, *“I hear that you like to drive that car pretty fast. I would watch that, as every patrol car on the road has your license plate on their dash and they might just be looking for you...”* Dapprich clearly understood the caution and admonishment, and avoided future problems.

Frank Crampton was killed on January 15th, 1970, conducting a prisoner transport from the County Jail to Jackson State Prison. He was stabbed and shot during a struggle with a convicted murderer that had attacked him with a knife during the transport on I-94 at Baker Road. His partner Deputy Harold Ewald was wounded in the event and months later succumbed to a heart attack attributed to the incident. Ewald pursued the prisoner while wounded, even though his weapon was empty due to an exchange of gunfire.

Bill Dapprich recalled the day Frank lost his life. Mr. Dapprich observed, *“There were officers from everywhere, going door to door and searching every side of I-94 for miles, from Ann Arbor to Detroit. I recall people heading home to get guns to help in the search. People didn’t even know what to look for but they wanted to help.”* Frank Crampton left behind a loving wife, Margaret, and two children, Nancy and Frank, and was missed by all who knew him.