



Roxana Kennedy  
Chief of Police

# CHULA VISTA POLICE DEPARTMENT

315 Fourth Avenue, MS P-200  
Chula Vista, California 91910-3801

## POLICE MEDIA ADVISORY

Date: April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
To: San Diego Media  
From: Chula Vista Police Department  
Contact: Sergeant Anthony Molina  
Phone: (619) 385-6775  
Email: [pio@chulavistapd.org](mailto:pio@chulavistapd.org)  
Subject: **PASSING OF CHULA VISTA POLICE DEPARTMENT ASSISTANT CHIEF**

---

Message: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Assistant Chief Phil Collum passed away surrounded by family and friends –**

Media Partners: It is with tremendous sorrow that Chief Roxana Kennedy announces the loss of her second in command and close friend, Assistant Chief Phil Collum. He passed away yesterday evening after his short battle with a rare form of cancer. He was surrounded by family and friends, including his loving husband, William Lopez.

### **Phil Collum's Career:**

Assistant Chief Collum, or Phil as many knew him, began his law enforcement career in 1990 as a Community Service Officer in Santa Cruz, California, while attending college. He became a police officer for the Santa Cruz Police Department but moved back to the San Diego region in 1994 and was hired with the Chula Vista Police Department in October of that same year. It was in Chula Vista where he would dedicate over 29 years of service to his community and department.

Collum was recognized from the beginning as an extremely intelligent leader and hard worker. He developed a reputation of fairness and ethical professionalism that helped him rise through the ranks from Officer, to Agent, to Sergeant. Then, as a true trailblazer, he became the department's first African-American Police Lieutenant in 2009, Police Captain in 2018, and Assistant Chief of Police in 2022.

Through every step of the way, Collum helped make the Chula Vista Police Department one of the most recognized departments in the country – known for paving the way in modern policing, using innovative police technology to enhance public service, and above all, maintaining relationships with the community it serves. It was in fact Collum's directive to create an entire division focused on community engagement which he would personally lead. The Community Engagement Division was established in 2022 thanks to his leadership and foresight.

Connecting with the community was so important to Collum. In a 2021 interview with the LGBTQ San Diego County News, when asked what excited him most about life, he said, “I find excitement in being part of a team making positive change for my community and for those around me.” Collum poured his heart and soul into bridging gaps between marginalized communities and law enforcement – not just with his own department, but regional partners as well. In 2022, Collum was instrumental in repairing relationships that allowed San Diego County law enforcement to participate in San Diego Pride events once again. It was imperative to him that officers work hand-in-hand with community members and business owners to keep the public safe, and he knew it started with maintaining trust and transparency in the community.

During his career at the Chula Vista Police Department, Collum served in many roles and capacities including the following:

Patrol Officer, Field Training Officer, Street Team Gang Suppression Unit Officer, Patrol Agent, Family Protection Unit Detective, Patrol Sergeant, Professional Standards Unit Sergeant, Patrol Lieutenant, Jail and Communications Center Lieutenant, Support Operations Division Captain, Investigations Division Captain, Patrol Division Captain, Community Engagement Division Executive Captain, and Assistant Chief of Police.

He was a graduate of California’s prestigious Command College (Class 58) and the FBI National Academy (Class 278). Additionally, he was the liaison for the United Way, a liaison for the San Diego Gay & Lesbian Parade, a board member for the California Peace Officers Association (CPOA), a member of the California Police Chiefs Association, and a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Throughout the years, Collum received numerous letters of appreciation and commendations from his peers, supervisors, and the community. He was the recipient of the 1997 Scottish Rite Civic Award, the 1999 Elks Lodge Civic Award, the 1999 Veterans of Foreign War (VFW) Civic Award, the 2007 Elks Lodge Civic Award, the 2015 Department Exceptional Service Award, and was named one of the 2023 Persons of the Year by LGBTQ San Diego County News. Collum also recognized by the California Legislative LGBTQ Caucus as a 2023 Pride Honoree for his unwavering commitment and dedication to the LGBTQ+ community.



## **Phil Collum's Personal Life:**

Collum was born in Alexandria, Virginia, and moved to San Diego as a toddler – only leaving San Diego for a short time to attend college in Santa Cruz, California. He met his husband, William Lopez, in 2008 and they were married in 2013. In addition to spending time together traveling and enjoying life, the two were extremely active in giving back to their community and those in need. Until his passing, Collum served on the Board of Directors and volunteered for his church, where he also put his creative and technical skills in sound and photography to work for the church's music and media productions. He and William also volunteered every month, traveling south of the border to support orphanages in Tijuana, Mexico, as part of the Corazón de Vida Foundation.



Collum loved movies and great food and as busy as he was, would take the time to share his recommendations on both to anyone who asked. Collum will be remembered not only for all of his accomplishments and charitable works, but also for being an amazing husband, loyal friend, and passionate leader. He was a true hero in every sense, and he will be greatly missed by his family, the community, and the Chula Vista Police Department.

## **Services:**

A memorial service to honor and remember Collum will be held at Eastlake Church (located at 2355 Otay Lakes Road) on Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 10 A.M. The service will be open to the media and the public. Members of the media are asked to contact PIO Sgt. Molina to RSVP for planning purposes.

## **A Request From His Family:**

In honor of Collum's memory, his family kindly requests that in lieu of flowers, you consider making a contribution to a cause that was deeply meaningful to him. The Phillip Collum Scholarship Fund has been established in partnership with Corazon De Vida, an organization dedicated to supporting orphaned and abandoned children in Baja, Mexico. Collum was passionate about providing education and opportunities to those in need, and through this fund, his legacy will continue to impact the lives of others positively. To contribute to the Phillip Collum Scholarship Fund, please visit:

<https://www.classy.org/campaign/in-loving-memory-of-phil-collum/c579007>

Your generous donation will help provide education and hope to children who deserve a brighter future, in honor of Collum's compassionate spirit. Thank you for your support and for helping us honor Collum's memory in this meaningful way.

---

Prepared By: Sgt. Anthony Molina  
Copies Sent To: San Diego Media

Approved By: Chief Roxana Kennedy  
Date/Time: 04-13-2024 / 1530