

1981

Captain John R. Urban

Lake County Sheriff Department

John Urban's selection as the Lake County Blue Coats Distinguished Service Award winner was definitely unique in the history of the award. Not for being the most heroic, nor for being the first honoree from his department, nor for being a winner while serving the department as a part time officer. The uniqueness of Urban's award was due to the fact that his award was for work done underwater. Urban had served on the department's underwater diving team for 20 years, and served as the captain of the team. Urban was honored by the Blue Coats on December 3, 1981 at the Kirtland Country Club.

Often a thankless job, lacking any glamour or recognition, the dive team is responsible for recovery of drowning victims and search and recovery of property. Urban's last dive resulted in the recovery of the body of a 12 year old boy who had drowned in the Grand River while fishing on Memorial Day, 1981. Chief Deputy Richard Amiott would state that "you want to recover that body for the family" so that they can place their loved one in their final resting place.

Among many cases in his career, Urban has also been involved in a Lake Erie search for a murder weapon in January, and in 1968, was assigned to assist at the site of the collapse of the Silver Bridge at Point Pleasant, West Virginia.

Urban was known throughout the Great Lakes and southern Canada for his diving training. He was always enrolling in seminars and training classes to enhance his skills.

Amiott commented that "I think it's recognition for John himself and his leadership ability. He's always striving to make the team better and better. He's always the first one there. When he's in the water, he finds them."

Urban would state that "It's a privilege to help the community in any way I can."

John Urban passed away on January 3, 1995.