

Thursday, July 27, 1989

Man charged with murder, denied bond for death of cop

WICHITA FALLS (AP) — Authorities filed capital murder charges Wednesday against a 38-year-old man in connection with a police shootout that led to the death of a veteran officer.

Two other officers were injured in the Tuesday morning confrontation in this city about 125 miles northwest of Dallas. The injured gunman was apprehended after a six-hour search by more than 60 law officers.

Police Lt. Walter Tommy Collins, who had been thinking about retiring, died of a heart attack after undergoing surgery for a gunshot, officials said.

Daniel Martin Fowler was charged with capital murder in Collins' death. He also was charged with attempted capital murder in the wounding of officers Steve Pruitt, 38, and Don Gossett, 35.

Pruitt, who was shot in the shoulder, was in good condition Wednesday, said a nursing supervisor at Bethania Regional Hospital. Gossett, who was shot in the leg, was treated and discharged.

Justice of the Peace Janice Sons denied bond for Fowler on the capital murder charge. Sons set bond at \$100,000 on each count of attempted capital murder.

While being moved from the hospital to the Wichita County Jail Wednesday, Fowler was asked by reporters for KFDX-TV if he felt remorse for the shootings.

"I don't feel none too good about it," Fowler responded.

Asked why he shot the officers, Fowler said, "Well, they pulled their weapons on me."

Officials said Collins, 52, had been taking heart medication, and he arrived at the hospital in shock, Dr. George LeBeau said. He was in surgery about three hours before he died.

Collins is the fifth officer to be killed in the line of duty here and the first since August 1968, police said. Collins is survived by his wife and three children.

"He was the kind of supervisor who believed in getting out with his men in situations like this," Police Chief Curtis Harrelson, who worked with Collins 25 years, said. "He was a good friend and a tremendous officer."

The gunman brandished a rifle early Tuesday after telling construction workers renovating a nearby housing project apartment to stop making noise. The workers called police and the gunman fired a .30-30 rifle when the officers arrived.

Fowler was found in woods behind his trailer with a shoulder wound he apparently suffered in the shootout.

Fowler's father said his son has had mental problems and was taking medication for a chemical imbalance. Fowler recently moved to Wichita Falls from North Plains, Ore.

White considers gubernatorial bid

Former governor finds positive public response encouraging

FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS

AUSTIN (AP) — Former Gov. Mark White, pondering a political comeback, Wednesday said he's encouraged over public response to his exploratory efforts in the 1990 governor's race.

White, the Democrat who ousted Republican Bill Clements from the Governor's Mansion in 1982 only to lose to a Clements comeback in 1986, said he will decide by September or October whether to run again.

"I've gotten lots of encouragement from people calling and sending cards and letters — some even had money in them," White said in a telephone interview from Houston.

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— Mark White, former Texas governor

The former governor said those early contributions ranged from \$15 to \$5,000, although he didn't know how much has been raised.

White, now a lawyer practicing in Houston, announced several weeks ago that he would explore a possible

1990 gubernatorial bid. Since then, the response has been good, he said.

"It's been very flattering," he said, adding that some of the messages of support have come from rural areas which voted against him last time.

"A good many have come from the country, rural West Texas, places like that," he said.

White was the governor who signed the controversial no-pass, no-play rule and other sweeping school reforms into law. That rule was widely blamed for some of his opposition in rural areas of the state.

retary of State Jack Rains, Class of '60, of Houston. Two other GOP contenders — Railroad Commission Chairman Kent Hance and Amarillo oilman T. Boone Pickens — have said they are considering the race.

"Maybe they look at the situation a little differently today," he said of those education reforms.

The Democratic primary for governor already has one declared candidate, state Treasurer Ann Richards. Attorney General Jim Mattox has raised more than \$4 million for a gubernatorial bid, which he is expected to make official soon.

Two Republicans have declared bids, Midland oilman Clayton Williams, Class of '54, and former Sec-

retary of State Jack Rains, Class of '60, of Houston. Two other GOP contenders — Railroad Commission Chairman Kent Hance and Amarillo oilman T. Boone Pickens — have said they are considering the race.

Last week, a group of conservative Democratic state legislators issued a statement saying that they don't think either Mattox or Richards could win in 1990. The lawmakers also said they hoped a moderate-to-conservative Democrat would enter the race.

Labor leader calls on officials to block workers' comp reforms

AUSTIN (AP) — A top Texas labor official said Wednesday the union movement must start calling in its favors to block business-backed reform of the workers' compensation system.

Joe Gunn, secretary-treasurer of the Texas AFL-CIO, said state office seekers who want labor's endorsement are going to be asked to support labor's efforts in workers' comp at the next special legislative session.

Lawmakers have failed to reach a compromise through one regular session and one special session on the insurance system to compensate employees who are injured at work.

Gov. Bill Clements said he will call another special session this fall to break the impasse that pits business against labor and lawyers who represent injured workers.

Gunn, who is expected to be elected president of the 220,000 member union Saturday, described the busi-

ness-backed reforms adopted by the House as a "devastating bill" that would have created the "employer protection agency."

Although Texas leads the nation in worker-related deaths, Gunn told union delegates at the Texas AFL-CIO annual convention that the House refused Senate proposals on enforcing job safety.

Of the House safety plan, he said, "It's a phony safety. It's a fake safety."

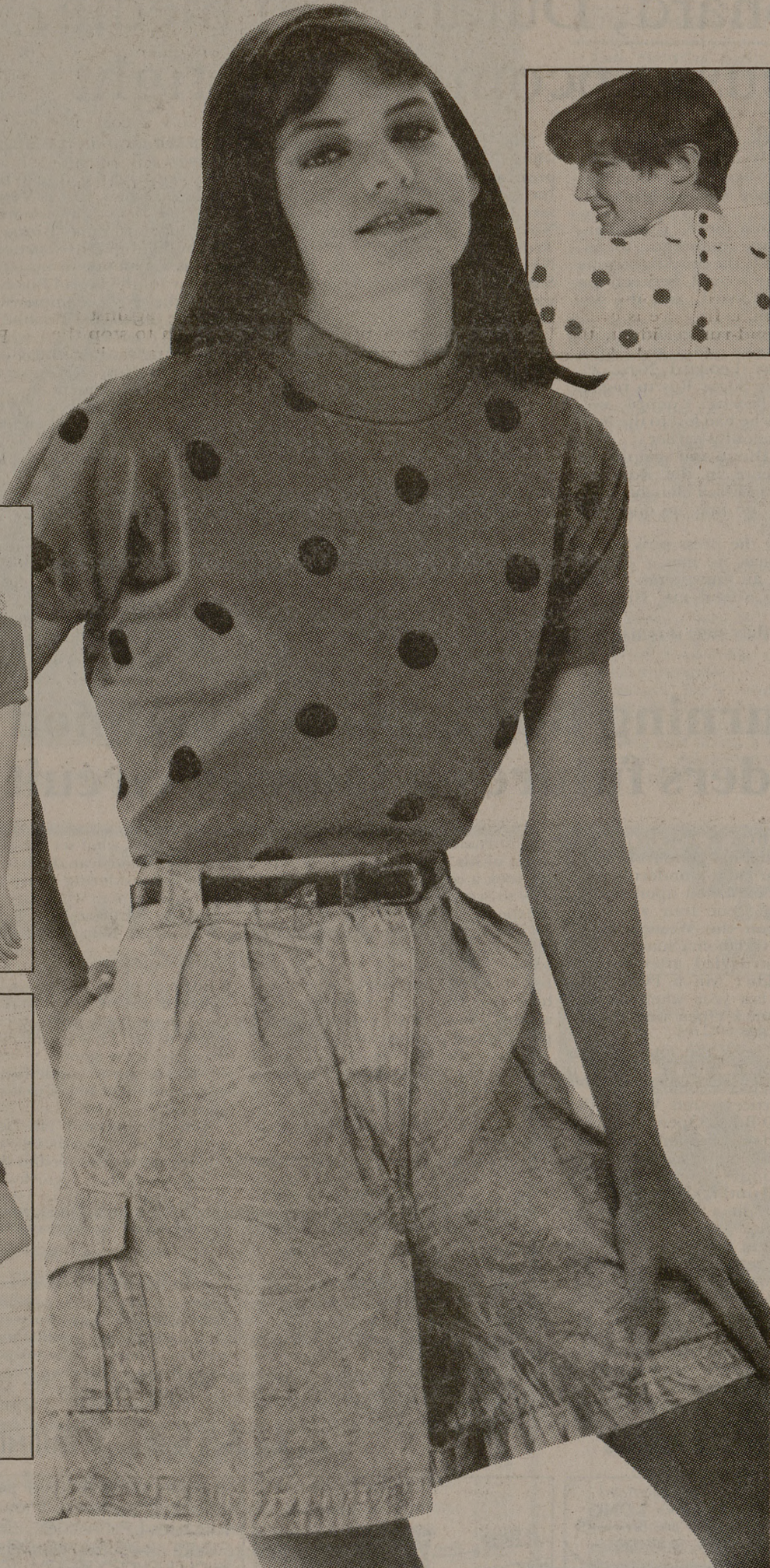
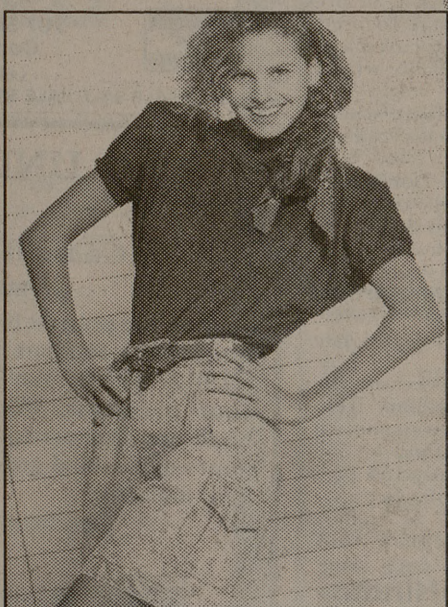
And, he said, the proposed benefit increases were a sham because of a plan to calculate permanent disability benefits on a set schedule instead of loss of wage-earning capacity.

Gunn said that workers, when approached by candidates, need to say, "It's time for you to give us your endorsement. Vote for the workers to keep their dignity."

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