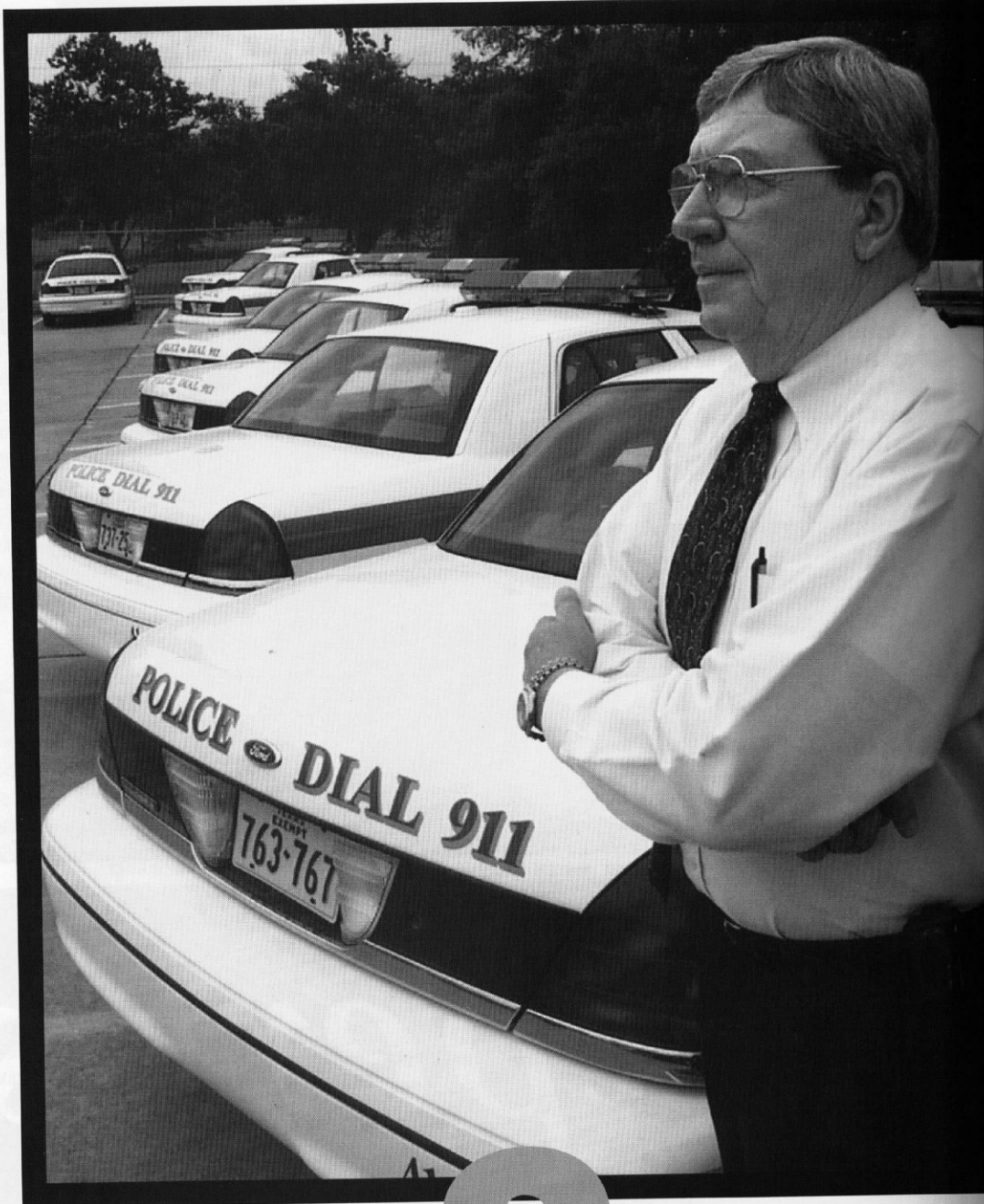


A deep  
commitment  
to community  
and a devotion  
to family make  
College Station  
Chief of Police

Ed Feldman

an  
**OFFICER &**  
a family man



*by William T. Harper*

**W**illie Mays -- the "Say hey kid" baseball Hall-of-Famer and one of the most happy-go-lucky, nice guys ever to pull on a pair of baseball spikes -- once came within a fraction of an inch of killing College Station's Chief of Police, Edgar Ray ("Ed") Feldman, while in the line of duty.

That is, if you consider pitching and hitting a baseball as being "in the line of duty."

It all happened on a bright, sparkling, springtime afternoon in Phoenix, Arizona in 1960. The future police chief was, at that time, a 19-year-old pitching "phenom" in the San Francisco Giants' minor league organization. The teenager was pitching batting practice prior to an exhibition game against the Boston Red Sox ... Ted Williams, Carl Yazstremski, those guys. The Giants' lineup that young Feldman was pitching to also contained a few Hall of Fame sluggers: Willie Mays and Willie McCovey, plus Orlando Cepeda, Felipe Alou and friends.

The routine? Throw one pitch to each batter in the Giants' starting

lineup and go through the cycle three times -- a total of 27 pitches. Feldman's first 21 pitches brought "ooohs" and "aaahs" from both the Giants and the Red Sox. Can you imagine being 19 years old and having one of the greatest hitters in the history of the game, Ted Williams, marveling at your "stuff?"

"I'm throwing it by everyone," Feldman recalls. "Nobody even gets a foul tip off me." By now, friend and foe alike have gathered around the batting cage to watch this pitching sensation. "And I can hear them asking," remembers Feldman, "'Who is this kid?' The more I heard, the bigger my head got," he admits.

Finally, Willie Mays came to the plate for his third at bat. Feldman was feeling cockier than Ronald Reagan running against Walter Mondale, even if he was pitching from behind a protective screen on the pitching mound. One more pitch. Just put it past Willie Mays (who, by the way, ended up hitting more than 600 home runs in his major career, behind only the legendary Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron).

That "one more pitch," a 90-plus miles-per-hour fastball, shot back at Feldman from Mays' bat like it was fired from a howitzer. The ball smashed into the iron frame supporting the screen, caromed past

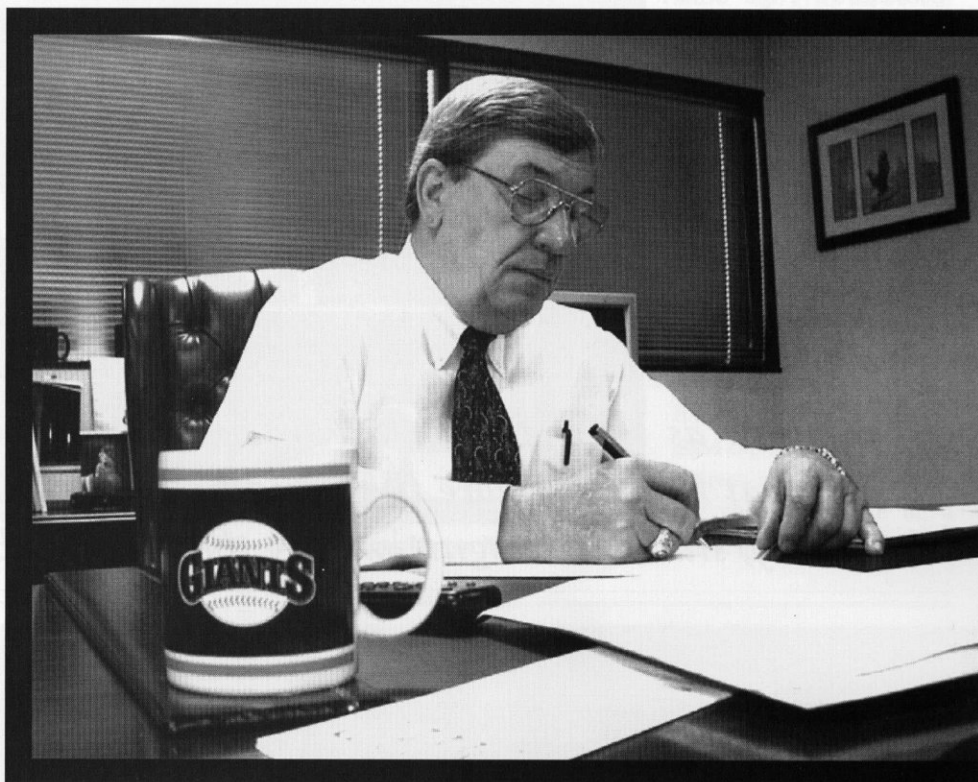
Feldman's ducking head by a fraction of an inch, and cleared the fence, 425 feet away in dead centerfield. More shattered than his protective-pitching screen, a shell-shocked Feldman peeled off his glove, stumbled shakily from the mound and stammered, "Forget it. I'm not pitching anymore."

Years later, as he reflects on his 35 years as a law enforcement officer, he believes he has never come so close to being killed, in

ping, six-foot-one-inch, 190-pound frame, Byrd said, "Why don't you come work for us?"

Feldman was thrown for a loop, more shocked than on that day in Phoenix. Incredulous, he shot back, "You must be crazy! You must be nuts. I've lived here all my life. I know everybody. And you want me to be a police officer? I don't think so."

Two weeks later, on May 18, 1965, 24-



or out of "the line of duty."

Feldman did go back and continue to pitch, but arm trouble limited his career to a few more years in the minor leagues. "Tendentious, bursitis, you name it," Feldman muses, still rubbing that right shoulder, "I was gone. I couldn't throw a baseball through a pane of glass." By 1965, Feldman was out of baseball and back home in College Station, wondering, "Where do I go from here?"

Although he had graduated from A&M Consolidated High School in 1959, he had neither career training, nor any inclinations other than to play baseball, and that was over. He enrolled at Texas A&M University (TAMU), but his heart wasn't in it.

Then, when Marvin Byrd, who was at that time a patrolman with the local police department, asked what was he planned to do, his answer was: "I have no earthly idea." Looking over Feldman's big, strap-

year-old Edgar Ray Feldman joined the College Station Police Department (CSPD). He's been there ever since.

When Feldman started in at the CSPD, the entire force consisted of one chief and four patrolmen, housed in a 100-square-foot office at 101 Church Street. Their days were divided into two 12-hour shifts, with one man in the car (a 1962 Ford). The Department didn't have a radio dispatching center; it didn't even have a radio dispatcher. The officers had to rely on Texas A&M's Physical Plant to relay calls to the car, which also pulled a trailer because, Feldman laughs, "We were also dog-catchers."

Thirty-five years with the College Station Police Department have brought Feldman and the department much acclaim and recognition, including being featured as the national cover story in a recent issue of Police Chiefs magazine and being nominated for attendance at the



prestigious FBI Academy at Quantico, Va. But the two honors that Feldman cherishes more than any others are his Liberty Bell Award and the ALERT (Advanced Law Enforcement Response Technology) Award.

The Liberty Bell Award was given to him by the Brazos County Bar Association for his work in developing an innovative "Ride-Along" program for seniors at A&M Consolidated High School. Once, while teaching a class in law enforcement at the school, he asked the students, "How many of you would be interested in riding with a police officer on his tour of duty?" He was inundated with teen-age enthusiasm.

So, with school administration, parental, and department support, he took the kids out to see what the "real" world of police work was like.

The ALERT Award, hanging prominently in his second-floor office at the

Department's headquarters at 2611A Texas Ave., is another source of great pride, even though he refers to it merely as "a nice award." In the first place, it is signed by the Vice President of the United States. It was granted for the pioneering work done by the Department in the field of remote communications, tying police officers on the street to state and national information links such as radios, computers, and the Internet.

But, as much as talk of those awards may boost any police chief's ego, the thing "that I cherish more than anything else," Feldman modestly, almost sheepishly, states is recognition "by the people who work for me."

Big Ed Feldman: rough, tough, and sometimes gruff. He's direct and to the point. He doesn't beat around the bush and he doesn't use weasel words. He simply tells it like it is. But, Big Ed Feldman is

also a "softy," especially when it comes to the women in his life, his wife Suzie and his daughter Traci. Ask the hard-nosed cop to talk about Suzie or Traci and a huge smile splits his rugged face and his green eyes light up.

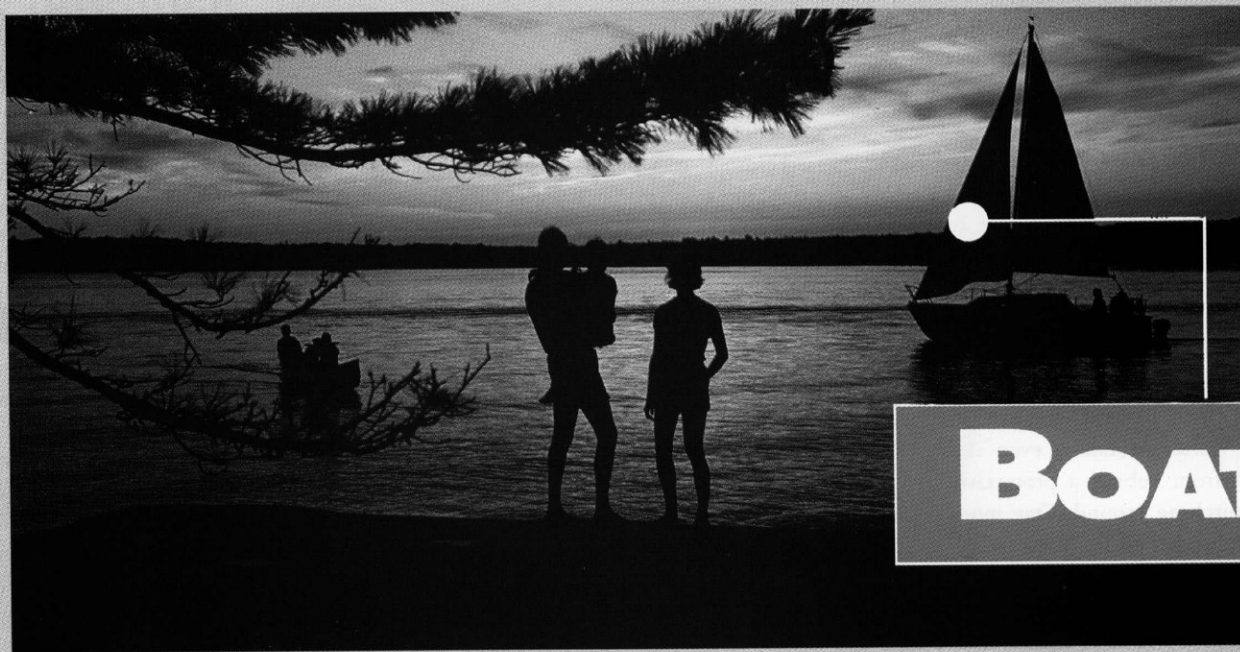
Ed and Suzie Feldman have been married since June 8, 1968. But, the lifetime College Station resident had to go to Houston to capture his blushing bride. Suzie Johnson was attending Houston Baptist Nursing School. On a lark, she traveled the 100 miles or so up Highway 6 from home with a couple of her classmates, one of whom was Feldman's cousin, Linda Feldman, who introduced him to Suzie.

For her, the uneventful evening was something less than memorable. For him, "Basically, I was smitten." Three months later, he got up the courage to call her on the telephone. "Ed who?" was her answer, the swain recalls. "But she consented to see

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**BOAT.**

**GET ON**

You haven't seen all of Bryan until you've seen *all* of Bryan

me if I came down to Houston."

And he did. Again and again, for about a year. She finally "gave in" to his marriage proposals.

When it comes to daughter Traci, the Chief is like an Indian brave watching over his papoose. "Traci was born," he beams, "on October 29, but I'm not going to tell you how old she is because she would absolutely have a fit." Like her father, she graduated from A&M Consolidated High School. Traci is now seeking a career in the theater, a search that took her to an acting conservatory in Dallas, and then to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London.

"She lived in England," he laments, "for about four years when she was in her early 20s. I didn't like that, but then again I knew I couldn't hold on to her."

Shaking his head that's full of salt-and-pepper-hair (more pepper than salt), he remembers, "I was gone on

my own when I was 18 years old but that's different, you know, than when you have a daughter and she's on her own."

Discussions of family time also raise thoughts of retirement, which will bring "a lot more time with Suzie," he confides with a big chuckle. "She can't wait." He wants to spend more time with his horses and cattle.

"I've got a lot to do around the house," he says, almost eagerly. More teaching is also in store. Travel will also be a big part of that retirement, motoring mostly around the United States. "I don't see myself going overseas," he confesses, "because you have to get in an airplane and I don't care to do that. I avoid air travel as much as I can. I never have liked it."

What he does like? Suzie. "She gives me a lot of inspiration," he says, almost in awe. "She has a lot of confidence in me. She makes me feel good about myself. She's always been my rooting section, I guess."

And he warmly offers the ultimate compliment: "She's my wife, and she's also my friend. That's a pretty good combination." It's also the key to a pretty good career and a successful retirement, whether you're the chief of police or a rookie pounding the beat.*i*



ABOVE: Ed Feldman receives the ALERT award from Congressman Kevin Brady.



**Docs.**

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