

Everything we know about the death of Worcester Police Officer Manny Familia and 14-year-old Troy Love

Updated Jun 07, 1:20 PM; Posted Jun 07, 1:20 PM

Worcester remembered fallen [Police Officer Manny Familia](#) over the weekend with community gatherings, moments of silence and flags lowered to half staff. The 38-year-old five-year police veteran died on Friday while trying to rescue a teenager, who also drowned, in the pond at Green Hill Park.

As the community and department enter a week that will see memorial services for Familia, here's everything we know about the incident and what's transpired since.

A report of teens struggling in the water

Megan Lamonda and Ayeh Tanteh heard screams for help from the area near the pond at Green Hill Park Friday afternoon.

They ran to the edge of the pond and saw several teenagers struggling in the water and [immediately called 911](#).

Police said calls began coming in about the incident at 1:35 p.m. Five officers responded, rushed into the water and rescued two teens.

“At this time, officers on scene realized that one of our officers was missing,” Police Chief Steve Sargent said.

Familia along with 14-year-old Troy Love were both unaccounted for when officers first left the water.

Divers began searching the water for Familia and Love. At 2:28 p.m., divers located Familia and pulled him from the water. He was taken to UMass Memorial Medical Center. He succumbed to his injuries at the hospital.

“He was a hero,” Lamonda, a witness who spoke to MassLive at the scene, said of his efforts.

At 3:25 p.m., the 14-year-old boy was located by divers. He was taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

All the officers who went into the water were taken to the hospital for evaluation. Seven divers were involved in the search and recovery, Sargent said, and one of them was taken to the hospital for treatment of minor injuries.

‘A man of depth and character

Friends and colleagues said Enmanuel “Manny” Familia had dreamed of pursuing a career in law enforcement with the ultimate goal of joining the Worcester Police Department.

Familia began as a police officer at Quinsigamond Community College in 2013 before joining the Clark University Police Department.

“Known for his big heart and big smile, he was dedicated and carried out his work with compassion. We are proud to call Officer Familia a Clarkie,” the university said in a statement released Saturday.

In 2016, he became a police officer for the Worcester Police Department.

“He was an incredibly dedicated and compassionate officer who connected with students, faculty and staff,” Clark University Police Chief Lauren Misale said. “His dream, while at CUPD, was to pursue a career at WPD and even though we knew his departure would be a tremendous loss to the department and university, we supported and encouraged him to pursue his dream. Even after his departure, he continued to contribute to CUPD and the university.”

Born in La Vega, Dominican Republic, the 38-year-old officer [moved to Worcester as a young boy](#) and graduated from Doherty Memorial High School in 2001.

Familia, 38, leaves his wife, Jennifer. The two met when he was 12 years old, dated in high school and were married for 22 years. They shared two children, Jayla and Jovan.

Jayla, 17, is graduating from high school and Jovan, 13, is a star shortstop of his baseball team, according to a [GoFundMe page](#) that has been launched to help the family.

“Manny had a smile that lit up the room, could joke with the best of them, and his laugh was contagious,” Misale said. “His kids were his everything. You could see in his eyes every time he brought them in to play ball or talked about them how proud he was of them.”

‘A great young man’

Troy Love was on vacation with his mother and three siblings from Virginia. On Friday, they visited Green Hill Park and at some point, the 14-year-old and two others entered the pond.

Love didn’t leave the water alive. Divers located the teen at 3:25 p.m., almost two hours after witnesses called 911 to report he was drowning in the water.

Love was [remembered as a boy with dreams of serving his country](#) and joining the military. He loved video games and hanging out with his cousin, Brian, who was also his best friend. Love’s aunt set up a [GoFundMe page](#) to help offset the cost of memorial services. The page has a \$10,000 goal.

‘Life is much bigger than a game’

A crack of the bat sent a ball down the left-field line.

On the Sunday after Familia's death, The Runbirds, Jovan Familia's youth baseball team, trailed by one and the hit represented an opportunity to take a lead over the Baysox.

Jovan Familia, the 13-year-old star shortstop and son of Manny Familia, acted as the go-ahead on first base.

He motored around second, then third and turned for home. He stomped on home plate as some of his teammates jumped up and down in the on-deck circle. The dugout broke out into a [frenzied celebration](#) that overflowed to the fans behind the bench.

Some of the fans behind the dugout were dozens of [Worcester police officers supporting Familia's son](#).

Jovan Familia's run advanced the team to the next round of the playoffs.

Later that afternoon, the 13-year-old tossed a strike off the mound of Polar Park in throwing out the first pitch of the Sunday afternoon WooSox game.

Among the family members honored on the field along with Jovan Familia were Manny's wife, Jennifer Familia, his 17-year-old daughter, Jayla Familia, his cousin, Gerardo Cruz-Familia, his nephew, Alan Familia, his brothers, Elvin and Eric Familia, and family friend Andrea Sotelo.

The Worcester Red Sox honored Familia throughout the weekend. [A moment of silence was held on Friday](#) upon learning of the tragedy, and [members of the Worcester Police Department threw out the ceremonial first pitches before Saturday's game](#).

City Manager Edward Augustus Jr. ordered that flags be lowered to half staff.

[A GoFundMe was created](#) Saturday for Familia's family [with a goal of \\$250,000](#). As of Monday morning, it had already generated nearly \$90,000.

The support has extended beyond Worcester. Dozens of law enforcement agencies sent condolences to the department and Worcester after the news of Familia's death broke.

On Sunday, in Auburn, children on Pakachoag Street in Auburn sold lemonade [to raise money for Familia's family](#). On Saturday morning, the Worcester Police Department [escorted Familia's body](#) from UMass Memorial Medical Center to the office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Westfield.

Police cruisers and motorcycles led the procession down Plantation Street as members of Worcester EMS lined the road. The Massachusetts State Police Air Wing hovered in the air.

Memorial Services

Calling hours for Familia will be on Wednesday, June 9, from 4 to 8 p.m. in St. John's Church at 44 Temple St. in Worcester. A funeral mass will be Thursday, June 10, at 10 a.m. in St. John's Church in Worcester. He will be laid to rest in St. John's Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Familia's name can be made to: The Familia Family, c/o Worcester Police Department Federal Credit Union, 805 West Boylston St., Worcester, MA 01606. Checks can be made to his wife, Jennifer Familia.