

Judge killed in crash remembered

Friends: Chandler resident trustworthy, loved outdoors

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Friends on Monday described former Maricopa County Superior Court Judge John Gaylord as a community leader, a trustworthy friend and a man who loved the outdoors.

"There wasn't a weekend where he didn't want to go hiking or camping," said Chandler Councilman Matt Orlando, a friend and former neighbor "John just liked being outdoors, he always wore cowboy boots. He just loved life."

Orlando said that Gaylord's love for the outdoors led him to motorcycle riding.

"He just liked the idea of freedom," Orlando said. "He always wanted a Harley-Davidson, and he finally got his red Harley."

Gaylord, 50, was riding that bike Friday night when he and a friend took a long drive to eat at a Mexican restaurant. Orlando said that Gaylord called his wife to see if she needed anything - "sort of like getting permission" - and left to ride.

At about 8:30 p.m., 12 miles south of Florence, Gaylord's bike was struck by an out-of-control driver, Department of Public Safety officials said.

Officials said that James Mathewson, 26, of Tucson was driving a Land Rover, pulling a boat, then veered and overcorrected, causing the boat to cross into the oncoming lane. The boat struck Gaylord, who died at the scene.

The judge had deep ties to Arizona. His family settled in the state in 1971, and he graduated from Glendale High School. Gaylord graduated from Northern Arizona University and earned his law degree from Arizona State University. He later settled in Chandler. Gaylord is survived by his wife and three children.

Chandler Councilman Martin Sepulveda said that Gaylord was the type of man who you could trust to watch over your family.

"He's always been a guy that I can go to and just ask him to watch over them," said Sepulveda, who has been deployed to Iraq several times.

Funeral arrangements have not yet been announced