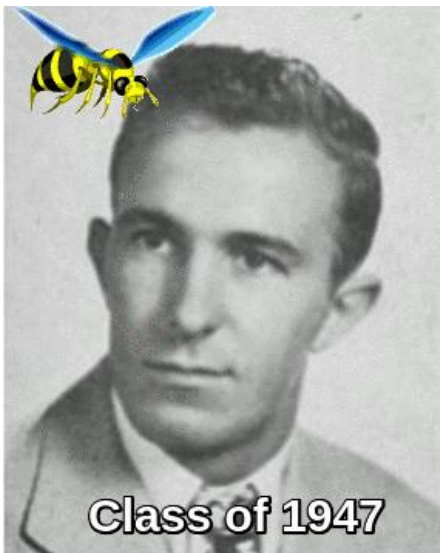


Class of 1947 – William Oren Crumby, Jr.



William spent 27 ½ years with the Memphis Police Department. He retired in 1977 at the age of 50 under then mayor Wyeth Chandler, who described him as a ‘policeman’s policeman.’ The Memphis native was appointed police chief in September 1974 and retired after a bitter struggle with the major and new police

director, E. Winslow ‘Bubby’ Chapman. William served as acting director for 15 months prior to his departure. During the 1968 sanitation workers’ strike, William set up and commanded a tactical operations center. Following a brawl between police and the Hells Angels in 1972, then deputy chief Crumby said, “Our men have been told to lean on them and lean on them hard.” In 1976, Crumby said he ordered the Police Department’s domestic intelligence files of Vietnam War protesters and civil rights activists burned just as American Civil Liberties Union attorneys were seeking a restraining order in federal court to prevent it. He was known for making his own decisions in the department. His willingness to handle police situations without passing the buck also helped him rise through the ranks. As a high school junior, Crumby left Memphis Tech High midway through his Junior year and enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1945. Nineteen months later, he

returned to finish high school and graduated in 1947. He spent a total of six years in the Navy during World War II and later on during the Korean conflict. During the 1960s he played in the Fountain of Youth Baseball league. The league was for those 35 or older. He also attended the FBI National Academy in 1970 and took courses at Memphis State University and Northwestern University. He was a 32nd degree Mason and a member of Al Chymia Shrine Temple. After he retired from police work, he tried politics in 1977, running as an independent for what was then called County Court and now known as the Shelby County Commission. He was defeated by Republican Carolyn Gates.