

Tampa police widow watches as justice plods ahead

By [Kim Wilmath](#), Times Staff Writer
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Cynthia Roberts holds her son, Adam, as she touches her husband's name on the Tampa police memorial for officers killed in the line of duty. Cpl. Mike Roberts died Aug. 19, 2009.



[SKIP O'ROURKE | Times (2009)]

TAMPA — The hearing lasted just 15 minutes. It was incremental, mundane.

The widow sat attentively in the front row, as usual. Yards away, a shackled man in an orange jumpsuit hung his head.

The sight of him upsets her. Humberto Delgado. Here, alive.

Her husband, Tampa police Cpl. Mike Roberts, gone.

More than a year after authorities say Delgado gunned down Roberts on a Sulphur Springs street corner, Cynthia Roberts lingered in a courthouse hallway Friday. First she spoke with a prosecutor, Jay Pruner, then she spent nearly an hour with her late husband's police colleagues.

She hugged each of them, tightly and with both arms. She asked about their own families. They told stories and laughed.

Someone complimented Roberts on a heart pendant around her neck. A gift from Mike, Roberts explained. He brought it to the hospital when Adam was born. Three hearts represented each member of the new family.

Before she left, she spoke with a Times reporter.

"It absolutely, already, for me, feels like an eternity," Roberts said.

Adam, who will turn 5 next month, was 3 when his father died. The little boy still asks her about him, Roberts said. She answers as best she can.

Adam always remembers in the pool. Before he died, Mike Roberts was teaching his son how to cannonball.

"Remember when Daddy used to throw me up in the air?" Adam asks her.

Healing hasn't been easy, but time does seem to help.

"Instead of thinking about it every thought," the widow says, "I think about it every other thought."

Support from the police community helps, too.

After the Friday hearing, an officer handed Roberts her car keys. He got permission to park her car in Sheriff David Gee's prime reserved spot.

"We take care of her," the officer told one of Roberts' friends.

The other day Roberts' yard needed resodding. As soon as they had some off-duty time, a few officers saw to it, Roberts said.

They're with her at every public event, at even the shortest of court hearings.

Roberts wouldn't dare miss anything. From the beginning, she vowed to see this through.

"I want to hear what happens firsthand," Roberts said.

Delgado's trial had been set to start this month, but Judge Emmett Lamar Battles delayed it in July to give defense attorney Christopher Watson more time to prepare.

Roberts is preparing, too.

She knows she'll have to step out of the room when attorneys bring out some of the evidence. She doesn't want to look at the photos.

At Friday's hearing, the judge, prosecutor and defense attorney agreed to discuss the case again on Dec. 10.

Again, Roberts will be there.

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