

## Nicole Decker

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**From:** nicole@sjpoa.com on behalf of The San Jose Police Officers' Association <nicole@sjpoa.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 11, 2014 10:36 AM  
**To:** Nicole Decker  
**Subject:** Sometimes the system gets it right



A few years back, many of us were confused, concerned and worried about the "out of character" behavior exhibited by one of our own. Those of us who worked around Jim Lisius knew him to be one of the hardest working cops on our Department. This decorated officer's love for police work was infectious and his reputation was solid.

So as stories began to circulate about behavior not his norm, questions were asked. Jim's troubles led to disciplinary proceedings that eventually led to his termination. Alcohol was always the suspected demon, how we were wrong.

Months after the termination, Jim began to experience signs of a serious health ailment. After visits to countless doctors, specialists and hospitals, he was diagnosed with A.L.S. (Lou Gehrig's Disease) and frontotemporal dementia. To quote Wikipedia, "The disorder causes muscle weakness and atrophy throughout the body due to the degeneration of the upper and lower motor neurons. Unable to function, the muscles weaken and exhibit atrophy. Individuals affected by the disorder may ultimately lose the ability to initiate and control all voluntary movement...until the terminal stages of the disease. Cognitive function is generally spared for most patients, although some (about 5%) also have frontotemporal dementia. A higher proportion of patients (30-50%) also have more subtle cognitive changes which may go unnoticed, but are revealed by detailed neuropsychological testing."

We finally had an answer for Jim's behavior change. The disease, which will eventually take his life, was affecting his cognitive skills. Once we realized the cause, we understood that Jim's termination had to be reversed.

We met with Jim and his wife, Frances. Jim was not employed, was not eligible for a service retirement at the time of his termination and so he was not receiving an income other than unemployment insurance. Because he had been terminated, he lost his healthcare (luckily Frances had a family plan through her employer), POA long-term disability insurance and POA life insurance.

We explained the situation to City Attorney Rick Doyle and Assistant City Attorney Nora Frimann. They understood that the termination of Jim Lisius, while unfortunate, was based upon the best information at the time. They also understood that reinstating Jim's employment so that he could receive a non-service connected disability retirement was the right thing to do. You can imagine the bureaucratic roadblocks they faced. Undeterred, they brought the matter to our new City Manager, Ed Shikada. Ed understood the situation immediately and cut through all the red tape.

I am happy to report to you that Jim Lisius was reinstated as a San Jose Police Officer and on February 6, 2014 the Police and Fire Retirement Board unanimously voted to grant Jim a non-service connected disability retirement.

Our work is not finished. The POA will now turn our attention to attempt to get Jim's Long-Term Disability Insurance and Life Insurance reissued. More bureaucratic roadblocks ahead; unfortunately, the City Manager's authority won't help us with this lift.

I want to thank those at City Hall, specifically Ed Shikada, Rick Doyle and Nora Frimann who led the City's efforts to reinstate Jim. Assistant Chief Eddie Garcia took the lead out of the Chief's office and Franco Vado and Gregg Adam did the heavy lifting for the POA.

The reversal I outlined above was not easy. Jim is fortunate to have a wife like Frances at his side. Throughout this process, she has been a tireless advocate for Jim. Not only did he lose the job he loved, his reputation took a hit. Part of the reason for this email is to right that wrong. Jim Lisius left this Department too soon, but he left with honor

and a reputation restored as a damn good cop.

Those who would like to send Jim a private message can email him at [jdl3321@yahoo.com](mailto:jdl3321@yahoo.com) or they can go to his website for an update or to post a note at: <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/jimlisius>.

Jim's family hopes to have Jim home later this month. They will post information on visitation at their home on the site once Jim gets settled in. Jim's family would appreciate anyone that would like to visit Jim to contact them in advance so they can let them know if it is a good day. They may call or text anyone of the family:

Frances at 408-747-7004

Jenny at 408-202-9347

Danielle at 408--857-6201

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