

Michael Ryner Sala was born on September 29, 1944 in the small village of Avaio in American Samoa to mother Malia Elisapeta Silivelio Pa'utalo Sala Fata Eneliko Siliga and father Raymond Ryner Howard, a Marine Platoon Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps, whose barracks were situated in the next village.

He attended Faga'itua Elementary School and then Poyer High School, now known as Samoana High School. He graduated in June, 1964 and received a scholarship to pursue medical training in Fiji. His life took a turn when, during the process of preparing to leave the island, he visited the police department in Fagatogo. He ran into a family member, Lt. Vilima'a Leiato, who offered him a position as a police officer – right there on the spot.

After consulting with his mother, he decided to accept the position and thus began his long and successful career in law enforcement. He went on to attend the Honolulu Police Academy and the California Highway Patrol Academy. At 22, he was the youngest officer ever promoted to Sergeant; at 24 the youngest ever promoted to Lieutenant.

At the age of 28, the High Chief Title "Tualamasala" was bestowed upon Mike. Matai titles are only given to select family members with the approval of the senior matai or high chief.

In 1973, at the age of 29, he began working as a Special Investigator for the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office in Portland, Oregon and in 1975 became a Multnomah County Sheriff. He graduated from Portland State University in March, 1977 with a bachelor's degree in Administration of Justice. In 1978, he graduated from the University of Portland with a master's degree in Criminal Justice Administration. He was a candidate for a second master's degree in Public Administration and a candidate for a doctoral degree in Criminology.

He returned home to American Samoa in 1978 where he served as Deputy Commissioner of Public Safety for 20 years. He served for 15 years as the Director of Intelligence for the South Pacific Islands Criminal Intelligence Network (SPICIN), the intelligence arm of the South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference (SPCPC) organization which is comprised of 21 countries in the Pacific, including Australia and New Zealand, until 2003 when SPICIN was reorganized as part of the regions' information sharing and intelligence infrastructure solely administered by the American Samoa Government.

In September, 1996, the Office of Territorial and International and Criminal Intelligence and Drug Enforcement (OTICIDE) separated from the Department of Public Safety and created as an independent law enforcement agency (Task Force). As director of OTICIDE, Mike was also a director of the INTERPOL Pacific Sub-Bureau comprised of Guam, Saipan, and American Samoa as Communications

Control Center (CCC), under the United States Department of Justice, National Central Bureau in Washington, D.C.

In February, 2007, he was appointed the first Director of the American Samoa Department of Homeland Security ASDHS).

He retired on January 3, 2013, after 50 years of law enforcement and public safety experience in American Samoa and the US mainland.

He was a lifetime member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and served as Chairman of the SPCPC from 1994-1995. He was Chairman of the American Samoa Government (ASG) Interagency Special Task Force on Narcotics and White Collar Crime Enforcement for nine years. He directed a Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI) within the Department of Public Safety. He was Chairman of the Preparedness Task Force on Terrorism in American Samoa, later renamed the Homeland Security Advisory Counsel (HSAC). He served as Vice Chairman of the eleven-member Governor's Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, as well as Chairman of the ASG Personnel Advisory Board. He presented at numerous law enforcement conferences regionally and internationally, including the IACP, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS), South Pacific Chiefs of Police, SPICIN and INTERPOL.

In addition to his government service, Mike served his community. He was an active lifetime member and Charter President of the Lion's Club in American Samoa. He joined the Boy Scouts of American Samoa in 1964 and is an active member of the Boy Scouts of America, American Samoa District Committee under the Aloha Counsel in Honolulu where he has served as chairman for the last 17 years.

Although he was extremely proud of his government service and accomplishments, he was most proud of his work with the Lion's Club. Mike led the club in various projects, including collaboration with the LBJ Medical Center, Department of Health, Feleti Barstow Library, and other government agencies to conduct vision screening clinics for residents, including outreach visits to the island of Manu'a. Teams of doctors, nurses and technicians have been hosted by the Lions, to work with the local club to offer eye care, surgery and medicine to the Samoan community, free of charge.

Mike truly believed in order to be a good citizen, one must give to their community. He lived his life serving his community.

He took his final breaths on the morning of January 17, 2022. He is survived by his children, Jennifer Rebecca Sala Jones and Matthew Michael Sala, and his grandchildren: Olivia, Malia and Betty Merleann.