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Flags Lowered in Honor of Newport Lifeguard

(Santa Ana, CA) — Board of Supervisors Chairman Shawn Nelson has directed County of Orange flags at each County facility be lowered to half-staff from Thursday, July 10, through Sunday, July 13, to honor the memory of Newport Beach lifeguard Ben Carlson, who died on July 6 while attempting to rescue a distressed swimmer in high surf.

The request for the flags to be lowered was made by Supervisor John M.W. Moorlach, whose district includes Newport Beach. “This is a fitting honor. Ben made the ultimate sacrifice of his own life to save another’s,” Supervisor Moorlach said.

Carlson, 32, was a respected and popular lifeguard for 15 summers. An avid swimmer and ocean enthusiast, he was stand-out player on his high school swimming and water polo teams in Rancho Cucamonga. He earned a psychology degree from UC Irvine and was a resident of Newport Beach.

The swimmer Carlson attempted to save survived, one of 278 people rescued from treacherous surf that day as Newport’s lifeguards dealt with holiday weekend crowds and exceptionally high surf, accompanied by a strong rip current. Carlson has been lauded by his fellow lifeguards as one of their strongest and most experienced swimmers, with a gregarious nature and eager readiness to help others.

Earlier this week, a procession of vehicles led by those from the office of the Sheriff-Coroner formed a procession to the Anaheim mortuary for a memorial service. A memorial paddle-out also was held in his honor at the Newport Beach Pier.

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