



Camarena to be remembered at ceremony Monday

» A HERO: A bust of the former Calexico police officer and firefighter will be unveiled at Police Department.

By MARC SCHANZ
Staff Writer

CALEXICO— An ex-Marine, former firefighter and Calexico police officer, Enrique “Kiki” Camarena was already a well-known face in Calexico before he signed up as a federal agent

with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in 1974.

After working in Imperial County, Camarena was transferred to the more dangerous work of tracking down smuggling networks in Mexico.

Monday is the 20th anniversary of Camarena’s death at the hands of members of the Arellano Felix drug organization in the Mexican city of Guadalajara, where Camarena was working undercover.

His death spurred what became a national campaign, “Red Ribbon Week,” which started in Imperial County and is celebrated every October to raise awareness about drug abuse and its costs.

The occasion is being marked by the Calexico Police Officers Association and the Calexico Police Department by the unveiling of a memorial bust of Camarena in front of the department at 420 E. 5th St., at 11 a.m.

According to POA spokesman Eric Hackett, people all across the country are familiar with Camarena’s sacrifice, but few are familiar with his roots here in

Calexico. Monday’s ceremony will celebrate his life here in Calexico, and several family members and friends are scheduled to speak, Hackett added.

Co-workers of Camarena’s, as well as dignitaries will be present to remember his life and work. Refreshments will be served after the ceremony.

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