

Disgraced ex-Chicago police Cmdr. Jon Burge, accused of presiding over decades of brutality and torture, has died



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Jon Burge, the former detective commander whose name became synonymous with the **Chicago Police Department's** sordid legacy of misconduct and abuse, has died in Florida at age 70, according to police union officials and a Florida funeral home.

Details about his death were scarce, with union officials and family members declining to speak with members of the news media, which spent years reporting on the numerous cases in which Burge was accused of torturing suspects in order to obtain confessions.

Burge was fired from the Chicago Police Department in 1993 over allegations of misconduct, but he never was charged directly with those alleged crimes. Instead he was convicted of lying to federal authorities about his 2014 and returned to his waterfront home south of

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The Fraternal Order of Police posted condolences on social media along with a message that the “full story” about Burge has never been told.

Funeral home officials confirmed they had received Burge’s body but declined to share any further information, citing the family’s wishes.

“They (family members) let us know they’re not doing anything in any newspapers,” said Sarah Zipperer of the Zipperer Funeral Home, in Ruskin, Fla. Burge lived in nearby Apollo Beach.

Dean Angelo, former head of the Fraternal Order of Police in Chicago, said he heard during a break in the murder trial of Officer Jason Van Dyke that Burge had died.

“It came as kind of a shock,” Angelo told reporters in the lobby of the Leighton Criminal Court Building.

“Jon Burge put a lot of bad guys in prison that belonged ... in prison,” he said. “People picked a career apart that was considered for a long time to be an honorable career and a very effective career. I don’t know that Jon Burge got a fair shake based on the years and years of service that he gave the city. But we’ll have to wait and see how that eventually plays out in history.”

Burge and detectives under his command were alleged to have tortured and abused more than 100 suspects into falsely confessing to murder and other crimes in the 1970s and 1980s.

While Burge was never criminally charged over the torture allegations, he was convicted in federal court in Chicago in 2010 on perjury and obstruction of justice charges for denying in a lawsuit that he knew of the abuse.

At his trial, a number of former convicts testified about Burge’s use of cattle prods on genitals, plastic to suffocate suspects and phone books to beat them.

Testifying in his defense, Burge denied he ever tortured suspects or condoned torture, saying he had never witnessed a cop abusing a suspect in his 30 years with the department.

Burge continued collecting a \$4,000-a-month police pension despite costing the city tens of millions of dollars in legal costs because of lawsuits related to the torture and abuse. Attorney General Lisa Madigan filed suit to challenge the decision, but the Illinois Supreme Court ruled she did not have the standing to take up the matter.

At last count, the city and Cook County have spent nearly \$100 million combined on Burge-related settlements and legal fees. In 2013, Mayor Rahm Emanuel issued an unexpected public apology for the stain Burge had left on the city, calling it a “dark chapter” that needed to be put in the past.

Burge was fired by the Police Department in 1993 . But it wasn’t until 13 years later that special Cook County prosecutors found evidence of widespread abuse by Burge and detectives under his command. They concluded

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