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Gunsmoke

Chance Encounter with James Arness

By Lewis Rigler, Texas Ranger, Retired



I attended the grand opening of the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum on October 25, 1968. One of the honored guests was James Arness, Marshal Matt Dillon of television's longest running drama series, ***Gunsmoke***.

Waco Chief of Police Calvert and I had been friends since our boyhood school days. One of Chief Calvert's many duties that day was escorting Mr. Arness during the ceremonies.



Lewis Rigler

*Photo courtesy of
Robert Nieman*

Lunch was being held at Baylor University and the chief asked me to join him and Mr. Arness. Just as we were getting ready to leave, Calvert was needed elsewhere. He asked Mr. Arness and me to go on ahead and he would join us later. Entering the building where the meal was being served, Mr. Arness said he needed to use the washroom. So we went there before going to lunch.

When I got home, I told my wife about the day. She was a great fan of *Gunsmoke* and Marshal Dillon. The first thing she asked me was, "Did you meet Matt Dillon?"

I announced, "Not only did I meet him, I urinated with him!"