

## Woman, 91, dies in attack by her pet dog

### Detroiter recalled as sweet neighbor

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On her block on Detroit's west side, Mary Stiles was the one who took care of everyone.

She baked pies for her neighbors, nursed them, watched their homes and gave them warm encouragement. Her love extended to animals.

When her grandson died a year ago, Stiles, 91, adopted his dog Butch, a bullmastiff that a neighbor described as 80 pounds and 3 years old. On Tuesday, for unexplained reasons, Butch mauled Stiles in her home at 2703 Tyler near Linwood, killing her in a bloody attack.

"She was beautiful," said Jeanne McCarver, 53, who lives across the street from Stiles' home. "She's the mother and grandmother to everyone on the block."

It was at least the third fatal dog attack in metro Detroit this year. In all cases, the dogs were family pets.

According to Detroit police spokesman James Tate, police were called to the Stiles home shortly after 4 p.m. When they arrived, they saw the dog outside the house. His face was bloody.

The dog turned toward one police officer and charged him. The police officer, whose gun was drawn, fired once at the dog, which fell dead on the sidewalk, Tate said.

No one knew why Butch turned against his mistress.

"Neighbors were saying that dog was very protective of the woman," Tate said. "For some reason, it snapped."

EMS technicians took Stiles to Henry Ford Hospital, where she was pronounced dead on arrival.

Charles Wilson, 72, who lives down the street, said his grandson was visiting the house at the time of the dog attack. Wilson said his grandson and a man who lived in the house with Stiles pulled the dog off of Stiles and forced it outside.



His grandson rushed to Wilson's home for help. At Stiles' house, Wilson found the paramedics working on her. But when he returned to his home, he saw the dog in a vacant lot nearby and two young girls approaching. He screamed at them not to run and at one point grabbed his gun. Other neighbors joined in the chorus, "Don't run. Don't run."

"I tried to get in between them" as the dog charged, Wilson said. "I shot two or three times. I had to."

Then police arrived and killed the dog.

McCarver, who was taking a bath, heard gunshots and later learned that Stiles was dead.

"I couldn't stop crying," she said. "It's just terrible."

McCarver recalled how she was injured when her furnace exploded. Stiles brought her food and nursed her to health.

Another neighbor, Dell Watt, 46, said she has known Stiles all her life. "She's like a mother to me," Watt said. "She treats me like a daughter. She was sweet, sweet. Lord, she was a sweet lady."

Stiles was a retired cleaning woman who stood about 5 feet tall and walked with a cane in recent years, Watt said. But in the neighborhood, she stood taller.

Neighbors knew they could count on Stiles to look after them, Watt said. Stiles watched her home and would call her about anything suspicious. She never accepted money for anything she did for neighbors, Watt said.

She said the dog barked a lot. "He never attacked anybody," Watt said. "He never attacked her. I don't know what happened."

The Detroit area's other two fatal dog attacks this year occurred in Waterford and Hamtramck.

In May, two large dogs, an Alaskan malamute and a husky, both family pets, mauled Samantha Black, 2, in the yard at her Waterford home.

In April, two pit bull terriers killed 6-year-old Cassidy Jeter as she walked with her younger brother near their Hamtramck home.

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