

Bury Teenage Prowler Shot By Police Officer

By BRIAN FLANIGAN

A funeral service was held last Saturday for 15-year-old Rufus Lewis, who was fatally wounded by an off-duty Detroit police officer June 19 while apparently involved in a residential home break-in.

Police investigators say Sgt. Robert F. Dougherty, a 17 year veteran assigned to the 10th (Grand River) precinct, received a phone call about 3 a.m. that morning informing him that someone had broken into the home of another officer, who lived across the street but was on vacation.

Investigators say Dougherty, armed with his service revolver, went to the backyard of the vacant home and saw one youth climbing over the back fence and a

second youth, later identified as Lewis, trying to crawl out of the house through a broken kitchen window.

When the two youngsters failed to stop after he identified himself as a police officer, Dougherty fired one shot which fatally wounded Lewis.

Although the investigation into the shooting hasn't yet been completed, Sgt. Gilbert Hill of the Special Assignment Squad said the indications are that Dougherty was acting properly.

"It was a robbery in progress," said Hill, "and Sgt. Dougherty had absolutely no idea the subjects were teenagers.

"The subject who went over

the fence and was later arrested was six feet tall and Lewis was in a window above Dougherty, so there was just no way he could determine the subjects were teenagers.

Hill said Dougherty has been routinely assigned to the Police Review Board pending outcome of the investigation.

Following the 11 a.m. service in the chapel of the R.T. Wilson Funeral Home, Lewis was interred at Woodlawn cemetery.

Lewis, who was a student at Murray Junior High school, is survived by his parents, Rufus Jr. and Lela; two brothers, Terrence and David; a sister, Shermelle; his grandparents and a great-grandmother.