



REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS

by Scott Mellott, Retired

This month I am honored to have Jayne Jahnke, the 18 year old daughter of Jay Jahnke, share this column so she can give up memories of her dad through her eyes. Her dad died in the early hours of October 13, 2001.

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Time is a unique thing. Sometimes the minutes pass sluggishly along like molasses, and other times it passes so quickly it appears to vanish. My time that I had with my dad passed by tremendously fast. It was like a beautiful shooting star. A thing that happens in the blink of an eye, yet the angelic image leaves an everlasting imprint on your mind and soul forever.

Time spent with my dad was cut short on October 13, 2001. Ironically, this is the month of fire awareness and prevention. I only had ten years with him. Despite the time gap, he loved my brother, Hunter, and I unconditionally, and he was always there for us. I remember sitting in the stale, silent room. The only thing you heard was muffled tears and loud, aching sobs. I couldn't concentrate on anything; the news was so devastating and unreal. Why couldn't he be the jokester he was and pop up off the bed saying, "Just kidding! I'm okay." and then every one would hate him for a few days for the cruel joke and life continues to its normal routine. The only thing that seemed to settle my wandering mind was the rectangular case with four framed butterfly pictures hanging on the wall across from me. The pictures of the delicate creatures seemed to reach out to me.

When we arrived back home from the hospital mourning room, our front yard was littered with butterflies fluttering from flower to flower. Since that morning, every where I go, a butterfly flies by me. The most absurd place I have had my delicate creature visit me was when we were in Colorado for the Pikes Peak Fire Fighters Memorial. The Stewarts and my family were going to visit Pikes Peak since we were there a few days early. The whole ride up the mountain I complained that I wanted it to snow! I want to see snow! Every time I mentioned the white particles that fall from the sky I received the reply, "Don't expect it. It's too hot and late for it." I prayed that dad would help me out, somehow he would make it snow for me. As soon as we reached the summit, I hopped out and the frigid air sent chills throughout my body. White flurries started to swirl all around me. I was so thrilled! And all the way up, all 14,115 feet, in the snow, a butterfly danced around my head. It felt as if it were saying, "Hi, I'm right here. I made it snow just for you."

Not only did my father visit me then but I see butterflies where ever I go. At my soccer games, when I need an extra push, a butterfly will come swirl around my head and then fly off. To me, that's like him being there supporting me and cheering me on, just like he would be doing if he were here with my family today. In my eyes, a butterfly is a symbol of rebirth and transformation; A symbol of independence, because it never meets its parents; it represents harmony, grace, and beauty. I also think it's kind of ironic, because everyone referred to him as a "social butterfly".



Time is like a handful of sand, the tighter you grasp it, the faster it runs through your fingers. Like Harvey MacKay quoted, "time is free, but it's priceless. You can't own it, but you can spend it. You can't keep it, but you can use it. Once you've lost it, you can never get it back." People come and go in your life. Time flies, but never miss the opportunity to tell those people how much they mean to you.

Jayne Jahnke

More FF info on page 14.

Remembering To Never Forget

JOHN DIXIE FISHER

Served HFD 1960 to 1990

Died September 20, 2008

JOHN CHARLES EAGLIN

Served HFD 1972 to 1999

Died June 18, 2008

MICKEY GENE PATE

Served HFD 1979 to 2008

Died April 17, 2008

RAYMOND NEAL BAILEY

Served HFD 1972 to 2003

Died August 24, 2008

ROBERT LOUIS DANBERG

Served HFD 1967 to 1980

Died June 10, 2008

OTTO W. MUELLER

Served HFD 1956 to 1982

Died March 26, 2008

ROY WAYNE DEES

Served HFD 69 to 1981

Died August 21, 2008

DELBERT LEE WARWICK, SR.

Served HFD 1956 to 2005

Died June 1, 2008

ARLON FLOYD DRAKE

Served HFD 1953 to 1973

Died March 9, 2008

BONNIE MORRIS COVIN

Served HFD 1956 to 1976

Died August 9, 2008

CHRISTOPHER JASON BOISVERT

Served HFD 2008 to 2008

Died May 30, 2008

RICHARD HENRY DECKER

Served HFD 1961 to 1984

Died March 6, 2008

DAVID EUGENE ANDERSON

Served HFD 1958 to 1982

Died August 4, 2008

DWAYNE FRANCES GUILLORY

Served HFD 1996 to 2008

Died May 18, 2008

"WHITEY" LESTER O'NEAL MARTIN

Served HFD 1949 to 1988

Died March 2, 2008

JOSEPH JOSHUA BLACKMON

Served HFD 1964 to 1984

Died July 21, 2008

BILLY ROYCE HESTER

Served HFD 1955 to 1986

Died May 6, 2008

ERIC DEWAYNE BRADY

Served HFD 1980 to 2004

Died February 15, 2008

JOSEPH FLETCHER HOLMAN, JR.

Served HFD 1953 to 1991

Died July 2, 2008

LEON LARA EGUIA

Served HFD 1957 to 1977

Died May 4, 2008

BRICEY EUGENE CHILDRESS

Served HFD 1959 to 1986

Died February 9, 2008

SCOTT STEWART WINTERHALTER

Served HFD 1959 to 1990

Died June 29, 2008

CLARENCE DANIEL BYERS

Served HFD 1951 to 1972

Died May 2, 2008

DAVID LEE NORRIS

Served HFD 1975 to 2003

Died February 1, 2008

MICHAEL ALLEN MAYS

Served HFD 2002 to 2008

Died June 24, 2008

JOEY SHELDON REED, SR.

Served HFD 1989 to 1993

Died April 21, 2008

TED W. SANFORD

Served HFD 1946 to 1974

Died January 26, 2008

LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH ANNIVERSARIES**FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER**

October 13, 2001

JAY "JAY BIRD" PAUL JAHNKE

Captain, Station 2

October 31, 1954

DELBERT HARVEY SHERFY

Chauffeur - Station 17

October 19, 1971

TRUXTON JOSEPH HATHAWAY, JR.

Fire Inspector - Training Academy



Total from January 1, 2008

to present - 27 Deaths

Total for the Year 2007 - 43 Deaths

For current information on
deceased Fire Fighters,
please go to my web site

www.houstonfirememorial.org

and click on "Recent Deaths"

or email Scott at

scottmel@juno.com

The Faces of Local 341

1932 to 2008

Houston Professional Fire Fighter's Association

Photos on this page submitted by Scott Mellott (Retired)



J. D. Fisher - Drill Tower - 1960

Photo provided by the family of J. D. Fisher



Crew of Station 6 - 1955

Photo provided by Ben Brymer



***Tank Truck explosion, May 30, 1980 - 610 Loop & 288
(l-r) Richard Lemoning, Mike Tollett, Larry Caswell***

Photo provided by Doyle Ebel

The Faces of Local 341

1932 to 2008

Houston Professional Fire Fighter's Association

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Crew of Station 7 in front of the newly remodeled Old Station 7 - 1981

Photo provided by Ben Brymer



MDA Telethon - 1980's

(r-l) V. E. Rogers, Lester Tyra, Ron Stone

Photo provided by Local 341



Engine 30 D/Shift

*(l-r) Capt. Carey Starrett, FF Kevin Searcy,
FF Alejandro Saucedo, E/O Brian Wishchnewsky*

Photo provided by Scott Mellott