

# MEMORANDUM

**From:** Sheriff Terry Wagner  
**To:** All Employees  
**Date:** January 9, 2018  
**Re:** 2018 Employee Recognition Awards

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The Employee Awards Committee has selected the following employees for their outstanding service in 2017. These awards will be presented before the County Board on Tuesday January 30th, 2018, at 0900 hrs.

**Citizen's Certificate of Merit: Corey Gustafson, Jerry Polivka, and Timothy Miller**

On May 30, 2017, at 8:23P.M., a motorcyclist ran off Hwy 79 just south of Agnew Road. The 59 year old driver was down a very deep ditch, unresponsive, in critical condition and struggling to live. Because of the time of day and location of the driver, most motorists would not have seen him in the ditch. A very alert Corey Gustafson spotted the motorcycle and then the driver, stopped to render aid and called 911. The driver was having difficulty breathing and then stopped breathing altogether. Jerry Polivka stopped and began CPR on the driver until he was breathing on his own. Timothy Miller, who is a doctor, provided care for the driver until emergency responders arrived, some 15 minutes after the call was made. There is no doubt the actions of these three men saved the drivers life.

**Civilian Employee of the Year: Court Officer Mark Booth;**

Court Officer Booth has been with the Sheriff's Office for 31 years. An excerpt from the nomination letter for Court Officer Booth; "Mark continues to be someone that I could not effectively do my job without. He performs, by far, the most [prisoner] transports in the Division, and is my "go to" guy when I need to have something done. He conducts [prisoner] transports efficiently with little or no direction, but more importantly he does them safely. Mark knows how the court process works and how the [prisoner] transports will fit into that process, therefore he is often able to identify potential problems before they arise. Mark rarely takes a day off and he doesn't abuse his sick leave. His work within this Division is under appreciated by many, but not by me." Mark's positive attitude, superior work ethic and his institutional knowledge of our office makes him well deserving of this award.

**Honorable Discharge: Deputy Sheriff Craig S. Schnieder**

Craig retired on January 3, 2018 after having served the citizens of Lancaster County for 40 ½ years. We appreciate his service and wish him well in his retirement. The Schnieder legacy continues; his son Jason has been a deputy sheriff for 4 years and his other son Jeffrey began his career as a deputy sheriff one month ago, both with Lancaster County.

**Life Saving Award: Deputy Sheriff James Roark;** On December 5th, 2017, Deputy Roark was at the Bridge completing his reports from an earlier call for service. The Bridge Staff were conducting safety checks on their residents and discovered a 36 year old man unresponsive, with no pulse or respiration. The man had been brought to the Bridge with a high BAC (Blood Alcohol Content) and suspected methamphetamine use. After radioing for medical units to be dispatched, James took over chest compressions from the Bridge staff. The man began breathing and James stopped chest compressions to check for a pulse when the man became unresponsive again. James continued with chest compressions and the victim continued to try and breathe on his own while starting to move his arms in a resistive manner. The victim began breathing on his own and continued to have a pulse until LFR arrived and transported the victim to the hospital. The victim survived this medical episode thanks to James' quick action.

## **Deputy Sheriff of the Year;**

### **Life Saving Award:**

#### **Meritorious Service Award: Deputy Sheriff Barry Barnett**

On March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at 0715 hrs, Deputy Barnett was on his way home after his normal shift; southbound on S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Deputy Barnett noticed smoke in the area and was waved down by a citizen at 'D' Street alerting him to a fire at the corner house. Barry discovered the fire on the east side of the house at the exterior, and only, stairwell to the apartment. He notified dispatch of the fire so LFR could be detailed and grabbed his fire extinguisher to attempt to control the fire. He also had the other deputies at the Sheriff's Office bring their extinguishers to the scene, allowing him to gain access to the upper apartment of the house where a family of nine (9) were trapped. Other deputies, LPD officers and passersby assisted in climbing onto the roof of the porch, getting the family onto the roof and lowered to the ground. But for the quick thinking by Deputy Barnett of getting additional fire extinguishers on the scene to slow down the fire, members of the Garcia family might not have made it out of the house.

On May 19, 2017, at approximately 2124 hours, Deputy Barnett has just finished assisting with the Citizens' Academy and was on his way home. He heard a medical call on the radio, sending units to a 45 year old female who was not breathing. The call was in the Southwood neighborhood and Barry knew he was only 4 blocks away so he notified dispatch he would be also be en route to the call. Barry took over chest compressions from the victim's husband until LFR arrived. LFR used an Automatic Electronic Defibrillator (AED) while Barry continued compressions and LFR set up their LUCAS chest compression machine. Although the victim did not survive this cardiac event, her family knew all that could have been done, had been done.

Deputy Barnett also volunteered to assist LPD with their Citizen Academy to help bring a rural law enforcement perspective. Barry put in a lot of time apart and aside from his normal shift to help make the Citizens' Academy a success.

Deputy Barnett has received many accolades over his almost 16 year career. He was named Deputy Sheriff of the Year in 2009 for his performance in 2008 and he received the Life Saving Award in both 2011 and 2015. Barry is a 1997 graduate of Lincoln High School and attended Southeast Community College. He and his wife Janis have two children, Eddie, age 11, and Corina (Cocoa), age 9.

#### **Gallantry Star: Deputies Rhonda Wicht and Michael Hansen**

*This award is the second highest award presented by our Office and is for an act of distinguished valor in the felonious arrest of an armed adversary who is a major threat to the welfare of the community and or/deputy.*

On September 28, 2017, at approximately 2:55 P.M., Deputy Sheriffs Rhonda Wicht and Michael Hansen were attempting to locate a 35 year old man for the purpose of taking him into custody on a mental health warrant. The man is known to have suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and at the time had a Carry Concealed Weapons Permit. As the deputies were knocking on the suspect's door, he approached from behind them carrying a rifle case and backpack, pushing his way past the deputies while trying to unlock his apartment door, ordering the deputies to leave. As the deputies attempted to prevent the suspect from entering the apartment, he tried to pull away, pulling all three into the entryway of the apartment. Deputy Hansen observed the suspect reaching into his waistband to remove a pistol. Deputy Wicht got to the suspect's right side to control his gun hand. After the suspect slammed Deputy Wicht into the wall, he was successful in pulling his pistol from its holster. As he was pointing his pistol at Deputy Wicht, Deputy Hansen pulled the suspect's left arm across his body and braced it against the wall and was able to draw his pistol, pointing it at the suspect's chest while ordering him to put down his weapon. The suspect dropped his weapon the 2<sup>nd</sup> time he was ordered to do so, but was still resisting arrest. Deputies Wicht and Hansen continued the struggle until two LPD backup units arrived, at which time the suspect was finally restrained and taken into custody. Two knives were also seized from the suspect. While Deputy Hansen would have been justified in shooting the suspect when he threatened Deputy Wicht, their close proximity would have made injury to Deputy Wicht a strong possibility. Instead, the suspect finally dropped his weapon when ordered to do so, knowing Deputy Hansen was prepared to defend his partner and himself, thus preventing loss of life of anyone involved.

Deputy Wicht is a 14 year veteran of the Sheriff's Office assigned to our Patrol Division; while Deputy Hansen is a 10 year veteran, assigned to Patrol and is a member of the Tactical Response Unit.