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Williston Police and Fire Departments' 2018 Awards Banquet honors many public servants



Beyond the members of the Williston Fire Rescue Department and the Williston Police Department, another set of agencies was honored Friday night (March 8). Seen here for their agencies assistance during parades in Williston are (from left) the plaques' presenter WPD Chief Dennis Strow, Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum, Florida Highway Patrol Lt. Daniel A. DeWeese, Ocala Police Department Chief Greg Graham, Dunnellon Police Department Chief Mike McQuaig and Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods.

Information and Photos

Provided By Brooke Willis And Chief Dennis Strow And Chief Lamar Stegall
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WILLISTON -- The Friday night (March 8) Williston Police and Fire Department 2018 Awards Banquet honored many deserving men and women who give their time, talents and other treasures in service to the residents and visitors of Williston.

The Williston Police Department is led by Police Chief Dennis Strow and the Williston Fire Rescue Department is led by Fire Chief Lamar Stegall.

Following are notations and photos from the people who were honored that night.



(from left) Kerry Maddox, Brooke Willis and Jimmy Willis Jr. are joined by the widow of the late Cpl. Davd W. Moss Lori Moss are seen after the presentation of the award.

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DAVID W. MOSS HUMANITARIAN AWARD

The late WPD Cpl. David W. Moss died in the line of duty on July 30, 1988. He is the only WPD officer to have died in the line of duty. Cpl. Moss touched the community and still does, Chief Strow has said.

The 2018 David W. Moss Humanitarian Award went to Jimmy Willis Jr., his wife Brooke Willis and Kerry Maddox.

Chief Strow said this trio has created The Money Pit Barbecue, where they have fundraisers to help people. They do not make money through the venture, but they generate funds to help people and families.

They have helped families, for instance, when a family member is fighting cancer.

Former Williston Police Chief Dan Davis came up with this award, which includes a fingerprint from the late corporal.

CHIEFS' AWARD

This award goes to the person selected by both Police Chief Strow and Fire Chief Stegall.

Brooke Ellzey Willis earned the 2018 Chiefs' Award, Chief Strow said in a telephone interview with *HardisonInk.com* on March 13 due to the publisher being called away from covering the March 8 banquet.

WPD Administrative Assistant-Records Supervisor-Evidence Custodian Willis serves both chiefs, Strow said, in a similar fashion. As for her duties with the WPD, her work ethic has allowed Chief Strow to eliminate a position so that she does the work of two people just for his department.

Chief Stegall said Willis' efforts are greatly appreciated in the Fire Department, where she provides administrative assistant support as well as all of the human resources duties for the WFR.

WPD Deputy Chief Clay Connolly looks on as Chief Dennis Strow presents the Life-Saving Award to the Rev. Charlz Caulwell.

LIFE-SAVING AWARD

The Rev. Charlz Caulwell is a multi-year winner of WPD awards, as are some other members of this metropolitan police force.

On March 24, 2017, Rev. Caulwell was on duty at the school crossing on Levy County Road

316 in front of the Williston Middle High School.

The Rev. Caulwell had stopped traffic to allow students to cross when he observed a



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vehicle that was not stopping. Rev. Caldwell pushed a child out of the path of the car, putting himself in harm's way.

This brave public servant was struck by the car, which resulted in injuries to himself.

FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR

The 2018 WFR Firefighter of the Year is Matthew Batton.

The Firefighter of the Year award stands for excellence, determination, work ethic, leadership and dedication to Williston Fire Rescue, and the people served by this department.

Batton went above and beyond the call of duty, to help the WFR and those in need. This annual award recipient is selected by his or her peers.

As Chief Stegall read over the nominations, he discovered that choosing the Firefighter of the Year is a tough decision for the WFR personnel.

"This young man worked extremely hard on improving our department," Stegall said. "He works diligently to keep all of our equipment ready at a moment's notice. He has constantly gone above and beyond with helping others."

POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR

The 2018 WPD Police Officer of the Year is Rich Peters.

Chief Strow said the Police Officer of the Year should be productive, cooperative, poised and dedicated to the overall mission of the Police Department.

"He or she should be mindful of the vision of the chief and the culture of community policing," Strow said. "Rich Peters is all of these things and he looks for ways to do his job better and, to nobody's surprise, he does.

"Most recently, Rich has dedicated himself to become a K-9 handler and recently completed that training. His instructors lauded Rich for working well with the dog and the rest of the class to everyone's benefit. This type of teamwork is the hallmark of an Officer of the Year."



**Fire Officer of the Year
Lt. Tony Moos (center).**

FIRE OFFICER OF THE YEAR

The 2018 WFR Fire Officer of the Year is Lt. Tony Moos.

This award recognizes a fire officer with the WFR who holds the rank of lieutenant or above, whose acts and deeds have demonstrated a commitment to serve their profession, their department, and their community as a fire officer.

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This officer has shown an exceptional commitment of leadership, dedication, and valuable contributions towards their fellow firefighters through training, leadership, safety, and preserving life and property.

“Tony exhibits the qualities of a leader, whether on the fire grounds or the administrative platform,” Chief Stegall said. “His leadership is hallmarked by his abilities to work through problems by utilizing strong interpersonal skills and seamless communications. He is calm under pressure and reassuring to those in his presence.”



2018 Reserve Officer of the Year Sgt. James Bond (center)

RESERVE OFFICER OF THE YEAR

The 2018 WPD Reserve Officer of the Year is Sgt. James Bond.

Bond “retired” last year to pursue his contracting business. To the great relief of Chief Strow, Bond remained with the WPD as a reserve officer.

“As you may know, we have no budget to pay reserves,” Chief Strow said. “So, frequently they are not as available as we would like. Not so, James Bond! When officers go on vacation, to training or other events that require an officer to work a shift, Mr. Bond is usually available.

“He does so with many years of police insight and experience,” Strow continued, “which means he requires little supervision. The requirements for Reserve Officer of the Year mirror those for the Full Time Officer of the Year. Mr. Bond exemplifies those same virtues.”

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER OF THE YEAR

The 2018 Communications Officer of the Year is Colleen Stevens.

The communications officers in Williston dispatch both the WPD and the WFR. Stevens is the dispatch supervisor. She has earned this award several years.

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“Her skills are above reproach, she shares her knowledge and experience with others and she looks to work outside the box,” both chiefs noted.

She has maintained the scheduling, training and recruitment of dispatchers, an issue which has been complicated via state legislation in the past 10 years. Regardless of any issues, Stevens maintains a competent and productive dispatch staff. She communicates well with her counterparts on the Levy County Sheriff’s Office’s 9-1-1 dispatch service as well.



Rookie Firefighter of the Year Jake Marrall

ROOKIE FIREFIGHTER OFFICER OF THE YEAR

The 2018 WFR Rookie Firefighter of the Year is Jake Marrall.

“When I think about this year’s recipient of the Rookie of the Year award,” Chief Stegall said, “many words immediately come to mind. Such words as ‘commitment’, ‘giving’, ‘dependable’, ‘humble’ and ‘family-oriented’, to name a few.

The word that stands out the most, to me, is ‘commitment’,” Stegall continued. “When this young man commits to something, you can rest assured the job will get done. It is very common to see him offering an opinion or suggestion when it comes to training, meetings or activities.”

The chief noted this firefighter is very involved in the regular operations within the department.

“For example,” Chief Stegall said, “if he sees something that needed to be done at the station, his attitude would be, let’s get it done -- rather than waiting for someone to tell

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him do it. The same was true if you needed help. A simple phone call would result in him coming to the station or your home, to help out however he could.”



Fire Chief Lamar Stegall (left) and Police Chief Dennis Strow flank John Salmeier.

CIVILIAN OF THE YEAR

The 2018 WPD-WFR Civilian of the Year is John Salmeier.

Technically, he is listed on the budget as a dispatcher, which is a great part of his job. In truth Salmeier is that” go to guy” who wears multiple hats which, the chiefs noted, makes him invaluable across a broad range of tasks. These may include light I.T. responsibilities, event coordination, construction projects, electronic repair, social media management, press releases, equipment acquisition, building maintenance, vehicle maintenance and a host of other unspecified tasks, which no one else can or wants to do.

“John is mission-minded and always strives to please,” the chiefs noted

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Honored for the Call of the Year are Capt. Jimmy Willis Jr., Lt. Kenny Maddox and firefighter Stephen Burnett (seen with plaques on left) and (not pictured) firefighters Tim Murphy and Todd Peacock.

WFR CALL OF THE YEAR

On May 13, 2018, there was the Cracker Saw Mill Fire.

The Call of the year award is given to one or more of the firefighters for outstanding performance in an emergency.

In the past, Chief Stegall said, this award has been given for calls such as delivering a baby in the middle of the night with the patient lying in the yard, a multiple-vehicle accident with multiple extrications performed by one firefighter while others attended to the injured.

This year, it goes to the WFR members responding to the Cracker Saw Mill Fire. They are Capt. Jimmy Willis Jr., Lt. Kenny Maddox and firefighters Tim Murphy, Stephen Burnett and Todd Peacock.

EXTRICATION AWARDS

Three vehicle crashes in 2018 required extensive extrication to save the lives of people. The firefighters involved in those actions were recognized with awards. Those men were Capt. Jimmy Willis Jr., Lt. Larry Neal, Lt. Brent Stegall, and firefighters Todd Peacock, Ethan Standridge, Chad Williams, Jake Marrall and Matthew Batton.

DISTINGUISHED VOLUNTEER

Jimmy Willis Sr. earned the 2018 Distinguished Volunteer Service Medal.

This award is one for the volunteer who selflessly gives of their time and talents to the WPD on behalf of the residents and visitors of Williston.

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This volunteer performs special tasks, helping officers to be free to handle law enforcement duties. This year's recipient also distinguishes himself by volunteering for his church and other civic tasks.



The 2018 WPD Auxiliary Officer of the Year Award goes to the Rev. Charlz Caulwell (center) and he is seen here with WPD Chief Dennis Strow (left) and Deputy Chief Clay Connolly.

AUXILIARY OFFICER OF THE YEAR

The 2018 WPD Auxiliary Officer of the Year Award goes to the Rev. Charlz Caulwell.

“This man serves as our chaplain, records gopher, parking attendant, funeral and parade escorts, eyes and ears on the street and school crossing guard,” Chief Strow said.

The only thing the city actually pays him to do is to help children safely cross the street from school.

“But the Rev. Caulwell volunteers hundreds, and maybe thousands of hours each year at a huge savings to the citizens of Williston,” Strow said. “He has done this for years and it would be impossible to calculate all that he has given to us. We would like to thank him for that service nonetheless.”

MOST IMPROVED FIREFIGHTER

The 2018 WFR Most Improved Firefighter is Jared Caswell.

The Most Improved Firefighter is given to a firefighter with more than two years as a member of Williston Fire Rescue, that has shown the most improvement in training, leadership and responsibility.

“When this year's recipient first joined our department,” Chief Stegall said, “I had some doubts as to his commitment to our department and the fire service. He is

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becoming a true leader, up for any challenge and very dependable.”

The advancements in rank in 2018, the years of service (including the 30-Year Award for WPD Chief Deputy Clay Connolly) and other special awards were also presented Friday night.

PUBLISHER’S NOTE: While Publisher Jeff M. Hardison has covered the WPD-WFR Annual Awards Banquet on several occasions, this year there were demands that caused the gentleman to regretfully decline the invitation at the last minute. Thanks to Brooke Willis, Chief Dennis Strow and Chief Lamar Stegall, though, the event was able to be covered to a degree. (Thanks, WPD and WFR.)