

Remembering

Ralph P. Arabie

David Crockett Steam Fire Co. No. 1 — Louisiana

Career Apparatus Operator
Date of Death: September 29, 2008
Age: 48

Ralph P. Arabie was born July 1, 1960, to Felix and Nellie Arabie. He was raised with his sister, Janice, in Gretna, Louisiana, a city that he would grow to love, serve, and protect for his entire life.

At age 18, Ralph became a paid apparatus operator for the David Crockett Volunteer Fire Company #1, which provided fire protection for the City of Gretna. Ralph quickly earned a reputation as a knowledgeable, hard worker who went above and beyond when called upon. At the firehouse, Ralph was always the center of attention, making everyone laugh and enjoy their time there. His smile could brighten up anyone's day.

In 1991, Ralph went through the police academy to become a reserve police officer for the Gretna Police Department. On his days off from the firehouse, he applied his work ethic and his love for serving others to police work just as effectively. He was known as a dependable, fair, and professional officer who loved doing the job.

Ralph was in charge of the junior firefighter program for several years, mentoring teenagers who were considering careers in public safety. He was a lifetime member of the Harvey Volunteer Fire Company #2, where he found his specialty in fire prevention and investigation. His biggest accomplishment came when he was appointed

supervisor of the Gretna Fire Board. In this role he was able to truly shine, utilizing his personality, knowledge, enthusiasm, love for people, and communication skills by conducting fire safety classes to the public he loved to serve. In 2005, Ralph showed true heroism by staying on duty through Hurricane Katrina. He was awarded the Medal of Valor for his courage, service, and leadership during the disaster.

While Ralph's career was very important to him, his main passion was his friends and family. On October 9, 2004, Ralph married the love of his life, Jan (Beck) Arabie. He happily took on his new role as stepdad to Jan's daughter, Casey Christiana Guidry, and her husband, Chase. He also became "Paw Paw" to their sons, Caden and Carter, who he referred to as his "best buddies."

He never missed a birthday, holiday, or karate match, and he always had his camera with him. He couldn't talk about his family without getting a huge smile on his face. His family was his life.

On September 29, 2008, Ralph was taken from us, leaving a scar on all of our hearts that will never heal. Though unexpected and way too soon, we all thank God every day for the time we had with him. He touched our hearts and brightened our souls. He is truly missed, but lives on inside of all of us.

