



Remembering



Richard R. "Ricky" Christiana

David Crockett Steam Fire Co. No. 1 — Louisiana

Career Firefighter/Operator
Date of Death: September 11, 2009
Age: 44

Richard R. "Ricky" Christiana, age 44, died of a heart attack while responding to a three-alarm structural fire in Gretna, Louisiana, on Friday, September 11, 2009.

Ricky joined the David Crockett Steam Fire Company #1 in 1983 and served as an operator for 20 years. He left the fire department for a brief hiatus to focus more on his custom trim carpentry business. Ricky had numerous clients who praised his craftsmanship and his woodworking skills. After a downturn in the construction business, Ricky returned to the fire department in May 2009 and resumed working at the job he dearly loved.

Ricky received the proceeds from the 8th Annual 2009 9/11 "We Will Never Forget" Poker Run, which were used to give him a traditional fireman's funeral. He was honored posthumously with the Cytec Fire Service Achievement Award and the Appreciation Award for Service to the Community from the Gretna chapter of the VFW. Ricky was honored at the State Firefighters Memorial in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and at the Jefferson Parish Fallen Firefighters Memorial.

Nicknamed "Lips," because he affectionately teased his colleagues and offered his opinions whether they were wanted or not, Firefighter Christiana was going



to get a taste of his own medicine. The burly fire truck operator was the first on the scene of a reported fire in Gretna and saw billowing smoke, so he radioed for additional trucks and manpower. Backup arrived and quickly realized that the source of the smoke was coming from a BBQ grill. Ricky was so embarrassed by this, as he thought the whole house was on fire. After that, the guys would always tease him about that and say, "Another barbecue fire, huh?"

Christiana is remembered as a hands-on firefighter with a take charge attitude. He was a rough and gruff guy who would give you the shirt off his back. He was a kind and generous spirit with a heart of gold and a wonderful sense of humor. He kept true to form the day he died, working behind the scenes at a function wrapping up a state firefighters' conference earlier in the day. He had given no indication that he was not feeling well and was his usual jovial self.

Ricky is the father of Ashley and Allison Christiana; son of Linda Nungesser and Nicholas Christiana Jr.; brother of Stephen, Lori, Robin and twin Nicholas Christiana III. He was preceded in death by his stepfather, Harold Nungesser, and grandparents, Everette and Rose McCracken and Nicholas and Madeline Christiana.