

Archer City Ambulance Director Receives Distinguished Award

By Barbara Phillips

North Texas Regional Advisory Council Outstanding Achievement Award was bestowed on Archer City's Ambulance Director, Pat Bryan, last Saturday morning in a surprise presentation at Vernon College in Wichita Falls during the Trauma Conference sponsored by United Regional Health Care. The choice was a unanimous one of Bryan's peers in 13 counties in the North Texas Region.

According to Archer City's City Secretary, Kim Whitsitt, "This award speaks in and of itself about the respect he has of his peers and what he has accomplished and continues to accomplish in his profession."

Bryan has been permanently confined to a wheel chair since the Archer City Ambulance Service was hit while in route to United Regional Hospital last year while transporting a critical patient whom Bryan was attending to at the time of the accident. The tables turned quickly, and Bryan and other paramedics in the ambulance found themselves on the other side of the equation, Bryan left with the debilitating injuries.

It would be easy for one to quit at this point, but not Pat Bryan. As soon as he was able to return to work, he did. His role has changed a bit as he is unable to get on the ambulance to perform paramedic duties, a job he loves, but his knowledge, instruction and guidance continue to be invaluable to those who work for him.

According to Bryan, he understands that he apparently received the award for dedication before and after the accident.

"I don't really receive awards well, but it's always nice to be recognized. Even though I'm not on the truck anymore, it is great to be respected. They know that I still do everything I can, not only administratively but through education to continually improve myself."

Being on the other side of the equation, Bryan really learned to appreciate two things even more after his accident: the small yet important things a paramedic does and the ability to trust the paramedic in charge.

"After the accident I felt like I was going to die at any moment. Paramedic Bill Sokora was trapped in the ambulance the same as I was, and there was nothing he could physically do to help me; however, he was still an outstanding paramedic in this situation. He reminded me to breathe. As stupid as that sounds, you have no idea how important that was. At a time when I was beside myself and I knew what was happening to me, the most incredibly important reminder he could give me was to breathe."

"It is weird to have the knowledge that I have and to know exactly what was happening to me. Even as I felt like I was dying, and still taking control by telling everyone what needed to be done, I heard the voice of paramedic John Stanley. When I knew he was on the truck, I finally was able to just let myself go. It was a matter of trust. I knew then that I stood as good of chance as I was ever going to stand."

"Remembering the little things and trusting the one in charge of your care are two things that I appreciate far more now than I did before. Beyond all the certification and drugs and all the things we

can do as paramedics, the small but important things a paramedic says and does are so important to the patient. And the ability to put your trust in the paramedic taking care of you is essential. We sometimes forget the basics such as human kindness; reminding someone to breathe is kindness. Talking with them even when you know there is nothing else that can be done is kindness."

Operations manager and paramedic Mark Hale of the Archer Ambulance Service said of Bryan, "He is very deserving of the award because he was devoted 24-7 to this ambulance service before the accident and is equally as devoted now that he is back in the saddle. Not only is he a devoted Director of the Archer Ambulance Service, but he is a devoted and knowledgeable medic . He is a great asset to this service."

Paramedic Bill Sokora said of Bryan, "I think his determination to remain a vital part of the Archer Ambulance service as Director and continued involvement in CPR classes throughout the region is a big factor in his receiving this award. He is determined. He's not a quitter, and it says a lot for a gentleman like Bryan."

"I want to thank the City for allowing me to continue my job with the Archer City Ambulance Service," Bryan said. "They didn't have to. I appreciate that they have the confidence in me and respect for my opinions and changes needed to continue to move forward with our ambulance service. "

As Director of the Archer Ambulance Service, his plate is full with the administrative duties, and continued education. You can be assured that if the Archer City Ambulance is called on your behalf, Bryan has made sure you will have a top notch paramedic on the truck at all times. He will not have it any other way; he hires only the best as his standards for employment are very strict.

Bryan ended the interview by saying, "I don't know what I did to receive this award, but, I would like to say pertaining to the common sense and faith in the person providing your care...I hope that future recipients of this award not only show knowledge, skill and professionalism, but embody the ability to remember the basics and inspire, in patients, the faith in their health care provider and trust that they are in the best hands that they could possibly be in. "