

ROCK SPRINGS MEN RECOGNIZED FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

Three Rock Springs men received special recognition this morning for aiding county deputies at the scene of a fatal ATV crash.

Sweetwater County Sheriff Rich Haskell said Courtney Beaver, his 17-year-old son Tevin, and Chad Walker are the first recipients of the newly-created Jim Stark Community Service Award.

On the night of December 12, 2008, Chad Walker of Rock Springs saw a vehicle rolling down the slopes of White Mountain north of Rock Springs. He called the Sheriff's Office immediately and remained at the scene to direct Deputy Sheriff Sheaman to the site of the crash.

Sheaman drove his patrol vehicle as far as he could up the mountain, and when he could drive no farther he continued on foot up the slope in the frigid darkness by flashlight, as did Mr. Walker, Courtney Beaver, and his son, Tevin Beaver.

After about 30 minutes of searching, the three men found John Millburg, 23, and Adam Atkinson, also 23. The two men had rolled their Polaris Razor all-terrain vehicle several times and had sustained serious injuries.

Emergency responders from Sweetwater County Fire District #1 secured the victims with backboards and baskets and transported them from the scene using ATVs. From the scene, both were taken to Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County in Rock Springs.

Tragically, Millburg was officially declared dead at Memorial Hospital. Atkinson was transported by Air Med to the University of Utah Medical Center in Salt Lake City. A college student, has returned to class and continues to recover.

Haskell praised Walker and the Beavers for their willingness to help deputies search for the victims of the crash. "In that cold, time was everything," he said. "Because these three men did not hesitate to do the right thing in a tight spot, it was possible to get Mr. Atkinson the timely medical treatment he needed. Mr. Millburg's death was a tragedy, but it could, just as readily, have been a double tragedy that night. I'm convinced that their willingness to pitch in made all the difference."

Catherine Millburg of Evanston, the mother of John Millburg, attended the presentation and personally thanked Courtney Beaver, Chad Walker, Deputy Sheriff Sheaman, and Sheriff Haskell.

The Award is named for the late Jim Stark, who served as Sheriff of Sweetwater County from 1977 to 1987.

"If any single person can be said to personify the term "community service" in Sweetwater county, that person would be Sheriff Stark," Haskell said. "His was, literally,

a lifetime of service. A nine-year veteran with the United States Navy in two wars - World War II and Korea - he was there at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. When the war ended, he joined the Rock Springs Police Department and served there for nine and half years, when he joined the Sweetwater County Sheriff's Office as a deputy. From there he served as Undersheriff from 1955 to 1977, when he was appointed Sheriff, an office he held and served with great distinction for 10 years."

"Sheriff Stark's accomplishments and honors make for a long list. He was a charter member of the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy. He was appointed an honorary member of the United States Marshals Service, a highly singular appointment. He was also named Exchange Club Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, Wyoming Peace Officer of the Year, recognized as Sheriff of the Month by the Wyoming Sheriff's Magazine, named the American Legion's Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer in the State of Wyoming, and won the Army and Navy Awards for working with youth.

Himself a distinguished boxer on the west coast in his 20s, Sheriff Stark was named Deputy Boxing Commissioner in 1958 and founded the boxing programs in both Rock Springs and Green River, which he ran for a number of years."

Present for the ceremony was Kathleen "Doll" Bottgenbach, Sheriff Stark's daughter.

"As recipients of an award named for Jim Stark, Chad Walker and Courtney and Tevin Beaver are in fine company," Haskell said. "I had the privilege of serving under him for man many years. No finer man or a finer peace officer ever lived. It's an honor for me to present these awards today named so appropriately for him."

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Photo Caption:



Photo #1: "From left to right, Catherine Millburg, Courtney Beaver, Chad Walker, Deputy Sheriff Jeff Sheaman, and Sheriff Rich Haskell.