



2018 FIRE FIGHTER OF THE YEAR



Mayor Gary Fuller and the Opelika City Council honored the nominations for Opelika Fire Fighter of the 2018 year at the November 6, 2018 City Council meeting. This year's overall Fire Fighter of the Year is Captain David Davis. The two Fire Fighter of the Year Runners Up include Apparatus Operator Ryan White and Fire Medic Jamie Williams. The reasons for their individual nominations were as follows:

Captain David Davis: is a "fireman's fireman," a leader in thought, word and deed not only on the fire-ground, but also around the station. On the morning of any given shift, Captain Davis won't be found in his office. More often than not, he'll be found with a mop or broom in his hands, perhaps even cleaning a toilet...duties typically reserved for the most junior of firefighters at the department. "Captain or not, I can't ask my company to do anything I'm not willing to do myself," Davis explains. Davis became a member of the Opelika Fire Department in 2007. Over a period of less than 10 years, he moved his way up to the rank of Captain. For five of those years, he served as Paramedic on the department's rescue unit. Davis is a consummate student of firefighting. His dedication to the study of the trade has brought him the distinction of having placed first in every written assessment taken along his journey. Captain Davis is a man of great character. Perhaps most notably demonstrated throughout his recovery from a training accident in March of 2018 which left him with second and third-degree burns to 30% of his body. Where others may have considered their firefighting career to be over, Captain Davis became a source of inspiration for an entire community as he fought daily through surgeries, procedures and rehabilitation; all with the singular goal of resuming his duties among his brothers and sisters at the Fire Department. To the amazement of many, just five months following his incident, Captain Davis returned to his engine company with a desire to serve made even more evident by the challenges he overcame to do so. Over the course of a career, a firefighter may have many opportunities to show the courage, actions and noble character of that of a hero. For the co-workers and contemporaries of Captain David Davis, however, his heroism is exemplified on a daily basis.

Apparatus Operator Ryan White: had firefighting instilled in him at a very early age through his Father, David White, who worked as a firefighter with the Opelika Fire Department for 25 years. After seeing his father's desire and determination to help others, and the sacrifices that were made to help others during the events of September 11, White made the choice to follow in his father's footsteps and become a firefighter. He was hired by the Opelika Fire Department in 2004 and it was soon clear to everyone that he was an excellent choice. White was eager to learn everything about the department and to assist anyone in need. As a result of him helping others and seeing how he can make a difference, he went through paramedic school and became a medic in 2010. He was assigned to the rescue truck and served as a paramedic until he went through all the training and testing to become an apparatus operator in 2013. He was promoted to apparatus operator but still maintains his paramedic license in order to serve anyone who may need his assistance. During the Pepperell Mill fire he was assigned to a suppression crew and worked tirelessly to do everything he possibly could to preserve the historic building. Later, White responded to the the Leshner Mill fire as an Apparatus Operator. White established water supplies and pump operations and again worked tirelessly trying to keep the fire to a minimum. In 2010, the Opelika Fire Department responded to a cardiac arrest at Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail in Opelika. On arrival, White found the patient unresponsive. He immediately went to work to try to save this life. His work would not go in vain. He was able to "bring back" the patient that day and the patient went on to make a full recovery. White is someone we all can look up to. He is compassionate, caring, understanding of others, and devoted to Opelika Fire Department. He can be found taking care of his assigned apparatus daily and keeps it in the best state of readiness. White consistently trains others and is willing to help anyone in need. he is a true asset to the department and the community. It is for these reasons we nominate Apparatus Operator Ryan White for the Firefighter of the Year.

Fire Medic Jamie Williams: has served the Opelika Fire Department for 14 years. He volunteers for all duties that are additional to the regular daily duties that C-shift personnel are asked to do. One of these is assisting Capt. Fields to paint and work on the burn building at the training center. Every shift that Williams is at work, he is eager to help Capt. Fields and the training division at the training center. Williams has put in countless hours at the training center working on the burn building to better serve the Fire Dept. Without Williams' continuous help the burn building would not be a reality. He has never been told to help with this project, but he just saw the need. Without a second thought Williams offered his help because he knew that project would help the entire Fire Dept. Williams is always going above and beyond not to better serve himself, but to better serve the department. Williams values the department and will do whatever he can to improve it. Cutting grass at the stations is a job most would say that is reserved for the new guys or younger guys. Williams sees this as a chance to help the new guys by taking on this task so that they can study and have time to complete their required job training. He takes his role as a senior man seriously and takes every opportunity to instill his knowledge and work ethic with the younger guys. This is the true definition of leadership and he shows it every shift. Williams is very aware at how the public looks at the Fire Department. He gives the extra effort to provide the public with a positive perception of the Opelika Fire Department. Williams is always ready to answer any of the public's questions and assist citizens with any request. Besides the "routine calls" that Williams responds to while on duty at the busiest station in the city, he also assisted with two extraordinary calls. One was assisting with extricating and reviving a patient that was experiencing a heart attack that caused him to wreck his car. As a result of hitting the tree, the car also caught fire. Without any hesitation, Williams and his crew freed the man from the burning vehicle only to find him not responsive and in cardiac arrest. Williams and the crew were able to revive the man and get a pulse back before sending him to the emergency room. Another was assisting in caring for an injured firefighter on a training exercise. At a time when chaos is prevailing, Williams was able to focus at the task at hand and care for an injured brother. There are many unseen or unmentioned instances that Williams does on his own accord that help make the shift run smoothly. Williams is always looking for ways to show he cares for his job, city and his family at the Fire Department. It's hard to put into words just how special Williams is and how much he is appreciated. Williams is truly one of those guys you have to meet and in a matter of minutes you realize how special he is.