

Three Give Their Lives in Service to the City

Passings

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Alfonso Caballero



Alfonso Caballero left his native Philippines 15 years ago with his wife and children to seek out a better life. That life ended up being in the Valley, and working for the City since 2001. He boarded the train most every morning in Chatsworth.

Alfonso Caballero joined the City family at the Department of Aging on March 1, 2001 as an accountant.

Al was recently named Employee of the Quarter by his colleagues at the Dept. of Aging. He was singled out for his skill, knowledge, work ethic and enthusiasm. He delved into his assignments with a refreshing zeal and became quite a team player. Within nine months of being hired, all of these attributes contributed to Al being promoted to Accountant II. Because of his great personality, Al created a wonderful work-

ing rapport with his DOA co-workers, the operating agencies' fiscal staff, and fellow colleagues in the Controller's Office.

"He was a very social, wonderful man who made you feel wonderful," said Laura Trejo, General Manager, Aging, where Caballero worked. "He enjoyed people, and it was obvious because we enjoyed him."

Friends and family remember Alfonso as a loving father who dressed well and loved to golf and sing.

He regularly attended church and joined the choir, so it wasn't unusual for Alfonso to burst into song in the office.

He is survived by his wife, Victoria Caballero; daughters Clarissa Caballero, 29, and Catherine Caballero, 21; son Carlo Caballero, 25; and grandchild Alexis Paige, 6 months.

Julia Bennett



Julia Bennett was a longtime Club Member. Alfonso Caballero was featured in *Alive!* one year ago when this newspaper detailed the Dept. of Aging as its department of the month.

Julia was a third-generation City employee. She was the daughter of retired Battalion Chief Ray

Gordon and the granddaughter of the late retired Assistant Chief Thad Whippo. Julia was a longtime member of the staff at the Valley Fire Prevention Office before recently transferring to the downtown office in City Hall East. She was on her way to work when the crash occurred. She was said to have taken the train reluctantly when she transferred downtown, but had grown to love it. She was said to regularly sit in the first car.

Julia began her career in 1983 with Building and Safety. In October 1986, she transferred to the LAFD, Valley Fire Prevention Office. On July 27, 2003, she voluntarily transferred to CHE Headquarters, Public Assemblage Unit, to help due to staffing shortages. Though she resided in Simi Valley, she willingly commuted to and from work on the Metrolink. Julia often told her co-workers that she enjoyed riding the trains because it allowed her the opportunity to meet new friends.

Julia was a joy to work with, according to co-workers. She had a way about her that would brighten your day if you felt a little low. She loved to laugh and was full of vitality and had a special way about her.

Julia took pride in her work and enjoyed assisting customers that needed fire permits, her coworkers say. She made everyone feel that they were important to her and to the department.

Julia also knew a lot about movies and music. Many times she recited lines from her favorite movies and words of many songs. She loved life in general: family, close friends, co-workers, and her "adopted" Fire Department family.

Julia was so proud to be part of the Fire Department, that she often introduced her family to co-workers. Julia is survived by her husband Paul, daughter Lyndsie, step-daughter Brittany, father retired Battalion Chief Ray Gordon, mother Linda Gordon, and brother Greg.

"She was well respected and an industrious worker who held the spirit of the LAFD as close to her as her bloodline, which ran deep in the department," said LAFD spokesman Brian Humphrey.

Her memorial service was held Feb. 4 at the Henry Fonda Theater. See related story.

In her honor, the LAFD dedicated a conference room on the 17th floor of City Hall East in her memory.

Julie's Memorial Service

Here are images taken from the memorial service for Julie Bennett, one of two City employees killed when two Metrolink trains collided Jan. 26.

Eleven people were killed in the accident that morning.

Her memorial service was held Feb. 5 at the Henry Ford Theater in Hollywood Hills. The men and women of the Los Angeles Fire Department wanted to celebrate her life.

Her officemates in the LAFD's Fire Prevention Bureau on the 17th floor of City Hall East mourned her death. She was a Club Member.

The family has respectfully asked that any memorial donations be made to either:

Lyndsie Bennett
c/o Los Angeles Firemen's
Credit Union
1520 West Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91105
(800) 231-1626

OR

**Los Angeles Firemen's
Relief Association**
Widows and Orphans Fund
2900 West Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
(800) 244-3439



Saying Goodbye to Christopher Wozniak

Born May 23, 1970 in Mission Hills, California and passed away January 22, 2005 at the age of 34. Chris was a former City of Los Angeles employee, working for both the Bureau of Sanitation and DWP. His father, Richard Wozniak is a Solid Resources Manager in the Bureau of Sanitation.



Christopher Richard Wozniak

Christopher was survived by his loving parents, Richard Wozniak, Benny and Martha Garcia; grandparents, Don and Elinore Webster; and Richard and Monica Garcia, Alice Garcia, and sisters, Melissa, Yvette, Andrea and Carrie; brother, Grant; brother-in-law, Justin; nephews, Sal, Nick, Alex, Lil B and River; nieces, Samantha and Jessie; and many uncles, aunts and cousins.

The love surrounding Chris was evident by the standing room only at the Rosary held on Thursday, January 27, 2005, and the Mass held on Friday, January 28, 2005, at St. Genevieve Catholic Church.

Chris will be missed for many reasons including his humor, compassion, laughter, love he had for his family and friends, and the protection he always had for his sisters. Just two weeks prior to his death, Chris took time out to select the perfect rosary beads for his sisters. Along with their memories, they will cherish this gift forever.

Richard Wozniak, father of the deceased, commented that "It is a shame to senselessly take a human life." Without hiding the sorrow of a grieving parent, he further added, "Simply because you're able to do so." Additionally, the family would like to thank everyone for their support and expression of condolences.

Rory Shaw



Rory Shaw, a 15-year City veteran, was on duty Sunday, Feb. 20, at an enormous sinkhole that had rendered Tujunga Ave. in Sun Valley unusable. The sinkhole apparently was caused by the torrential rains the City had been experiencing.

Rory, one of the Bureau's emergency specialists, was on site, briefing City officials that night, including Mayor Jim Hahn, Councilmember Tony Cardenas and Bureau of Public Works Commissioner Yolanda Fuentes Sunday night when he returned to work at the sinkhole site.

He walked away and stood near the edge of the sinkhole. The ground gave way, and he fell in.

It remains unclear exactly how Shaw fell into the sinkhole. LAFD officials are continuing their investigation at press time.

Cardenas was quoted as saying that he saw Shaw begin to cross the street in deepening water, and then, "he just disappeared."

Within minutes, Cardenas was quoted as saying, LAFD rescuers arrived on the scene, but they were not able to rescue Shaw.

"My heart and prayers go out to Rory's family, friends and co-workers, and I extend my deepest sympathies," Mayor Hahn said. "I have ordered all flags at City facilities to be flown at half staff in his honor." Mayor Hahn also said that counseling was to be available for City employees who knew Rory.

400 Say Goodbye to Rory

Memorial service for Rory Shaw held in City Council chambers.

Rory Shaw was always there to serve the City in emergency situations. At a memorial service held in City Council chambers Feb. 24, approximately 400 people came to remember him.

In a crisis, civil engineer Rory Shaw was the go-to guy. Even if the call came in the middle of the night or on his day off, he would respond.

Rory, director of the City's Emergency Sewer Repair Division, was killed Feb. 20 in Sun Valley when the ground gave way while he was helping to repair a sinkhole in Tujunga Avenue in Sun Valley.

"His life ended tragically because he was trying to save a street," his sister, Leslie Botti, said during the two-hour memorial.

"Do not play the what-if game," she was quoted as saying. "It was an accident."

Born in Aurora, Colo., Shaw grew up in Michigan and graduated from Michigan State University in 1979. He served in the Navy until 1984, working on nuclear power and classified assignments.

He went back to school to obtain a civil engineering degree and then embarked on a 14-year career with the Los Angeles Public Works Department.

"I think it's an honor for all of us to be City employees when we look at employees like Rory Shaw," said Hahn. "His memory is going to serve as an inspiration to all of us. Maybe when we're tired, maybe when we think the job is too difficult, we can think of Rory, and maybe we can also go beyond the expectations."

Shaw's family has set up a scholarship fund with his alma mater, Michigan State University. Those who wish to donate should make their checks out to the university, and include the designation, In Memory of Rory Shaw.

Checks should be mailed to Michigan State University, University Department, 4700 S. Hagadorn Road, Suite 220, East Lansing, MI 48823.



The Club extends our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Julia, Alfonso, Rory, and Christopher.