State Fire Marshal Presents Euclid City Schools Superintendent with Ohio Fire Service Citizen’s Award

Papouras Rescued Woman from Burning Vehicle Back in March

(GATES MILLS, Ohio) — State Fire Marshal Kevin S. Reardon presented Euclid City Schools Superintendent Chris Papouras with the Ohio Fire Service Citizen’s Award today for rescuing a woman from a burning vehicle earlier this year.

Papouras, of Gates Mills, was awakened by the sound of a car crash outside his West Hill Drive home in the early morning hours of March 1. The vehicle had struck a boulder and flipped onto its side, leaving the female passenger trapped inside.

Without hesitation, Papouras approached the burning vehicle and attempted to remove the windshield with his bare hands before retrieving a sledgehammer and using it to safely pull the woman away from the wreckage.

“That was a defining moment because you knew you had to do something, and you didn’t think twice about it,” Marshal Reardon said to Papouras. “Had it not been for your quick and decisive actions that night, there might have only been one person who walked away from that car.”

Marshal Reardon recognized Papouras during a private ceremony inside the Gates Mills Community House. Joined by his wife and son, Papouras was also honored by Gates Mills Mayor Karen Schneider, 24th District Senator Matt Dolan, and Gates Mills Fire Chief Tom Robinson, who nominated him for the award.

“I’ve been in the fire service for 45 years. In that time, I’ve witnessed many acts of heroism. This is the first time I’ve ever nominated a citizen for such an important award,” said Chief Robinson. “And while the awards and proclamations are a physical reminder of the day, Chris now joins a very small group of people who have saved a life.”

This is the 40th year of the annual Ohio Fire Service Hall of Fame and Fire Awards, presented each year by the Ohio Department of Commerce’s Division of State Fire Marshal and Ohio Department of Public Safety’s Division of EMS. Today’s ceremony marked the fourth event hosted by the State Fire Marshal’s office.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Papouras and this year’s 11 other honorees are being recognized individually at smaller, more intimate award ceremonies in their home communities or online.

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This award is handed out annually to members of the public who, at great personal risk to themselves, are credited with directly saving or attempting to save a life or lives during an extreme fire or other emergency rescue situation.

Chris Papouras, recipient of the 2020 Ohio Fire Service Citizen’s Award.

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The Division of State Fire Marshal is part of the Ohio Department of Commerce. The department is Ohio’s chief regulatory agency, focused on promoting prosperity and protecting what matters most to Ohioans. We ensure businesses follow the laws that help them create jobs and keep Ohioans safe. To learn more about what we do, visit our website at com.ohio.gov.

The Ohio Department of Public Safety, through the Division of EMS, oversees the certification of emergency medical technicians and firefighters and ensures that the professionals in these lifesaving roles are properly trained, educated and prepared for emergency situations.