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Sally Ellertson
Public Information Officer
141 West Renfro
Burleson, Texas 76028-4261
817-426-9622
F: 817-426-9390
sellertson@burlesontx.com
www.burlesontx.com

The Burleson Police Department's 2014 Officer of the Year is the community's "go-to guy," and "it is this type of relationship with the community that sets this officer head and shoulders above the others." Why is he the go-to guy? David Wardlaw has served as the department's sole community resource officer for the past year.

"I am truly honored and thankful for the recognition of my peers," Wardlaw said of the award. "I'm also thankful for my friend and mentor, retired officer Jack Goleman. He had been instrumental in my development as an officer."

The Burleson Police Department hired Wardlaw in November 2002. The 44-year-old Burleson resident joined Goleman as a community resource officer in 2013. He received about one year of training before Goleman's retirement.

"This officer is constantly trying to create relationships with the community through crime prevention and public education programs," according to the nomination letter. "You often find him taking part in City functions like the Hot Sounds of Summer concert series, council meetings and parades. He has done the work of two officers this last year and has continued to bring high acclaim to the department."

Wardlaw served in patrol and as a motorcycle officer in the department's traffic unit. He earned a bachelor's degree in criminology and criminal justice in 2007. The honoree is certified as a crime prevention specialist, crash reconstructionist, instructor, field training officer, and background investigator. He served for about five years as the driver for the SWAT team and in the department's honor guard.

Wardlaw isn't the first in his family to go in to law enforcement. His uncle, Phillip Wardlaw, worked for the Farmers Branch Police Department. He also worked with the DEA. Phillip Wardlaw retired in December 2014.

Before he made law enforcement his career, David Wardlaw served six years of active duty in the United States Army. His last duty assignment was Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

The honoree's family includes his wife, Crystal, who he will celebrate his 21st anniversary with in the spring; daughter Sade; son Cody; brother Dwight; mother Donna, who is getting ready for retirement; father Tim who is already retired; stepmother Nella and stepbrother Jay.

"Burleson is my home. I can't imagine being a police officer anywhere else," Wardlaw said. "I am blessed to work with and for some of the finest people you'll ever meet. I'm very proud to be part of this police department and to serve the Burleson community."