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She's a dedicated dynamo of a woman, and she wears Burleson Fire Department bunker gear. Firefighter/EMT Jules Knight was selected as the City of Burleson's Employee of the Quarter for the first quarter of 2016.

Knight is credited for spearheading the fire department's first ever Open House in 2015, training a fellow first responder who then became the first female firefighter hired by the Cleburne Fire Department, and for her most recent endeavor of serving on the City's community risk reduction program.

The community risk reduction program focuses on increasing the awareness of fire and life safety risks involving children. "Drowning prevention and water/pool safety are especially important topics right now, however, helmet (bicycle/skateboard) safety and hyperthermia (abnormally high body temperature) are other hazards," the award winner said.

When Knight was hired by the Burleson Fire Department in June 2009, she marked a milestone as the department's first career female firefighter. Recently, she worked with Stephanie Pribble to prepare her for the Cleburne Fire Department's physical agility test.

"The real inspiration for us both was the emotional, mental, and spiritual bonding we shared with our love for the fire service – the serving, the physical challenges and the demands. I knew she would make an excellent firefighter so I made it my goal to help her in any way I could."

Stephanie Pribble succeeded in being the first female to pass Cleburne's physical agility test, and the first female firefighter to be hired in the City of Cleburne's 135-year history.

The most visible example of Firefighter Knight's dedication is the April 2015 Burleson Fire Department Open House. According to the nomination letter, Knight "came in on her days off to do extra work to make this Open House the best event ever. She contacted our retired volunteer firefighters and invited them to come so we could show them our appreciation. She collected memorabilia from them, as well as from other firefighters, and set up an amazing display of

our Burluson Fire Department history. There is no way this event could have been a success without Jules.”

Knight said that she and several other firefighters approached the chief in 2015 and mentioned an Open House. “We thought it would be great to invite the community in to get to know us and learn more about our history, the services we provide, fire safety, and even the personal aspect of living at a fire station. Our hard work paid off with one of the largest fire department public events in Burluson Fire Department history. It was a blast!”

The honoree started on the road to a career that involves medical care when she worked for an obstetrician/gynecologist for more than nine years. She said it was an experience “that gave me the opportunity to really appreciate the patient care and compassion it takes to work in the field of medicine.”

Knight completed basic EMT school at Tarrant County College, and then volunteered with Edgecliff Village Fire-Rescue while going through the fire academy at Training Division in Crowley. She graduated from the academy in December 2006, and was hired by the Burluson Fire Department in 2009. Her older brother Paul, a firefighter with the Austin Fire Department since 2003, stepped in to do the honors when it was time for Knight to be officially badged in as a Burluson firefighter.

“He had a big influence on me in my decision to go for it and pursue a career in the fire service,” Knight said. “Like so many reeling from the tragedies of 9/11, something changed within and we both felt it was our duty to give back and make a difference in the world.”

The honoree’s cousin, Vincent Rodriguez, is a captain with Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson Co. Fire Department. Knight’s cousin Matthew Renaud was one of four firefighters who died in the Southwest Inn hotel fire in Houston on May 31, 2013. He was a captain with the Houston Fire Department, Station 51. Capt. Renaud was 35 years old.

The City’s Employee of the Quarter award is based on an employee’s efficiency, transparency, honesty, innovation and customer service, all of which make up the City’s ethics statement. The first quarter focused on employees from the fire department, police department and fire marshal’s office.

The second quarter will focus on athletic field maintenance, golf course, library, parks maintenance, the BRiCk (recreation center), and the senior activity center. Third quarter nominations revolve around public works, and the honoree from the final quarter will hail from administration (animal services, city manager’s office, city secretary/records, community development, economic development, engineering/gas well development, finance/support services, human resources, information technology, municipal court, neighborhood services and permits/inspections.