

Burlington County Times

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Honoring heroes

The annual prosecutor's awards highlighted public servants and civilians who went the extra step.



Riverton Borough President Suzanne Cairns-Wells honors Riverton Police Chief John Shaw for his role in apprehending and arresting the subject who robbed the Beneficial Bank in July, 2010.

MAPLE SHADE - Police officers know they can be called upon at any moment to take actions that could mean the difference between life and death.

But it's a rare day when the life that needs saving is the officers' own boss.

Such a scenario happened January to Moorestown officers Craig Ruggiano, Brian Wesolowski and Walter Walczak when they responded to a two-vehicle accident on Route 38 and discovered that Public Safety Director Harry Johnson was suffering cardiac arrest in one of the vehicles.

The officers provided immediate life support to Johnson, who was transported to Cooper University Hospital in Camden. He survived the heart attack and has made a complete

recovery and returned to work.

For their life-saving actions, the three officers were presented with commendations during the annual PROCOPS dinner Thursday night at the Touch of Class by Candlelite on North Fork Landing Road.

Held annually for 22 years, PROCOPS is an acronym for Prosecutor's Recognition of Citizens or Public Servants. Ruggiano, Wesolowski and Walczak were among nine officers given law enforcement officer commendations for life-saving deeds and outstanding police work.

Nine non-law enforcement officers were also honored, including five members of the Moorestown First Aid and Emergency Squad who cared for Johnson at the Moorestown accident scene and provided life support for him en route to the hospital.

The squad members - Kim Jones, David Mayer Jr., LeeAnn Parry, Michael Richards and Daniel Shields -- received civilian heroawards. Also, Beneficial Bank employees Marina Lucic, Julieanne Rudd and Deirdre Saia were given awards for their actions in notifying police of a bank robbery in progress. They helped Riverton Officer John Shaw apprehend a man who held up their branch on Broad Street on two occasions last year.

By David Levinsky
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