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LETTERS

No one could exaggerate the legend of "Jimmy D"

Home News Tribune Online 01/26/05

There is no easy way to approach the loss of a great man. All words come out wrong and all gestures seem insignificant. However, the atmosphere that was joyously created at the Harvest Moon on Jan. 16 for the late Deputy Fire Chief James D'heron was amazing.

I never saw so much love in one room in my life. There were enough stories of Jimmy circulating to fill a lifetime of tears and laughs. I have not seen the same group of people together since Jimmy D's wake and funeral. Though his wake and funeral had hundreds and hundreds of people present, nothing could ever compare to the intimate gathering that was created at their cafe on that cold winter day. It was so peaceful to look from afar at his wife and children smiling and laughing with so many different individuals whose lives Jimmy had touched.

They successfully brought together Jimmy's family, friends, "brothers," neighbors, etc. There were even people there Jimmy never knew. And the beauty in that is — now they know who he is. They know who he still is and who he will always be. Jimmy D was, is, and will always be a hero.

You see, for years to come people will sit down at your bar, see the tap that has "Jimmy D" embedded in the shiny red firefighter emblem. There will be people who will ask, "Who is Jimmy D?" Maybe someone with them will answer, maybe someone at the next table will answer, maybe the bartender or waitress will answer. Or maybe that day, at that minute, there will be nobody who knew of Jimmy D. However, Jimmy's story of death is a story in which the fish can't get bigger every time. His story already ends with the biggest catch of a lifetime. He died a hero — the best and hardest level of manhood there is to achieve. No version of any story about Jimmy D could ever be exaggerated because his story already shines. It does not matter if one man says he saved 10 people that day, and the next woman says it was 15 people.

Either way — Jimmy D was a hero to us all, and I cannot thank them enough for honoring my best friend and "brother" at their brewery.

Bob Casale

Retired captain, Fire Department

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