

NAEMT celebrates its 2011 National EMS Award winners

ONCE AGAIN, MEMBERS AND GUESTS ATTENDING the NAEMT General Membership Meeting and Awards Presentation in Las Vegas the evening of August 30 were presented with some of the finest examples of excellence in our profession.

NAEMT awarded its 2011 National EMS Awards to three outstanding individuals exemplifying EMS professionalism and dedication:

EMT of the Year - William (Bill) Rise, EMT-I
Milbank, South Dakota

Paramedic of the Year - Anne Edwards, NREMT-P
Indianapolis, Indiana

Rocco V. Morando Lifetime Achievement Award - Ken Knipper
Melbourne, Kentucky

Bill Rise

Rise, a volunteer EMT-I with Grant-Roberts County Ambulance Service, is described as an outstanding example of an EMT by Katheryn Q. Benton, South Dakota EMT Association (SDEMTA) State Training Officer. "By helping educate other EMS providers and the public, as well as promoting safety to everyone, Bill shows his commitment to the care and welfare of the people of his community and the State of South Dakota," she says.

Because of Rise's commitment to EMS, he currently is enrolled in a paramedic program to increase his skill level. He looks to "provide an even higher level of care to the

patients he serves and for the ambulance service of which he is a vital member," says Benton. Duane Tillman, EMT-I, of Grant-Roberts Ambulance Service, commends Rise for sharing his knowledge with other EMS personnel as well.

Mike Mach of the Milbank Fire and Rescue Department comments that Rise has always been very active with the department, not only at the scene of incidents, but also during drills and in helping newer members. "He is experienced with rescue drills and helps with planning and setting up different rescue drills such as vehicle extraction and procedures in an actual water rescue," Mach says.

Since 1989, Rise has found time to volunteer with the Grant-Roberts County Ambulance Service and also volunteers many hours with organizations including the Milbank Volunteer Fire Department and the Police Reserves. He has served as a police reserve officer since 1999 and is Secretary/Treasurer of the Fraternal Order of Police and is a member of the Milbank Police Department.

"Through continual training and hands-on experience, Bill has become a valuable asset to the local community," says Tillman. Rise is trained in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) and helps on the Watertown, S.D., CISD team. It's one of his toughest jobs, Benton says.

Trained as an American Heart Association CPR/AED instructor, Rise has been involved in coordinating and teaching bicycle safety courses to the public, teaching first aid courses to local fire departments, Boy Scouts and 4-H groups, and in many events promoting safety in the community. He also is involved with the Department of Public Safety, conducting annual child safety seat, seat belt and motorcycle helmet surveys within the county.

Rise has served as Vice-President of the SDEMTA for more than 10 years and has been involved on its various committees. He also volunteers for the Masonic Temple, Elraid Shrine in Sioux Falls, and the Yelduz Shrine in Aberdeen. "He has made numerous trips transporting children to the Shrine Hospital in the Twin Cities," notes Tillman.

Benton says, "It's time for everyone to take notice of the person who is always helping, is there when needed, and is the one who always can be relied upon to get the job done."

Anne Edwards

Edwards, a paramedic with Indianapolis EMS, "will step up when others shy away," says Michael Thralls, NR/CCEMT-P, PI, FP-C, CMO Operations Commander, Indianapolis EMS. He describes her as always giving 100 percent.

Edwards trains new employees as well as paramedic students in the Indiana University School of Medicine. "Anne provides them with the structure and guidance they need to build a



Bill Rise is congratulated on his award by (left) Scott Cravens, EMS World Magazine Publisher, and (right) Chad Brown of Braun Industries.

Glen E. Ellman

great foundation for their future field practice. She spends time after her shift to work with students, helping them prepare for the next day, an exam, or difficult concepts,” Thralls says.

In fact, Edwards was nominated by Silvia Alba, FF/EMT-P, whom she precepted during the ambulance rotation portion of the class. “Little did I know that she would become more than a preceptor; over the course of the rotation she proved herself to be a role model for patient advocacy, a patient and fair teacher, level-headed in the midst of chaos and the voice of encouragement,” Alba says.



Anne Edwards receives her award from Cravens and Patrick Moore, NAEMT Immediate Past President.

private and makes sure they understand and learn from each experience. She herself is quick to ask medical directors questions to increase her knowledge and share it with her students.”

She notes that Edwards models her strong work ethic and conscientiousness when she unflinchingly and thoroughly checks her ambulance at the beginning of each shift, anticipates a possible inability to get back to the station for more supplies in case of back-to-back calls, and immediately addresses any issues that may interfere with patient care. “Anne is not one to stand on the sidelines when she can do something to make things better.”

When the agency teamed up with the MESH Coalition to build a disaster team capable of deploying to the MAST-F, a 25-bed mobile tent hospital system, Thralls says that Edwards quickly stepped up to volunteer her services and has become a team leader instrumental in developing policy and deploying missions. Additionally, to help unify EMS services within the county, Edwards has provided her expertise in developing a new field training program, policies and procedures. “She has put in hundreds of hours with the focus of making the service better for our future patients,” says Thralls.

Thralls notes that Edwards takes her time on scenes to ensure the family, friends and patients understand their options, and facilitates the best choices for the patient. He says that on time-

critical calls, she guides the patient care team to keep everyone on task in a timely manner. Alba says Edwards is an inspiration and shares this story of how she goes above and beyond to advocate for her patients: “We had a run during which a female patient was confused about her medication. Anne called the company that sent the patient medication every month, getting the error corrected for both the patient and her husband when she realized he had the same issue. She saw the bigger picture – and by taking the time to make the call, she helped two people avoid becoming patients in the future. When the situation allows it, she helps her patients improve their long-term health.” Alba says that on a busy ambulance, Edwards sees her share of “regulars,” and although it is easy to treat these patients with less than professionalism, Edwards greets them by name and is familiar with their history and issues, addressing their conditions with the same regard, time and time again.

“Anne is always willing to explain concepts, do post-incident analysis of runs, share resources to aid learning, encourage when she sees the need and genuinely wants to help students become good medics, capable of thinking critically and clinically,” Alba says. “She gives feedback to her students in

critical calls, she guides the patient care team to keep everyone on task in a timely manner.

Alba says Edwards is an inspiration and shares this story of how she goes above and beyond to advocate for her patients: “We had a run during which a female patient was confused about her medication. Anne called the company that sent the patient medication every month, getting the error corrected for both the patient and her husband when she realized he had the same issue. She saw the bigger picture – and by taking the time to make the call, she helped two people avoid becoming patients in the future. When the situation allows it, she helps her patients improve their long-term health.” Alba says that on a busy ambulance, Edwards sees her share of “regulars,” and although it is easy to treat these patients with less than professionalism, Edwards greets them by name and is familiar with their history and issues, addressing their conditions with the same regard, time and time again.

“I believe it is fair to say that there are few people who display true passion for their work, compassion for others, dedication to the mission of their organization, and are willing to do both the sweaty, back-breaking work and office work with the same degree of energy, all while maintaining a positive attitude,” says Alba. “Yet Anne does exactly that.”

Ken Knipper

Knipper was nominated for this award, NAEMT’s most prestigious, due to his tireless and dedicated service to EMS in the many capacities he has served. “Ken is most deserving of this honor,” says Charles M. O’Neal, B.A., NREMT-P, Assistant Division Director, Kentucky Division of Emergency Management. O’Neal notes that he has had the privilege of serving with Knipper on various state level EMS committees and councils and has seen firsthand the “sincere desire he has to see the citizens of the Commonwealth receive first rate prehospital medical care, and his determination to see EMS in Kentucky recognized as a legitimate part of the public safety community.”

Knipper is retired from his job as Campbell County Emergency Manager. He has served as a volunteer EMT and Chief of the Silver Grove Fire Department in Northern Kentucky. “Ken has consistently and fairly represented the citizens of Kentucky and the EMS community,” says O’Neal.

Knipper previously served as the Director of the Kentucky Board of Emergency Medical Services, was inducted into the Kentucky Firefighters Association Hall of Fame in 2008 and has received a Special Recognition Award from the EMS Branch of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health Services.

“Ken was always there to help support my agency and causes that would improve EMS for the citizens and the EMS community as a whole. Be it fire-based, hospital-based or a private EMS organization, Ken was always ready to offer advice and

National award winners > > continued

provide support through the many channels he had developed over his many years,” notes O’Neal.

Knipper currently is serving his second term on the National EMS Advisory Council, where he was appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to represent volunteer EMS practitioners. He served as a member of the National Core Content Committee during the development of the EMS Education Agenda for the Future: A Systems Approach. He also was a panelist on the Institute of Medicine’s Preparedness and Response to Rural Mass Casualty Incident workshop, which was funded by the



Ken Knipper (left) receives his award from Bill Brown, NREMT.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in response to a National Transportation Safety Board recommendation to the Federal Interagency Committee on EMS. He currently serves as a member of the Culture of Safety Project Steering Committee, a project funded by a NHTSA grant awarded to the American College of Emergency Physicians. Additionally, Knipper serves on the National

EMS Advisory Council and serves as a liaison to the NREMT Board of Directors.

“For many years, Ken’s presence has been ubiquitous in the emergency medical services projects supported by NHTSA,” says Drew Dawson, Director, Office of Emergency Medical Services, U.S. Department of Transportation, NHTSA. “Ken has capably and professionally represented the voice of volunteer EMS providers throughout the nation – regardless of their affiliation. Ken is indefatigable in his enthusiastic support of EMS system improvement throughout the United States.”

According to the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC),

over 30 years ago Knipper recognized the need for volunteer EMTs in his Northern Kentucky community and helped initiate the EMS division of his local department. Since then, he has become a prominent and active leader and voice for EMS at the local, state, and national levels.

He represented the NVFC at various development meetings for the National EMS Workforce Assessment and for the EMS Workforce Agenda for the Future, and was a member of the steering committee for the Feasibility for an EMS Workforce Safety and Health Surveillance system study. Knipper’s representation in several meetings led to the development of 2007’s “EMS Pandemic Influenza Guidelines for Statewide Adoption (2007)” and “Preparing for Pandemic Influenza: Recommendations for Protocol Development for 9-1-1 Personnel and Public Safety Answering Points.”

“Ken’s dedication and commitment to the fire service of Kentucky and to the NVFC over the years has been exemplary,” says Ronnie Day, Executive Director, Kentucky Fire Commission. “Ken takes on all he does with determination, and his devotion and enthusiasm is second to none.”

“Ken is a living legend of leadership in EMS in Kentucky,” says Bill Brown, Executive Director, National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT), who presented Knipper with the award.

These three awards are part of the National EMS Awards program. The NAEMT EMT of the Year Award is sponsored by Braun Industries, the NAEMT Paramedic of the Year Award is sponsored by EMS World, and the Rocco V. Morando Lifetime Achievement Award is sponsored by NREMT.

Other 2011 National EMS Award winners included:

Volunteer EMS Service of the Year - Bay Shore-Brightwaters Rescue Ambulance Sponsored by Impact

Dick Ferneau Paid EMS Service of the Year - Sussex County (Delaware) EMS Sponsored by Ferno

Glenn Luedtke, Chair of the EMS Safety Program Committee, received the NAEMT Presidential Leadership Award for his dedicated work in the realm of EMS safety.