

Three Saskatchewanians saluted for bravery

BY WILL CHABUN, LEADER-POST APRIL 20, 2012



Three people from Saskatchewan received the Medal of Bravery from Governor General David Johnston at a ceremony in Ottawa on Apr. 20.

Photograph by: CHRIS WATTIE, REUTERS

REGINA — Maybe, Mark Janke thought to himself that evening in late April of 2008, a farm truck had lost a bale of hay.

But as the truck driver from Elbow slowed his vehicle on a highway in southeast Saskatchewan, he spotted skid marks, then a bleeding man trying to flag down traffic and get help.

“There was something out of the normal,” he remembers thinking.

At that point, Janke, who is a trained medical first responder, began doing the things that on Friday brought him and another man, Darren Bieber of Weyburn, the Medal of Bravery from Governor General David Johnston in a ceremony at Rideau Hall. Also receiving the medal was Jeff McCarthy of Regina, recognized for his bravery in saving the life of a woman in 2007.

The award to Bieber and Janke stemmed from an incident near Stoughton on April 27, 2008, when a vehicle bearing five people went out of control, left the road and entered a water-filled ditch.

Janke radioed his position to his company’s dispatcher, and asked for help. “And then I just prayed,” he said in a telephone interview Friday.

“I went, ‘God, I need help. Show me what needs to be done.’ And then, I got out of my truck and, I guess, did what needed to be done.”

The citation said Janke was able to pull two people out of the wreckage of the Honda CRV, which was blocking a culvert and partially submerged. Bieber then arrived and helped Janke remove the last two victims.

The two rescuers cared for the two survivors until an ambulance arrived. Unfortunately, three of the five occupants did not survive.

McCarthy was honoured with the Medal of Bravery for risking his life on Feb. 27, 2008 to rescue a woman who’d become trapped inside her vehicle after an collision between her car and a semi-tractor trailer near Balgonie.

Through thick fog, McCarthy ran across the highway, reached in through the passenger-side door of the car and pulled out the injured driver.

“Without concern for his own life, Mr. McCarthy moved the victim towards his vehicle on the other side of the highway,” his citation from the governor general’s office said. “As he did so, another vehicle hit the woman’s car where Mr. McCarthy had just been standing.”

In all, Friday saw the governor general present two Stars of Courage and 36 Medals of Bravery to Canadians. This family of decorations for bravery was created in 1972 to recognize people who risk their lives in order to try to save or protect others.

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