

Employee aids injured DPS officer

By John Tucker, Editor

Shane Lawson missed the free Grand Slam breakfast at Denny's on Feb. 9.

He had planned to meet his co-workers for lunch and take advantage of the free offer, publicized by the restaurant in a Feb. 7 Super Bowl advertisement, but something bigger came up.

The Information Technology Group employee was driving to a service call in Phoenix about 12:45 on the afternoon of Feb. 9 when he witnessed a crash in front of him on Interstate 17, just north of Indian School Road.

A woman driving north in the outside right lane in a late-model Ford Crown Victoria crashed into what Lawson thought was a concrete barrier.

Driving an ADOT-owned Ford Taurus, Lawson immediately pulled over and parked the Taurus diagonally behind the crashed vehicle, which was partially blocking the lane. He turned on his car's hazard lights and jumped out to check on the driver of the Crown Victoria. She appeared to be OK physically, but Lawson noticed that she was "very upset."

Seconds later, he realized why. The woman had crashed into the motorcycle of DPS officer Randall Wilson, who was finishing a traffic stop on the right shoulder of the freeway. The motorcycle hit Wilson, pinning him against a concrete barrier.

"He was wedged against the wall," Lawson said. "He was conscious and I could see his eyes moving inside his helmet, but he wasn't able to speak."

By now, other motorists had pulled over to help. One of them was a nurse. Lawson asked if anyone

had called 9-1-1. None had. Lawson did not have a phone with him, so he borrowed a phone from the Crown Victoria driver and dialed the emergency number. He gave the operator all the details. Officers and an ambulance were on the way.

Lawson returned to the injured officer and reassured him. "I told him that help was on the way and to keep conscious." Minutes later, four DPS motorcycle officers arrived and took command of the scene. They checked on their fellow officer, set up lane closures, and began directing traffic around the crash.

Lawson told the officers what he had seen and done, and he stayed on scene until Officer Wilson was taken by ambulance to a nearby hospital. The DPS officers thanked Lawson for blocking traffic and calling 9-1-1. One of the officers told him, "You may have saved one of our own."

The 10-year employee plays down his role at the crash scene. "I was thinking that could be me or one of my family; I knew I had to act quickly. Anyone would have done the same," Lawson said.

Having suffered numerous broken bones, Officer Wilson faces a long recovery but is expected to return to work eventually. He recently went home from the hospital.

Sgt. Eric Anspach was the first DPS officer to arrive at the crash scene.

"Shane assisted with traffic control, was instrumental in getting us preliminary information, and he stayed around as long as we needed him. His assistance was greatly appreciated," Anspach said.

Lawson may have missed a free meal, but he has a priceless memory of doing the right thing at a time when it mattered most.



Shane Lawson
IT Group