

Book Reviews (continued)

Riding with the Blue Moth by Bill Hancock

This was the first book that gave me hope of a better tomorrow. Bill Hancock's book started out as a simple journal while biking across America, a trip he had always planned to take with his son. The chapters are short, which is helpful when you have limited concentration. His analogies were meaningful and easy to relate to. It was a reminder to look for the good in people when your heart is too full of pain to be able to think of others without effort. It gave me hope. It is a very real account of the loss of a son.

You can borrow these books and many others for free through the Foundation's Lending Library. By visiting www.firehero.org (Family Programs section), or contacting Linda Hurley at (301) 447-7693 or lhurley@firehero.org. If you want to purchase your own copies, please consider buying from Amazon.com through the link from our online Lending Library. Materials purchased through the Amazon.com affiliate program will benefit National Fallen Firefighters Foundation programs and help us purchase additional materials for the Lending Library.

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program (PSOB)

Did you know...

Just released, the Attorney General's Guide to the Hometown Heroes Survivors' Benefits Act provides survivors and public safety agencies with a step-by-step review of the PSOB Program and how to file claims for eligible line-of-duty heart attacks and strokes. The Guide includes concise information on the history of the PSOB

Program, details regarding the Hometown Heroes Act, the claims review process, and key points of contact for survivors wanting more information or seeking assistance with their claims. To access the Guide electronically, visit www.psob.gov or www.firehero.org. For a hard copy, contact the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

Enacted in 1976, the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program provides death, disability, and education benefits to those eligible for the program. The PSOB benefit for eligible deaths occurring in FY 2008 is \$303,064. PSOB partners with key national public safety organizations, including the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, to provide information and support to survivors and surviving agencies of America's fallen officers.



BJA Bureau of Justice Assistance

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program

Toll-free: 1-888-744-6513

We want to hear from you...

We have had a few recent requests from survivors on specific topics. If you have thoughts or suggestions to offer, we would love to hear from you and may use your responses in a future issue of *The Journey*.

"My husband has been gone almost 20 years, and some days I think it's harder now than it was years ago. I guess it's that empty nest syndrome and just feeling so alone. I'd like to see some articles from survivors who lost a spouse 15 plus years ago. It would be nice to hear how others deal with the loneliness this much later."

"I am a seven-year survivor and am tired of being alone. I need suggestions from other people who are in their



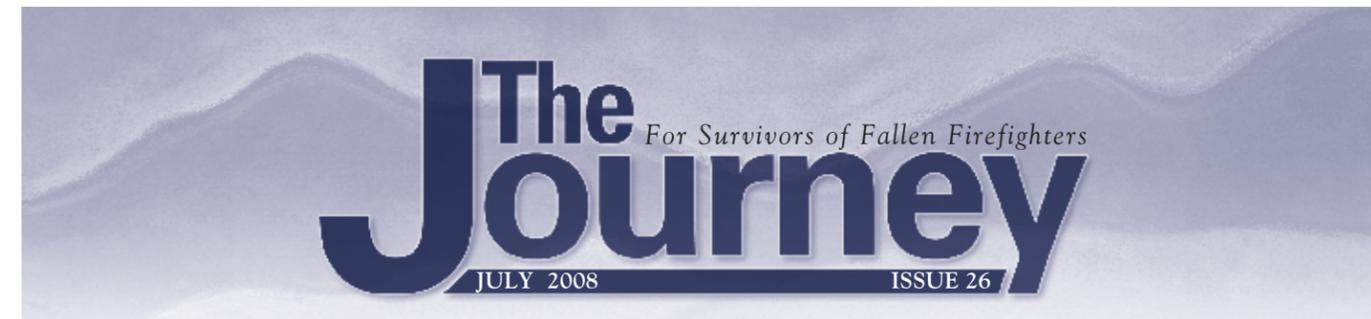
late fifties on how to deal with meeting new people. I don't want to do the bar scene! As a spouse, I was forced to go back to work after my husband's death, which limits my time. Where are people meeting people?"

Please send a Word document or e-mail to Jenny at jwoodall@firehero.org. If you don't do computers, send a typed or neatly handwritten copy to:

The Journey

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When a young child's parent dies, the effects on the child last a lifetime. There is the initial, intense grief; but as children grow and develop, new aspects of grief come into focus. A three-year-old may wonder, "Who will take care of me?" That is the primary concern when you are three. But when that three-year-old is a ten-year-old, he deals with new losses, like not having Dad around as a model and a source of information as he becomes a man. And he may grieve for other things when he leaves home for the first time or becomes a dad himself.

One of the concerns survivors share with us most often is the worry about how the death will affect their children. Here is the good news: most children will be OK. They will be changed, deeply affected. The death of that parent will be one of many factors that shape who they will become. They will need extra support from those who love them. They need to know that they will be cared for, that however they are feeling is OK, and that they can still talk about the person they loved.

Adults in the family should educate themselves about how children perceive death and how they grieve at

different ages, as well as the signs that a child is struggling and needs more help. It is very important to take care of yourself and get whatever help you need in dealing with your own grief. Children learn by watching the primary adults in their lives, and grief is no exception. They are watching you for cues.

There are many resources out there to help grieving children and the adults who love and care for them. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Learn about children's grief so you know what is "normal" and what might indicate that a child needs more help. (Check www.firehero.org for a list of books available through the Foundation's lending library.)
2. Talk with others about what helped them and their children. (Let us know if you would like to talk with another fire service survivor.)
3. If you are worried about a child in your family, find a qualified grief specialist who can help you help your child. (The Foundation can help you find resources in your local community.)

In this issue, children who lost their fathers share their thoughts.

Cole Schoolman

Son of Dana Schoolman (1988-IL)

A note from Cole's mom, Anne Wade:

Cole was very young when his father died, and it's amazing how much you don't know exactly what your children are feeling during their growing up years. You can

imagine and hope you're covering all the bases, but seeing it in writing always shows a few things you missed.

A Son's Story

I lost my father a little more than seventeen years ago, when I was only three years old. Many days, it still feels and hurts like it happened yesterday. The last time I spoke with my father was a cold and snowy day in November, but there is not a day that goes by that I don't think about him.

My father was a member of the Ashkum Township Volunteer Fire Department in Illinois for many years. He was very well known and liked by many people in our small community. I had no idea how well liked and respected he was until I grew up and got to know more people in our area. It's amazing how many people I have

continued inside

Cole Schoolman (continued)

met that have a special fond memory or thought of my father that they still remember to this day, some nineteen years after his death. Hearing some of the stories brings back some of my own fond memories of the short time I was able to spend with my father. I still have people to this day that will come up to me and mistake me for my father because we have such a strong resemblance in both appearance and attitude. Knowing what kind of man my father was makes me feel very good when people mistake me for him, because I know how much he was respected and well liked.



Anne Wade and Cole Schoolman

seen eye to eye, but no matter what the circumstances, she has been and will always be the first one to help me in the time of need. I remember many times in the middle of the night waking after having a bad dream about my father, and she would always be right there with me. My mother has basically raised and supported my sister and me by herself since the death of my father, and she has no idea how much respect and gratitude everybody in my family has for her. Seeing how strong my mother has been has made me a much stronger person and has even helped me help two of my friends deal with the death of their fathers while in high school.

The strongest support group besides my mother has been the fire department and fire community. Many members of the fire department have known me since I was born and have been with me every step of my life, pushing me to excel in everything and to be the best I can be. Seeing this strong bond of brotherhood is what made me eventually join the fire department when I was old enough.

I have found that growing up having lost a father in the line of duty is very hard to deal with. But it is not a reason to stop living or striving to be the best person you can be. Growing up this way takes a lot of support and many tears shed, but all in all I feel that growing up this way has made me a much stronger and more mature person. I will never forget my father, because he will be forever in my heart and the hearts of others. But there are ways to live life through the pain.

One of the hardest aspects of life to deal with growing up as a young child without a father is all of the questions others ask. When I was in grade school, teachers and other students would often ask me what my father did for a living. At that age, it is very hard to think about it, let alone be able to tell somebody else that your father has passed on. As I got older, the questions like those still sting deep down inside. But knowing now how my dad was killed, the circumstances around his death, and how much he did for his community, I am no longer ashamed or embarrassed to answer the questions.

A child growing up with a parent that was lost in the line of duty needs to have a very strong support group and people they can turn to for support and comfort. I feel that I had the strongest support group anyone could ever ask for. Probably one of the strongest people I have ever met would be my mom. My mother and I have not always

Kalee Brown, age 11

Daughter of Craig Brown (1998-KS)

A note from Kalee's mom, Kristi Brown:

Kalee loves to write and will be attending a Young Authors Conference at Pittsburg State University for the 3rd year. This is the first time she has written about her father, who died when she was just 2½ years old.



Kalee Brown

HERO

My father is my hero, Standing tall. Taken from this life, Like a soldier fallen in war.	I was not ready to lose. A firefighter, Saving lives, But no one could save his own.
It is not fair, That he's not here. The Lord took my hero,	I love him forever, Forgetting him never. He truly is my hero.

Tanya Lindsey

Daughter of Alan Mickelson (1989-WY)

A note from Tanya's mom, Marietta Kornick:

Tanya was 11 when her dad died fighting a church fire, but some of the hardest part of her grieving came in her junior year of high school, when she was 17. She wrote this poem for an English class, and it helped her through a tough time.

In Memory

It was 40 degrees below outside
When you left the house.
But I didn't hear you
For you were as quiet as a mouse.

Every time I drive by that church
My heart begins to sink.
Ever since you left that night,
There seems to be a missing link.

Your funeral was so beautiful,
People came from around the state.
People kept coming and talking to us
Fortunately, they were patient, they
Knew they would have to wait.

Now they have a center
Built in honor of you,
To train the other firemen
Don't forget, they loved you too.

Every time I think of you
I think of things I didn't say.

Now each night I go to bed,
I hope you hear me when I pray.

Every time that you yelled at me
I knew that I had been bad,
But you were always there for me
Whenever I was sad.



Tanya & Jason Lindsey

I wish you could have been here
While I was growing up.

Maybe it would have been easier
To convince Mom to get a new pup.

Everyday I always worried
That you were alone.
But when Grandma died last September
I knew that you would
welcome her home.

Not once did I ever realize
That you would not be here.
But even if I can't see you
I know that you are near.

I have one year to go
Until I walk across the stage.
I just wish you could be here
When my book of life turns its page.

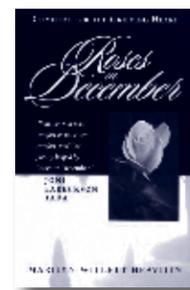
I have never been so proud
To have a father such as you.
Even as I go on with my life
I will always LOVE YOU!

Book Reviews

What Books Helped You After the Death of Your Firefighter?

By Marlene Moore

Mother of Jared Moore (2004-KS)



Roses in December by Marilyn Heavilin

About a year after losing Jared, I started reading books on grief to try to find some answers. The first were all written by psychologists who had studied grief, but they had not lost a child. A couple of them made me feel like there was no hope of ever feeling joy in my heart again. Finally, through *The Compassionate Friends*, we went to hear a guest speaker, Marilyn Heavilin, author of the book, *Roses in December*. The Heavilins have experienced the loss of three children.

This book was especially helpful because she charted the different personality types and how they react to loss and grief. It helped to better understand not only my grief but also my spouse's and our surviving children's. Also, the author is Christian, and she had experienced many of the same attitudes from others who thought it was possible to instantly forgive those responsible for her son's death. Her family also had to endure a trial with a less than satisfactory outcome. The toll that legal issues take on the grief process was not mentioned in any of the other books I have read.