

**ACCOUNTABILITY: Jeremy Russell, MPD**

The nominee demonstrated exceptional performance in safety and maintenance repairs to (3) three multimillion-dollar aircraft within the MPD Air Support Unit. Reliability is critical to ensure airworthiness for law enforcement-related missions, search and rescue, and the safety of our citizens. The nominee is very meticulous and pays close attention to detail while diagnosing and communicating maintenance issues. This ensured safe flights of the pilots within the unit. The nominee effectively resolves complex mechanical issues and offers suggestions for improvement while identifying potential issues to ensure operational efficiency.

Being a Rotorcraft Mechanic and FAA Certified Helicopter Pilot makes the nominee's skills unmatched. During testing and flying the MPD's Airbus AS350, the nominee identified a critical issue with the engine and determined a solution. The nominee presented the solution to the manufacturer of the aircraft engine system, and they worked in collaboration on a resolution. His skills and knowledge saved the lives of pilots, and prevented property damage; however, the biggest achievement is saving the Memphis Police Department hundreds of thousands of dollars in cost savings for negative wear on the aircraft and prevention of a potential catastrophic event.

**COLLABORATION: Qwanesha Ward, Fire Service**

The nominee is passionate and demonstrates service excellence by consistently going above and beyond to ensure accuracy when communicating details about catastrophic emergency events in the community. It is imperative that all communication is precise and conveyed in a timely manner. Working collectively with internal and external stakeholders can be challenging while verifying respective details for communication. The nominee's compassion and loyalty resonate in her ability to partner collaboratively with internal and external partners to get the job done.

The nominee works in suppression and EMS field as a Fire Fighter Paramedic, which offers the insight needed to filter and push accurate information throughout the city. In addition, the nominee efficiently collaborates with various partners on projects such as the Big Red Block Party, awards ceremonies, graduations, and production videos. The nominee is well received and understands the level of patience and consistency to work in partnership with others. Transparency is a big part of trust, and this nominee understands the commitment to excellence in any capacity that she serves working with stakeholders.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE: Victoria Smith, Libraries**

The nominee is a great example of what customer service should be. The library serves customers from every walk of life and background. There are times when the nominee encounters difficult customers but finds a way to make a difference in their lives. She handles challenging customers by always communicating professionally and remaining calm. She listens to customers to understand their concerns while seeking a solution. The nominee never views anyone as a "challenge" but a person in need of help to resolve their challenge.

Her compassion for people is unwavering. Some customers have minor challenges that prove to be major for them. The nominee assists customers with logging on to the computer, completing job applications, and applying for other resources while offering words of encouragement. The nominee never takes it personally, even when dealing with an irate customer. She remains calm

and finds a way to assist. Her compassion for people is consistent. As a result of necessity, the nominee started a garden at the North Branch Library, offering carrots, beets, cucumber, greens, and much more to customers in the community who lacked transportation to get fresh vegetables. She is making a huge difference in the community, one customer at a time.

**DIVERSITY: Renee Parker Sekander, Executive**

The nominee is dedicated to ensuring that her work provides more seats at the table for the LGBTQ+ community. A large focus is leveraging inclusivity for people outside of city government to have a closer relationship and to get involved. The nominee is committed fostering partnerships between government and the LGBTQ+ community to promote a safe and equitable city. During PRIDE Month the nominee garnered hundreds of participants to participate in the Pride Month Parade and encouraged them to participate in PRIDE events throughout the month. The nominee is committed to growing the City of Memphis MEI (Municipal Equity Index) score which rates how inclusive and safe our city is for equitable living. The nominee is also committed to changing the overall “negative” narrative in the Tennessee Equitable Profile from the Movement Advancement Project. The nominee will continue to be the change agent for inclusivity to promote a safe city for all to enjoy.

**INNOVATION: Whitney Dunning, Libraries**

The nominee is passionate about providing youth with dedicated Library resources to create equal access to STEAM learning, literacy and homework help. The Memphis Public Library currently offers DiscoverREAD Centers for early literacy and teen innovation, called (TLC’s). The nominee recently discovered that there was a critical gap in the “Tween” resource service level. Data shows that tweens feel too old for children’s programs and too young for teen programming. This sparked the idea to create a learning continuum for 4-6<sup>th</sup> grade students. This model was piloted at the Central, Hollywood and East Shelby Libraries offering art, STEM, digital skill-building and homework help. As a result, tween participation increased by 25% and the centers are bridging the educational divide in low-income communities. The centers give at risk youth for disengagement, a dedicated library space to build relationships and learn skills to enhance their future.

**MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE: Bobby Arnett- Solid Waste Management**

This nominee is “All In” and it shows, in his dedication to employees. His positive spirit is contagious and ultimately sets the tone for the team. He is often the first person to arrive and the last to depart each day. This allows him time to prepare to lead others and ultimately lead change. He motivates his employees to apply for promotions and develops them, by hosting “mock interviews”. He understands that promoting up can impact morale and create a culture of excellence. His mild demeanor does not prohibit him from advocating for his employees, although he shies away from recognition. As a servant leader, the nominee understands that his job requires him to listen to the needs of employees to ensure that they are successful and happy. He understands that he must be the voice of reason, when challenges occur. Because he models professionalism and dedication, employees work to follow his lead.

**TEAM EXCELLENCE: Environmental Enforcement, Public Works “Blight Grinders.”**

**Jackie Walker, Dorothy Butler, Tracey Harwell, Brittany Smith, Alexis Powell, Iasia Johnson, Na’eem Rashada, Timothy Garner, Corletta Tipton, Rolando Hill, Shinequa White, Eriks Toney, Michael Ward**

The nominees work across the city to ensure that citizens follow environmental ordinances set forth by the state. They relentlessly investigate and enforce violations that create “eyesores” and devalue the community. Most recently, the group focused on a special initiative implemented by Mayor Paul Young, called “Project Code Zero.” This initiative was aimed toward “illegal dumping” areas across the city. The nominees worked tirelessly to issue citations and administer debris removal at illegal dumping sites. This team went above and beyond to reduce unsightly blight in the community. They worked relentlessly to hold repeat violators accountable for continued violations. As a result of their diligence and hard work, 182 Notice of Violations were issued to include repeat offenders and local tire shop owners. This group faced many obstacles in the community to enforce environmental codes of ordinances. The “Blight Grinders” took their name to heart as they crushed the illegal dumping sites to build a better Memphis. Project Code Zero lived up to its name.

**Volunteer of the Year: Jameta Young, Police Services**

The nominee is usually found volunteering on and off the job to improve the quality of life for citizens. She is passionate about serving in community projects and often encourages her counterparts at the 9-1-1 center to join. This year, she led the peanut butter drive for the food pantry. She also raised \$400 for the City of Memphis Junior Achievement Campaign. Her efforts continued with Bring Your Child to Work Day. MPD started a Girls Scout Troop, and she was the first to volunteer to assist and support the cause. Her role was critical to the success of this campaign.

For the holidays, she collected blankets and socks for the homeless. The nominee also led an initiative for the Special Olympics. As a member of the Junior League, she also served as the chair for a free camp for children who lost parents or close relatives. It was sponsored by Camp Good Grief. The nominee has been a champion for the community during her 20-plus years of service with the City of Memphis and is deserving of this award.

**MENTOR OF THE YEAR - Vickie Miller Brown, General Services**

The nominee has served as a mentor for the Grizzlies Team Mentor Group for (9) nine years. She has been an inspiration and beacon of light to middle school students across the city. The program led by the Grizzlies Foundation was developed to create a comprehensive pathway for student success. The concept is unique, TEAM Mentor places (3) three adult mentors with six students to form a TEAM. Each TEAM functions as a micro-community with its own identity, culture, values, and voice. Mentors are required to commit 90 minutes per week at a school site during the year. Mentors also expose mentees to special events such as community projects, holiday celebrations, and Grizzlies Games.

This platform allows mentors to positively impact the lives of students during the school year. The mission is to get each student to master the following mandated standards: read with comprehension, write with clarity, and compute with accuracy, in addition to developing

reasoning and problem-solving skills. The nominee is delighted to serve in this capacity because of her passion for people. She is setting the blueprint for students to be the leaders of tomorrow.