



GREATER NAPLES FIRE RESCUE DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

KINGMAN SCHULDT, FIRE CHIEF

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hodges Family Advocates for Local First Responders

Utilization of an acquired structure that is scheduled for demolition is an extremely valuable resource for first responders. It allows for the simulation of real life emergencies to equip first responders with the hands-on experience they need to effectively manage the type of crises they face daily. The Hodges family (Thelma Hodges and Leslie King III) have graciously donated the use of the previous home of Hodges Funeral Home located on Santa Barbara Blvd. in Golden Gate, for the benefit of first responder training.

Thelma Hodges, and her late husband Earl, have been pillars in the Naples community for over 60 years. In addition to the funeral home, they founded the Naples Vault Company, Naples Crematorium, and Naples Memorial Gardens and Cemetery. They have always been avid supporters of emergency responders and Earl was even named, posthumously, an honorary deputy of the Collier County Sheriff's Office. He also served as President of the Collier 100 Club whose mission is to help those who serve.

It is the Hodges' belief that without highly-trained public safety professionals, a community cannot thrive. Hodges University, named in honor of Earl and Thelma, offers degrees and professional certifications that include criminal justice, nursing, and healthcare. Hodges University also offers a paramedic program that immerses students not only in the classroom, but also with hands-on training. Recently, a team of Hodges EMS students participated in a statewide paramedic competition and won the student category, besting 18 other teams. These degrees and professional certifications are designed to offer students an engaging course of study to prepare them in the fields of EMS, nursing, law enforcement and overall healthcare. In fact, Hodges University is expanding its healthcare offerings with the launch of additional programs later this year. Each of these programs seamlessly allows students to continue their studies to advance in their public safety careers.

To further equip community first responders with essential training, the Hodges' vacant building in Golden Gate has been utilized by several emergency response agencies since January for some of the following training: Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), Regional Bomb Squad, Firefighter Search and Rescue, Firefighter Technical Rescue, Firefighter Air Consumption, Meth Lab, Active Shooter, and EMS Tactical training. Fire Crews were fortunate enough to welcome a

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please contact the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District Headquarters.*



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visit from Thelma during a training event. "Earl would be proud of us for visiting you today," she said. "He was really a dare devil and loved this kind of stuff."

In addition, Hodges Funeral Home generously offers all firefighters, EMT's, and their families a dedicated discount when putting a PreNeed Plan in place. They also offer full funeral services for any firefighter whose life is sacrificed in the line of duty.



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