

# **A SPECIAL UPCOMING MOTHER'S DAY: Cheryl Brooks, her family, are forever indebted to Alton Police Sgt. Jason Cole**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
May 4 2016 8:00 AM



**ALTON** - If anyone could ever be considered a hero for his actions, it would have to be **Alton Police Sgt. Jason Cole** for what he did to help save the life of a local woman, **Cheryl Brooks**.

Sgt. Cole and Brooks' lives intersected around 2 p.m. on Nov. 30, 2015, when she had a heart issue, lost consciousness and stopped breathing while driving toward the intersection of Homer Adams Parkway and Alby Street in Alton.

Brooks had just finished talking to her daughter, **Katie McBee**, on the phone when the life-changing incident happened.

"When I got off the phone, it was unbelievable how fast it all happened," Brooks said. "It was all by the grace of God that he put the right people in the right place at the right time. Everything worked like clock work to save me."

The other amazing thing is Brooks' vehicle was left in drive with her foot pressed hard against the brake through the whole process until Sgt. Cole arrived and put the car in park.

Sgt. Cole, an Alton Police officer for 14 and a half years, said performing CPR and helping save Brooks was one of the "greatest moments" of his long career.

"On that particular day I was working on patrol," Sgt. Cole said. "An officer was working a traffic crash on Alby and Homer Adams and I hadn't heard from the officer in a while and decided to go check it out instead of going in to do paper work. I started to get out of the vehicle and I heard there was a 9-1-1 call near Jack in the Box.

"I turned out of the Steak 'N Shake parking lot and someone flagged me down and pointed and said they thought the person in the vehicle was having a medical emergency. I turned the lights and sirens on and crossed the intersection. When I got there, she was changing color and there were no signs of life. I broke out the driver's side window and unlocked the door and her vehicle was still in drive. I put the vehicle in park, took off her seat belt and started administering CPR."

Sgt. Cole called for rescue and ambulance help and let them know he was performing CPR. Sgt. Cole said he believes he had to have been put in that place that day by something bigger than himself.

"I felt like it was the longest two minutes of my life," Cole said. "I felt so alone in that moment. I knew help was coming, but it felt like a long time."

"I am a total walking miracle," Brooks said. She then pointed to Sgt. Cole and said, "I am here because of him."

If Sgt. Cole had been even a minute later, Brooks would have lost her life. Every second counts when someone has lost consciousness and is no longer breathing. After two

minutes of time, it becomes nearly impossible to bring someone back without permanent brain damage, Sgt. Cole said. He often thinks if he hadn't been able to proceed past Homer Adams Parkway that day when he did or if he had been somewhere else, what would have happened.

Mrs. Brooks is still recovering from the episode, but each day she regains strength. She has no permanent or lasting issues because of the quick responses of Sgt. Cole and the firemen and medical personnel at the hospital. She was in a coma for a period after the incident, but eventually woke up and came literally back to life before everyone's eyes.

For Sgt. Cole, the greatest thing ever for him was to see that Mrs. Brooks was able to celebrate Christmas with her family. In January, Mrs. Brooks and her husband took food down to the first responders, Sgt. Cole and the Alton Fire Department.

"I can't even give them the appreciation I feel for giving my life back," Mrs. Brooks said. "People talk about coincidences, but I believe God put all the people in the right place at the right time. I don't know why he chose me to stay behind. There are a lot of people younger than me that have lost their lives in this fashion. I believe CPR is the reason I am alive today."

Brooks' daughter, McBee, said what Sgt. Cole and the other first responders did for her mom could never be repaid and overall their value to the people of Alton each and every day is most high.

"It means the world to me," she said. "If Sgt. Cole hadn't been there and done what he did our lives would have been turned totally upside down. My mom and dad rely on each other and my dad would be lost without her. My mom is the glue that keeps the family together. I love her so much."