

# Nolte Place Fatal Fire Was Devastating For Family And First Responders At Tragic Scene

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ALTON - Fatal fires don't happen often in Alton and much of the reason is the quick response and training of the Alton Fire Department and neighboring fire agencies.

When Alton firefighters arrived this past week at 5:50 a.m. Thursday, November 18, at Nolte Place in Alton there was intense smoke coming from the back of the home.

Unfortunately, a woman - 63-year-old LaDon Mick lost her life in the fire, along with a pet dog. The woman's death was due to smoke inhalation, firefighters have said.

Family members came to the scene and they were beyond devastated by what had happened. It was heartbreaking to see the family's pain at the scene.

Witnessing what happened at the scene, firefighters reached out to them and did their best to comfort them.

The goal of first responders is to save and protect lives and so often they do. However, this time, they couldn't because of the extreme circumstances that existed when they arrived at the scene, it was impossible to save the victim's life.

Alton Fire Chief Jesse Jemison and Battalion Chief David Eichen were two of the leaders at the Nolte Place scene this past Thursday. Both were shaken by what had happened and both talked about how much empathy they had for the family who had just lost their loved one.

"These situations are very difficult and it doesn't get easier as the years go by and more and more piles on it it gets harder and harder," Eichen said.

In October, Riverbender.com had a story about Alton Fire Department Battalion Chief David Eichen and how he grows pumpkins to giveaway prior to Halloween. He brings them to his neighborhood in the back of his truck and asks for people to come and get them for their families at no charge. Eichen also took one of his monster pumpkins to an Alton fire station and displayed it on Halloween. The firefighters gave candy away to trick or treaters and they also were treated to the dressed-up monster pumpkin.

Eichen has been a firefighter for 29 years and he said the pumpkin-growing hobby takes his mind away from the stark scenes and situations he sees as a first responder.

"I call the pumpkin business my therapy," he said back in October. "I see a lot of ugly things and it is something to replace those images with such a variety of positive shapes and sizes and then give it away to the children."

Chief Jemison emulated Battalion Chief Eichen and said after years and years of fire fighting, these tragic situations are always more difficult than any of the first responders could convey. With deep emotion, Chief Jemison and Battalion Chief Eichen both conveyed their condolences to the family who lost their loved one and dog in the fire.

Area residents are also asked to keep LaDon Mick's family in their thoughts and prayers this holiday season.

