

SCDOT remembers fallen employees during annual ceremony

By Bob Kudelka

A plaque on the SCDOT Workers Memorial Wall quotes Secretary of Transportation **Christy A. Hall**: “Our Prayer is that no more names will be added to this wall.”

Standing in front of the wall, Secretary Hall gave somber news to begin the April 28, 2021, SCDOT Workers Memorial Ceremony, held to honor the men and women who have given their lives in service to SCDOT and the state of South Carolina.

“The wall previously had 86 names on it,” Hall said. “It is with a very heavy heart that we will be adding three more names to this wall during this ceremony today.”

Vernon G. Kaminer, a Maintenance Foreman at the Swansea Maintenance Shed in Lexington County died on November 18, 1974, after his work vehicle was struck by another vehicle. His niece and nephew watched as his name was added to the wall.

Also added were the names of **David Sibbick** and **Cecil Morgan** of Horry Maintenance, who were

killed July 25, 2019. The two men were on their way back to Horry Maintenance when they decided to stop and patch a pothole they saw on U.S. 501 just outside of Conway.

“They did what hundreds of other DOT employees do every day,” Hall said, as the men’s families looked on. “They saw a problem and decided to fix it. Without warning and in a blink of an eye, everything changed. The depths of the tragedy of that day are immeasurable.”

This year’s ceremony began with Deputy Secretary for Engineering **Leland Colvin** welcoming all to the ceremony, which was being streamed live on the SCDOT website and Facebook page. Colvin said he was “overwhelmed” by the show of support.

“Today is always a difficult day for all of us,” Colvin said. “There is no doubt that we will continue to grieve these losses. The deaths of these men and women left an indelible mark on our lives. But I am honored and delighted that we have a permanent place to remember them and a place we can

always visit.”

SCDOT Commission Chairman **J. Barnwell Fishburne** led the attendees in prayer and introduced Hall to give remarks.

Hall also thanked everyone for attending, including members of the SCDOT Commission “as it clearly shows just how much you care for the employees of this agency and your appreciation for the sacrifices that are made in the line of duty to our great state.”

Names of each fallen employee were read aloud by Chief Engineer for Operations **Andy Leaphart** and Chief Engineer for Project Delivery **Randy Young**, as a bell was rung once for each name by Director of Safety and Health **Kenny Eargle**.

It was an emotional day for families of the fallen.

“It means a lot to just know that SCDOT cares enough about their employees to do these types of things for us as family members,” said Julia Jones, whose husband, **Standra “Stan” Jones Sr.** of Lexington Maintenance died in 2007. “This means a lot.”

Like other surviving family

members, Julia Jones hoped coverage of the ceremony would also serve as a reminder for drivers on SC roads.

“Take your time, wherever you are going, don’t risk taking some else’s life,” Julia Jones said. “They have families too. These men and women are out on the roads every day out making the roads safe for us. Take time out to leave early for your destination be-

cause you don’t want the blood of somebody else’s...on your hands.”

On June 10, SCDOT employee **Chuck Kennedy** was killed on his way to a job site when the vehicle he was driving was struck by another vehicle on U.S. 178 near Scotts Ferry Road in Greenwood County. His name will be added to the wall during next year’s SCDOT Workers Memorial ceremony.

We Remember Them

by Rabbi Sylvan Kamens and Rabbi Jack Reimer

**“At the rising of the sun and at its going down,
We remember them.**

**At the opening of buds and in the rebirth of Spring,
We remember them.**

**At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of Summer,
We remember them.**

**At the rustling of leaves and the beauty of Autumn,
We remember them.**

**At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of Winter,
We remember them.**

**At the beginning of the year and when it ends,
We remember them.**

**As long as we live, they too will live;
for they are now a part of us,
as we remember them.**

**When we are weary and in need of strength,
We remember them.**

**When we are lost and sick at heart,
We remember them.**

**When we have joys we yearn to share,
We remember them.**

**When we have decisions that are difficult to make,
We remember them.**

**When we have achievements that are based on theirs,
We remember them.**

**As long as we live,
they too shall live,
for they are a part of us,
as we remember them.”**

To conclude the ceremony, Secretary Hall read aloud a heartfelt poem to honor the fallen employees.



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

SC Secretary of Transportation and SCDOT Commissioners spoke with and consoled each family member at the conclusion of the ceremony.

See more photos from
the ceremony on next page