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Tiffany Bauereisen is the first person in her family to pursue a career in law enforcement, and she has done it with a gusto that earned her Burleson Police Department's 2012 Officer of the Year honors and the 2015 Ofelia Blair Character Award.

Ofelia Blair worked as a clerk in the department's criminal investigations section. She lost her battle with cancer in 2003, two years before Bauereisen started her first night on patrol in Burleson.

"I have always heard how very special she was to everyone so receiving her award for outstanding character traits is a great honor," Bauereisen said.

The award recognizes dedication, professionalism, compassion, and empathy. According to the nomination, "Officer Bauereisen is the kind of officer who can give you a shoulder to cry on or a lesson in tough love. She has mentored many young juveniles in the community and held them accountable for their actions in the future. She has also been involved in training several of our officers, which has helped shape the professional department we have today."

Bauereisen credits her mother, Billie Pace, for teaching her right from wrong "and instilling in me a very strong moral compass to follow. When I was a child, she would quiz me on 'what would I do if.' She wanted me to have a Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C for every situation from personal safety to finances. That line of thinking has been very helpful in this career."

Bauereisen grew up in Haltom City and graduated from Haltom High School. She earned an associate's degree in May 2001 from Tarrant County College. She was a wife and a mother for 14 years before she applied, and was hired, as a Burleson police officer in September 2005.

"My husband, Kirk Bauereisen, has backed me from day one with this career," the award winner said. "When I told my mother that I was hired and I was going to be a police officer, she said, 'I knew I should have made you play with dolls.'"

Bauereisen worked as a patrol officer, mainly on the second shift (evenings) for 10 years. During those years, she was awarded a Purple Heart for a broken nose that she sustained while trying to arrest a suspect.

“My first mentor was Sgt. O’Heren. He was my training officer and he taught me to do this job in a safe, effective and caring way,” Bauereisen said. “I loved to watch Officer Lancaster (retired) and Sgt. Trumble conduct their investigations. And, my advice mentors are Sgt. Pool and Officer Alley. I can reach out to any of these officers for help or advice, anytime of the day or night. All of my brothers and sisters in blue have played a role in my career.”

Bauereisen gets involved. She has served as one of the department's training officers since 2012, been a member of the Burleson Police Department's SWAT Team and Bicycle Patrol, and served as an advisor to the Police Explorers. She is currently a member of the Honor Guard. Bauereisen took on a new role in December 2015, when she was transferred from patrol officer to community resource officer.

Having strong family support is important to anyone who chooses public safety as a career. Bauereisen and her husband Kirk moved their family to Burleson so their children could go to better schools and grow up in a small town.

“Within a week my mother and my sister, Heather Barnes, moved to Burleson too,” she said. “My brother and his family live in Keller. We are a very close family. I didn’t grow up in Burleson but I fell I love with the town and its people. I wanted to work in the city that we lived in and where my children went to school.”

Tiffany Bauereisen and Kirk have been married for 24 years. They have two children – daughter Jessie Cone and son Danny Bauereisen - and they became grandparents for the first time in January.