

Foundation Roadway Worker Memorial Scholarship recipient looks back on her experiences



Erica Pearson, a previous recipient of The Foundation’s Roadway Worker Memorial Scholarship Program, reflected on the work zone crash that changed her family’s life, and how she was able to use the scholarship funds to advance her dreams.

Pearson received the scholarship while she was a member of the U.S. Air Force based out of Aurora, Colorado, as well as the Chuck Bailey Memorial Scholarship, in 2006 and 2012, totaling \$6,000 in support of her Bachelor’s degree in business administration from Hawaii Pacific University. She has also gone on to

obtain her Master’s degree in human relations from the University of Oklahoma.

When reflecting on the scholarship and her education, Pearson talked about the day many years ago when a work zone crash impacted her family’s lives forever. Her father was working in a highway work zone in 2002, when he was struck by an impaired driver. While the crash led to the amputation of her father’s left foot, it helped her to grow closer to him, and inspired Pearson to obtain an education and pursue a career helping others.

“My dad still works as hard as ever. After losing his foot he suffered excruciating phantom nerve pain, has had nine

surgeries, and endured ill-fitting and deteriorating prosthetics. Despite all of this, he still works six days a week and 60 to 80 hours a week in the summertime. My dad is my hero. I will never give up because of the tremendous resilience he has shown throughout his life and as an amputee,” said Pearson.

Pearson has served in the United States Air Force for eight years, currently in the role of Technical Sergeant. She has won several awards including the Senior Airman Below-the-Zone award, the Airman Leadership School John L. Levitow award, the 2015 Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) of the Year award, the 2016 United States Air Force in Europe’s Command and Control NCO of the Year award, and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

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The Foundation’s Mission

The American Traffic Safety Services Foundation (The Foundation) exists to promote roadway safety through charitable giving and public awareness programs.

"I love what I do, and I cannot imagine doing anything else," said Pearson.

When thinking about what The Foundation has done to help her, Pearson spoke about the idea of being a part of something bigger that has a positive impact on people's lives.

"Being a part of something much bigger than myself was what The Foundation inspired in me. To have so many strangers believe in you, it was transformational. I wanted more of that. I was inspired by what The Foundation stands for, and for all those workers, injured or not, who do not have a voice. Saying 'thank you' to The Foundation and its members I have met over the years, does not do justice to the time, energy, and heart they have shown me. It truly has been a pleasure to be part of such a magnanimous organization," said Pearson. 

ATSSA is a proud sponsor of The Foundation. Donations made to The Foundation may be tax-deductible (check with your tax advisor) and are a meaningful way to support the loved ones of those lost or injured in work zone crashes. The Foundation supports impacted families through several programs, including the Roadway Worker Memorial Scholarship and Experience Camps Travel Scholarship. To learn more about The Foundation, visit atssa.com/TheFoundation.



Erica Pearson with her father, who was injured on the job in a work zone crash.



Apply for a Roadway Worker Memorial Scholarship

This competitive program offers financial assistance for post-high school education to dependents of roadway workers killed or permanently disabled in roadway work zones, which helps ensure that their dependents' academic dreams continue.

Scholarships are valued up to \$10,000. Applicants with a strong commitment to volunteerism may apply to receive an additional \$1,000 Chuck Bailey scholarship.

Eligible applicants must apply by the February 15, 2019 application deadline.

Visit www.atssa.com/TheFoundation to download the application form.

