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OFFICE OF
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— Stronger, Safer Florida —

Attorney General Ashley Moody News Release

BACK THE BLUE: Attorney General Moody Recognizes Firefighter Who Rescued a Sheriff's Deputy from Fiery Car Crash



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today presented a Back the Blue Award to Orlando Fire Department Lieutenant Ben Wootson for quickly rescuing Seminole County Sheriff's Deputy Matthew Luxon from a fiery car crash. While off-duty, Lt. Wootson noticed that Dep. Luxon's patrol vehicle hit a concrete pillar supporting an overpass bridge, then jumped into action to pull the law enforcement officer from the car seconds before the entire vehicle became engulfed in flames.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "I'm honored to present this Back the Blue Award to Lieutenant Wootson for rescuing a sheriff's deputy from a burning vehicle. Whether on or off-duty, our first responders never stop being Florida heroes. Lieutenant Wootson set a great example of what it truly means to selflessly serve others."

Orlando Fire Department Chief Charlie Salazar said, "Orlando Fire Department Lieutenant Wootson's heroic actions on March, 25, 2023 made it possible for Seminole County Deputy Matthew Luxon to make it out of his crashed and burning patrol car without additional injuries that could have been life threatening. This was a case of being at the right place at the right time."

Lt. Wootson exemplifies the bravery and courage that it takes to serve as an Orlando Firefighter. This particular rescue was unique because Lt. Wootson was off-duty and jumped into action to make a difference in someone's life. He is to be commended for the extraordinary effort and for risking his own safety to save another public service professional. We are extremely proud of him and the example that he sets for the fire and rescue profession!"

Seminole County Sheriff Dennis Lemma said, "Receiving a call that a member of our agency was in a serious crash with fire, with unknown but serious injuries, is one of the calls that you never want to receive. In the case of SCSO Deputy Matt Luxon, I am incredibly grateful for Lt. Benjamin Wootson, who stepped into immediate action to save the life of someone who he did not know. It is a testament to those who choose a life of public safety and live a life of service above self. It is difficult to express how much it means to me, our agency, Deputy Matt Luxon, and our entire Seminole County community. Lt. Wootson is beyond deserving of the AG's Back the Blue Award."

On March 25, Lt. Wootson was taking his son to soccer practice when he witnessed Dep. Luxon's cruiser collide with an overpass bridge. Lt. Wootson immediately sprang into action by racing over to the patrol car to pull the deputy from the vehicle, only seconds before it was engulfed in flames. After getting Dep. Luxon to safety, Lt. Wootson called for assistance using the deputy's radio, letting the Seminole County Sheriff's Office know about the down officer. Lt. Wootson then alerted the fire department to provide medical care.

Attorney General Moody launched the statewide Back the Blue campaign soon after taking office in 2019. The campaign highlights law enforcement officers, citizens and organizations taking extraordinary steps to forge positive relationships between law enforcement and local communities. Since its inception, Attorney General Moody has issued more than 50 Back the Blue Awards.

To nominate a law enforcement officer, citizen or organization for a Back the Blue Award, or for more information about Attorney General Moody's Back the Blue Campaign, click [here](#).

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Attorney General Ashley Moody's Back the Blue campaign highlights law enforcement officers, citizens and organizations taking extraordinary steps to forge positive relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Supporting law enforcement is a top priority for Attorney General Moody and the mission of Back the Blue is to commend Florida's brave law enforcement officers and Floridians who back them.