

Anthony Bernard Rousseau

Here is the text of comments made by Bernie Marinovich in honor of his uncle, Anthony Bernard Rousseau, for whom the city dedicated Fire Station 10 during a ceremony on Nov. 22, 2019.

Thank you for inviting me to the Station 10 ribbon-cutting ceremony today.

It's my humble honor and privilege to recognize and represent **fallen firefighter** Anthony Bernard Rousseau and the Rousseau family, and express our heartfelt gratitude to the Biloxi Fire Department.

I got a call a couple of weeks ago. Chief Boney asked me to meet with him, here, at Fire Station No. 10, and make a decision as where to place the engraved plaque and fire station bell. I said great, and after, he was satisfied as to where it should go.

He asked me if I'd like a tour of the new, unfinished station. As he took me on the tour, he **PROUDLY** pointed out the many state-of-the-art features of the facility. During that walk through, he shared with me what it means to be a fireman. Chief Boney explained to me, as he did to a recent group of new firemen, that it takes a very **special** and **unique** person to be a **FIREFIGHTER!**

He said **it takes a person who will put themselves in harm's way, and willingly risk their lives on any given day, time or situation, without hesitation.**

It takes a person who is **fully committed**, and loves **THIS** chosen profession. **You have to LOVE this life** to be a firefighter, he said. At that moment, standing there in that brand new fire station, I came to understand that on that horrific day, **March 14, 1951, Anthony Bernard Rousseau was THAT Biloxi firefighter.**

For those of you here today who may not know the Tony Rousseau story...

The central station alarm was sounding. There was a fire called in, it was at the Buena Vista Hotel. Tony was responding and was attempting to board the hook-and-ladder truck. But Tony lost his grip, lost his footing, slipped and fell under the rear wheels. He was crushed by the truck as it left the station. Mercifully, he never regained consciousness and passed away the next day. The tragic accident made the front page of the Daily Herald.

I didn't get to know Uncle Tony. He was just 43 years old when he died, and I was only three. But I think my mother, Octavia Rousseau, Tony's sister, would have described him as a **quiet, humble hard-working man.**

I believe Tony himself would have said he was an ordinary American, doing what he

loved and the work he believed in. But I submit, that Tony Rousseau was **NO ordinary American**. On the contrary, he was a committed Biloxi **FIREFIGHTER**. I know in my heart that Tony embodied what it takes to be a firefighter: **Honor, Courage, Valor**.

It's been said that nothing worth having is without struggle and sacrifice. To get to where we are today, **it CERTAINLY has been that**. It's been a long and lonely journey, and so many years have passed (68 years), but finally, **Tony**, today it's your day **to be recognized for your ULTIMATE sacrifice**, to be honored as a member of the brotherhood - with **DIGNITY** and **RESPECT** as **THE FIRST** Biloxi firefighter to **die in the line of duty**.

Inside this beautiful new fire station a plaque has been placed in your honor. It will forever stand, as long as there is a Fire Station No. 10 and a Biloxi Fire Department.

It is my hope that this memorial will ensure that your legacy will live on, through the many generations of Biloxi firefighters to come.

Anthony Bernard Rousseau, we never knew you, but NOW, Biloxi will never forget you.

Again, thank you Mayor "FoFo" Gilich and Fire Chief Joe Boney for your leadership and unwavering support, City Council members, the Biloxi Fire Department and the quiet effort of many others.

I'd also like to thank Kat Bergeron for the stories she wrote in the Sun Herald about Tony Rousseau, **the forgotten firefighter**.

Thank you all AND **God bless the Biloxi Fire Department**
