

A new endowed scholarship at LSU Shreveport will honor fallen Shreveport police officers.

Shreveport police Cpl. Jason Frazier started raising money for the scholarship after Sgt. Tim Prunty was killed in the line of duty in 2010. Sgt. Prunty was fatally shot while responding to a call for help at a convenience store in southwest Shreveport.

Since then, two other Shreveport police officers – Officer Thomas LaValley and Officer Chatéri Payne – have died tragically. Officer LaValley was fatally shot while responding to call for help in 2015. Officer Payne was fatally shot outside her home earlier this year.

Frazier, an LSUS alumnus, said Sgt. Tim Prunty was one of his mentors when Frazier joined the Shreveport Police Department.

“I spent a great deal of time, after my shift, learning from Tim prior to his starting his graveyard shift,” said Cpl. Frazier. “When Tim was killed it impacted me deeply. Although I believe I have yet to do enough to live up to his legacy, I continue to strive for excellence in this profession.”

Cpl. Frazier said Officer LaValley’s determination to join the police department also inspires him. Officer LaValley wasn’t selected to join the department initially, but he persevered and in 2011 became an officer.

“He asked me what he could do to be a better candidate,” Cpl. Frazier recalled. “I continued to encourage him to maintain his spirit of excellence and not give up just as Tim Prunty did with me as a mentor. He became a servant of the citizens of the city of Shreveport as a result of his determination.”

In January, Officer Payne’s death rocked the department. She was a rookie, fresh out of the police academy, when she was fatally shot in her own driveway as she prepared to go to work on the night shift.

“Although I did not know Chatéri Payne that well, as an academy recruit, I saw in her the determination to work in excellence as a Shreveport police officer. Her drive was evident,” Cpl. Frazier said.

Cpl. Frazier’s fellow officers helped raise money through T-shirt sales. Mike Billings, owner of the Dixie Corn Maze in north Caddo Parish supported the effort from the start. Law enforcement officers from around the United States contributed to the fund. This fall, Shreveport police and firefighters also raised money through the Turkey Bowl, an interdepartmental flag football game.

Shreveport Police Chief Ben Raymond said the scholarship announcement is bittersweet.

“Although it is exciting that we can fund a scholarship, it also causes us to pause and remember the reason we’re having to do this, because we have lost some very good officers in the line of duty,” Chief Raymond said. “We want to continue to remember them, to keep their families in our thoughts and prayers.”

In November, the LSUS Foundation donated \$500 to bring the fund to the \$10,000 level required for an endowed scholarship. Now additional donations have put the fund a nearly \$11,000. LSUS Foundation Executive Director Laura Perdue says the foundation will continue taking donations to grow the endowment.

“We are grateful that Cpl. Frazier chose LSU Shreveport to establish the scholarship,” said Laura Perdue, LSUS Foundation executive director. “The fallen officers honored by this scholarship are remembered for their legacy of service. Awarding this scholarship to deserving students will remind us all of the sacrifices our law enforcement officers make every day as they strive to keep us and the community safe.”

The scholarship will be open to full-time juniors and seniors majoring in criminal justice at LSUS. Students must maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or higher. Preference will be given to family members of fallen Shreveport police officers; immediate family members in law enforcement; and students who have a family connection of any sort to law enforcement. Scholarship recipients must perform 80 hours of community service with a nonprofit organization to which they have no ties.

Students will be able to renew the scholarship once, as long as they meet the grade point average requirement. Students who renew the scholarship must perform 40 hours of community service.

LSUS Chancellor Larry Clark said LSUS is honored to be part of the tribute to Shreveport police officers who made the ultimate sacrifice.

“This new academic scholarship honors remarkable fallen City of Shreveport police officers, including Sgt. Tim Prunty, Officer Thomas LaValley and Officer Chatéri Payne. This new scholarship is a great tribute to these individuals who put service before self. It assures that their legacy will be known, honored and respected for years to come by future LSUS criminal justice students privileged to receive it. LSUS thanks the family, friends and community supporters who made it possible.”