

To: Whom It May Concern

January 2011

I first met Al Blencoe in 1984 when he joined the staff of the La Crosse County 9-1-1 Dispatch Center where I was already employed. We worked together in the Emergency Services Department for 26 years during which time we have been both colleagues and peers.

Al quickly learned to handle all the tasks required of a 9-1-1 dispatcher and did his job with care and concern for callers and responders alike. During his time as a dispatcher, we often worked together. This is a high stress job and requires a degree of trust among dispatchers. During emergency situations, I always felt I could rely on Al to carry out his role in the incident.

When he was promoted to supervisor, I had an opportunity to work on his shift. Although I was not used to the close attention Al paid to those of us working under him, I soon realized this was an extension of his conscientiousness about the role of the emergency dispatcher. Al required excellence from those working for him. Unlike some supervisors, Al remained current and active in all aspects of dispatching as well as supervision.

Al progressed to Technology Coordinator moving to an office down the hall but not out of the department. When I was promoted to Supervisor shortly after this, I found Al a valuable ally in learning the role of management. His door was always open and I often took the short walk down the hall to seek his advice. After I was appointed Training Supervisor, I was faced with almost no budget to provide meaningful training for 28 people. My computer skills were basic. Al was right there, willing to provide input on new training projects. He went over many of my suggestions and proposals which improved the final product, teaching me better computer skills in the process.

In his role as Technology Coordinator, Al took his knowledge of the problems in the dispatch center working with databases from other departments and simplified and improved many of the problem areas. One particular project is a good example of his skill. In 9-1-1 Dispatch Centers, speed is necessary but must be accompanied by accuracy. The no contact bond sheets which started out in one binder grew rapidly to 9 or 10 binders. Almost every person encountered had to be checked manually in these binders. The sheets were carbon copies hard to read and the binders fell apart easily. Often the information in the book was not removed by the agency that put it there. Al knew the frustration dispatchers had with this system. He worked to computerize these bond sheets which are now filled in on a computer. Checking names takes seconds instead of minutes. All of us appreciate his ability to find the problems and solve them to make our job easier.

Over the 26 years we worked together we also became friends away from the workplace. Al has always been supportive and loyal to his friends and colleagues, always with a positive and upbeat attitude in friendship as well as work. Although I am now retired, I still seek out Al's advice. He was an asset to our department and would be to anyone who hires him. I am honored Al requested I write this letter and may be contacted by phone or mail.

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