

## Kirk Pederson

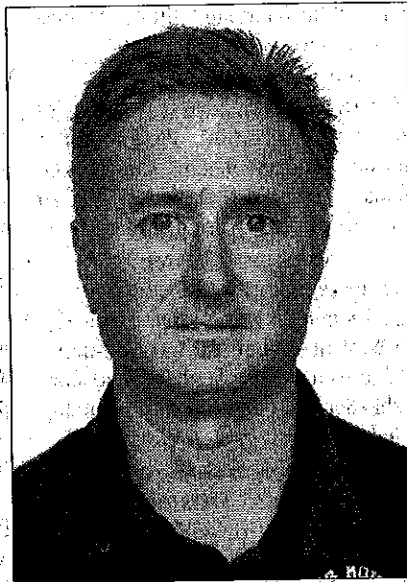
Kirk Pederson, 49, of Ankeny, died Monday, October 17, 2011 at home. His funeral will be 10 a.m., Friday, in the Johnston High School Gymnasium with public burial to follow at Hazelwood Cemetery in Grinnell. Visitation will begin at 3 p.m., Thursday, at Merle Hay Funeral Home, where his family will be present 5-8 p.m.

Kirk William Pederson, son of Roger and Mitzi (Winkler) Pederson, was born October 12, 1962 in Grinnell, Iowa. Following his high school graduation, he received his bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Iowa. Kirk worked for Parks and Recreation Departments in Marshalltown and Des Moines prior to joining the Des Moines Fire Department. He enjoyed running and bicycling. Kirk had a love of life and music, as he had played in several bands.

Kirk was preceded in death by his sister, Heidi Pederson; and his grandparents: Jack and Irma Winkler and Leonard and Augusta Pederson.

Kirk's memory is cherished by his wife, Kristine of Ankeny; stepsons, Trenton and Zane Ratcliff; his special buddy, Afton Polk, who was like a daughter; his parents, Roger and Mitzi Pederson of Grinnell; brother, Dana (LeAnn) Pederson of Grinnell; brothers-in-law, Joel (Megan) Guthrie of Altoona and Jeff (Sara) Guthrie of Newton; his nieces, Katie and Samantha Pederson and Kerrigan, Jamesyn and Kaylee Guthrie; aunt, Norma Kaisand of Grinnell; uncles, Don Pederson of Grinnell and Robert (Rita) Winkler of Flagler Beach, FL; his wife's parents, John and Kim Guthrie of Kellogg; many cousins, close friends, and his brothers and sisters at the fire department.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Kirk's name may be left to John Stoddard Cancer Center, the Powell 3 Floor at Iowa Methodist, or the Des Moines Firefighters Welfare Fund. Online condolences may be left at [www.merlehayfuneralhome.com](http://www.merlehayfuneralhome.com).



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# Firefighters honor fallen comrade

Grinnell and area firefighters turned out last Friday, Oct. 21, to help escort a firefighter who lost his life in the line of duty to his final resting place. Kirk Pederson, a Des Moines firefighter who grew up in Grinnell, was buried in Hazelwood Cemetery in a ceremony attended by his family, friends and fellow firefighters.

Pederson's funeral took place in Johnston. After the funeral, the flag-draped casket was placed on the Des Moines fire truck on which Pederson served, and the funeral cortege of fire trucks drove by the fire station from which Pederson fought fires.

The fire truck bearing Pederson's casket then drove onto the interstate for the trip to Grinnell. Fire trucks from fire departments along the way were parked on every overpass between Des Moines and Grinnell as the procession traveled eastward. Fire departments from towns along the way could not all attend the burial, but they joined in the procession honoring a fellow firefighter by making sure that fire trucks all along the way marked the route of the procession.

When the procession exited the interstate at Grinnell, Grinnell police began closing Hwy. 146. Southbound traffic was stopped before First Ave.

where the procession would turn toward Hazelwood Cemetery. Northbound traffic was also stopped to leave the highway clear of traffic for the procession.

Firefighters from nearby departments came to Grinnell to join the

Grinnell Fire Department in honoring Pederson. Trucks from Grinnell and the neighboring departments, including Brooklyn, Deep River, Gilman and

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*continued on page 5*

## Comrade honored —

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Searsboro, were parked in the east lane of Hwy. 146 leading up to First Ave.

Grinnell's ladder truck and a ladder truck of the Toledo Fire Department were parked across from each other at Hamilton Ave. and Hwy. 146. When the funeral procession reached Grinnell, ladders on the two trucks were raised and positioned to form a cross over the highway. Grinnell Firefighter Jed Petersen and a Toledo firefighter climbed their respective ladders and hung an American flag from the crossed ladders.

The funeral procession passed under the crossed ladders and American flag, then past the parked fire trucks, and reached the corner of First Ave. and Hwy. 146 where an honor guard of firefighters was stationed. Composed of firefighters from Grinnell and neighboring fire departments, the honor guard stood at attention and saluted as the procession passed. Grinnell Police Chief Jody Matherly also stood at the intersection directing traffic.

At the cemetery a bagpiper played "Amazing Grace" and the American flag draping Pederson's casket was removed and given to his widow and family. The turnout gear Pederson wore while fighting fires was displayed at the cemetery during the burial.

The Des Moines Fire Department

crew with which Pederson served escorted his casket to Grinnell and joined the reception hosted by the family at the Methodist Church after the burial.

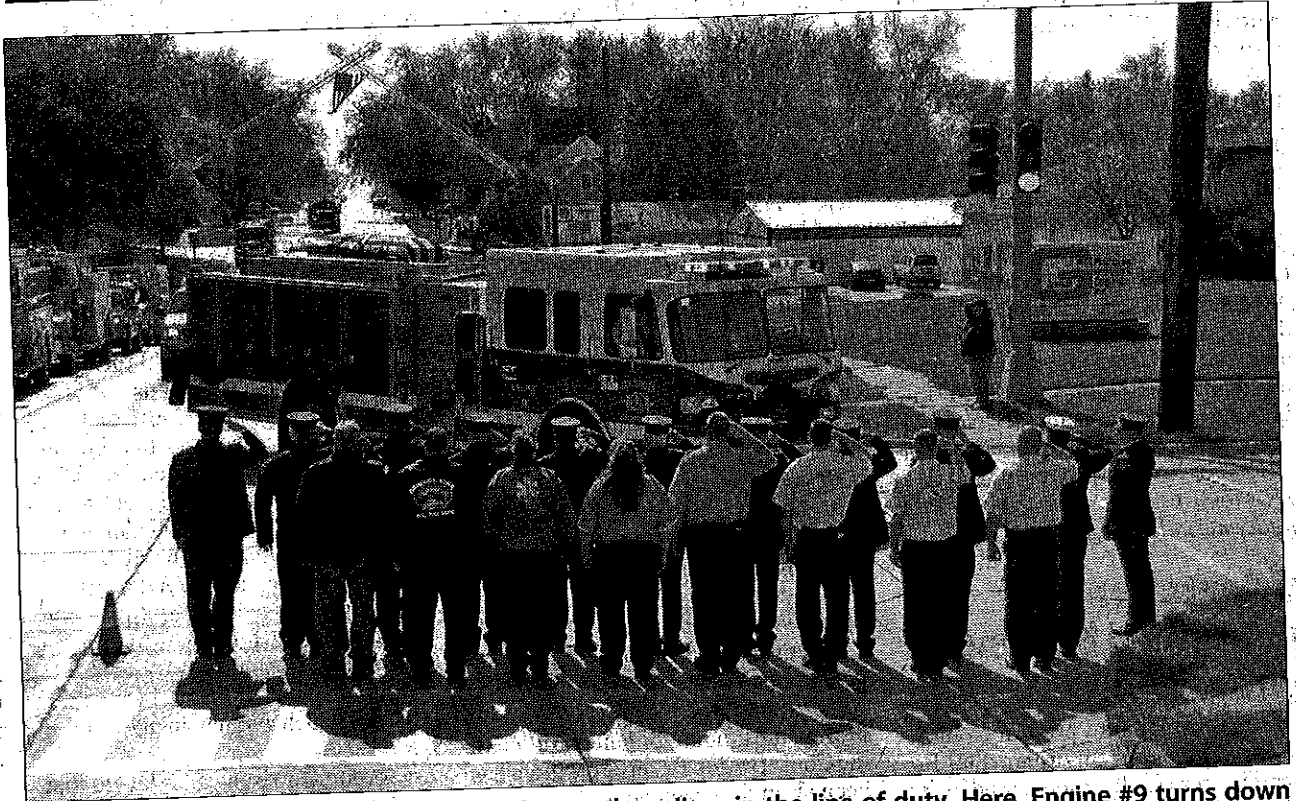
Grinnell Fire Chief Dan Sicard explains that the crossed ladders, the honor guard, display of gear and providing the family with the flag are all traditional ways of honoring a firefighter who loses his life in the line of duty. Another tradition, often performed at the cem-

etery, is the ringing of bells, symbolizing the last alarm for the fallen firefighter. That tradition was included in Pederson's funeral in Johnston.

Pederson succumbed to cancer. Sicard explains that certain types of cancer are closely associated with the calling of firefighting. When a firefighter dies from one of those forms of cancer, the death is considered to have happened in the line of duty.

GHR

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2011



Area firefighters give an honor guard salute at the passing of Des Moines Fire Department's Engine #9, bearing the flag-draped casket of Grinnellian Kirk Pederson. A veteran Des Moines firefighter, Pederson died from a type of cancer which is an occupational hazard in the profession, and thus was bid farewell with traditions which honor firefighters who have lost their

lives in the line-of-duty. Here, Engine #9 turns down First Ave. toward Hazelwood, after passing beneath the crossed ladders of Grinnell and Toledo trucks, together bearing an American flag. Pederson's final ride on #9 was from his funeral in Johnston to his final resting place at Hazelwood Cemetery. - Photo courtesy of Duane McClun