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NEWS

Oak Forest man dies in construction accident

Saturday, June 25, 2005

By Dan Lavoie
Staff writer

Stephanie McKoin's wedding dress lay Friday in a bag on the living room floor of her Oak Forest home.

Her husband of 11 years, William "Mac" McKoin, would never let her sell it.

"He always wanted to give me everything," she said. "He was the most generous man I ever knew."

Mac McKoin will be buried with the dress Monday. He died Thursday in Barrington when the construction crane in which he was working tipped over.

McKoin, 44, of the 5600 block of Fern Ave., wasn't wearing a safety harness as he worked on fixing the roof of Barrington High School, Barrington-Inverness police said.

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration will investigate McKoin's employer, Johnsbury-based Midwest Sheet Metal.

Police and OSHA officials are unsure exactly what caused the accident.

They said McKoin was operating and riding in the basket of an aerial lift that could rise as high as 60 feet, but it's unclear if it was completely extended. The lift, which can be driven on four wheels, was on level ground but was near a curb at the time of the accident, authorities said.

"It's only an assumption at this point that it may have gone over the curb, and it was just enough to set the top part tipping over," Barrington-Inverness Deputy Chief John Edwards said.

OSHA's investigation could take as long as two months, the agency's North Chicago area director, Diane Turek, said.

"(McKoin) was not wearing fall protection or a harness. So it was like he was shot out of the basket," she said. "It's tragic. Just so tragic."

McKoin was born on the North Side of Chicago but moved to Colorado at a young age to be raised by his aunt and uncle.

He joined the Army at 17, traveling all over the world for nine years as a drill sergeant and tank commander. He has two adult children from a previous marriage.

After a short stint as a car salesman, where he met Stephanie, McKoin decided to study to become a carpenter. He earned his way into the carpenters union, eventually switching over to Sheet Metal Workers Union Local 265.

A lifelong Harley-Davidson fan, he finally saved enough money to buy his own motorcycle in 2003.

"It was the first time he could afford a Harley," his wife said. "He was so happy."

Visitation will be from 2 to 9 p.m. Sunday at McKenzie Funeral Home, 15618 Cicero Ave., Oak Forest. A Mass will be at 9:30 a.m. Monday at the funeral home.

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