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## Media Advisory

**The Family of the Butch Gudat Fund is pleased to announce the following events:**

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**Wednesday, January 23, 2019**

**12:00 PM**      **Memorial service for the 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Vernon “Butch” Gudat’s passing**  
**Location:**      **Lutheran Cemetery, 914 N. Pleasant Street**

**Wednesday, January 23, 2019**

**1:30 PM**      **Butch Gudat Fund Scholarship and Grant Awards**  
**Location:**      **Central Illinois Fire Training Center, 7130 N. Galena Road**

2019 marks the 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Captain Vernon “Butch” Gudat’s death fighting the Main Street apartment complex fire in downtown Peoria. Captain Gudat sustained fatal head injuries on January 23, 1983 when a brick wall in the burning building collapsed. He served with the department for 16 years. No Peoria firefighters have given their lives in the line of duty since.

This is the twelfth annual year to provide scholarships in honor of Captain Gudat. Butch Gudat’s son and daughter established the Butch Gudat Fund as a living legacy to their father. The fund provides college scholarships to qualifying children and grandchildren of career and volunteer firefighters in Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford counties. **The 2019 scholarships will be awarded to Emily Grugan of Washington and Caden Davis of Bartonville.** The winners were chosen based on academic performance and short essays and evaluated by a scholarship committee. In the essays, students were asked to give an example of courage that inspires them, explain the importance of family and friends in their lives and share a way they demonstrate dedication to their communities. Each of the winners will receive \$1,500 to be used for tuition and books.

The Butch Gudat Fund also provides grants to the tri-county area to assist with the purchase of educational materials, installation of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and other community fire prevention efforts. A grant in the amount of \$1,000 will be presented to **Peoria Fire Department – Chief Edward Olehy, Jr.** for community fire prevention efforts. Additional scholarships and grants will be awarded each January.

Since inception the fund has awarded:

24 Scholarships totaling \$36,000

12 Fire Prevention Grants totaling \$10,000

The Butch Gudat Fund is held at the Community Foundation of Central Illinois.

The Community Foundation of Central Illinois (CFCI) has served Central Illinois for over 32 years. Formed in 1985 as the Peoria Area Community Foundation, CFCI supports positive initiatives and innovative approaches to addressing the changing needs of our region.

[www.communityfoundationci.org](http://www.communityfoundationci.org)

The Butch Gudat Fund was established to create a living legacy in memory of Peoria Fire Captain Vernon “Butch” Gudat. The fund is a charitable foundation for assisting Tri-County firefighters, their families and their communities. It will provide \$1,500 college scholarships to qualifying children and grandchildren of career and volunteer firefighters in Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford counties. It will also provide fire prevention grants to Tri-County fire departments.