

## Medals of Valor

### **Corporal Clyde Taylor**

Off-duty on the night of May 4, 1997, Corporal Clyde Taylor was acting as a chaperone at a teen dance his neighborhood civic center was holding. His job that night was to ensure the youngsters in attendance had a safe, enjoyable time.

Early in the evening, Corporal Taylor turned away a group of older teens. The teens had a history of causing trouble.

As the dance ended, Corporal Taylor escorted several of the young people in attendance toward their homes. Parents had begun arriving on the scene, and the parking lot was filled with cars and teens.

One of the parents alerted the officer that one of the teens he had turned away earlier had returned, and was threatening others with a gun.

Suddenly, shots rang out. Corporal Taylor saw the muzzle flashes of the gun, which was pointed directly at him and the youngsters he was escorting.

Corporal Taylor quickly separated himself from the group of teens and charged toward the empty lot from which the shooter was firing.

As the shots were fired, panic spread through the parking lot. Teens ran for cover, and parents hazardly drove to escape being hit. Corporal Taylor was accidentally hit and knocked to the ground by one of the cars.

Although his knee was seriously hurt, Corporal Taylor continued to the nearby lot where he returned the assailant's fire.

Unfortunately, the shooter did escape. However, Corporal Taylor was able to identify the suspect, who was later arrested.

During the incident, one teen did receive a minor gunshot wound.

Sheriff Greg Champagne commended Corporal Taylor for placing himself in peril, while preventing children from being hurt. "Had he not," the sheriff said, "one can only imagine the result." Corporal Taylor received the department's Award for Valor, one of the SCSO's highest honors.