

## 05-31-2016 Galveston TX - Stephen Espedal - FF Surf Rescue Attempt

### Firefighter drowns while saving teenage girl in gulf

<http://www.chron.com/neighborhood/bayarea/article/Two-drown-in-Galveston-over-Memorial-Day-weekend-7954776.php>

May 31, 2016 By [Harvey Rice](#)

GALVESTON – A Houston woman and a Kennard volunteer firefighter drowned over Memorial Day weekend in the Gulf of Mexico, the firefighter while saving a 15-year-old girl, the Galveston Beach Patrol said.



Shanita Riley, 43, was pronounced dead Sunday after being taken to the University of Texas Medical Branch. The body of Stephen Espedal, 37, was discovered Monday morning by a fisherman, Beach Patrol Chief Peter Davis said.

Both drownings were reported within minutes of each other on Sunday, Davis said.

Both were reported close to 8:40 p.m.

Espedal had been camping with friends at San Luis pass, an area where swimming is illegal and signs are posted warning that the area is too dangerous for swimming. Davis said the Beach Patrol and volunteers had been ordering people out of the water at San Luis Pass all day Sunday, but the patrols end after nightfall.

A 15-year-old girl waded into the water in near darkness at the most dangerous spot, where the currents flowing under the San Luis Bridge meet the Gulf of Mexico, Davis said. He said she walked past a no-swimming sign to enter the water at spot where the current would have pushed her into the Gulf.

Davis said the bottom changes so quickly that a person wading knee deep can take a single step into water over their head.

The girl screamed for help and a number of people scrambled into the water to help her, but only Espedal was able to reach her. He put the teenager on his back, but at some point realized that they were not going to be able to make it back to shore, Davis said.

"I think he realized they were both going to drown and he ended up throwing her to shallow water," Davis said. "He really sacrificed himself to save that girl."

The girl was able to get to a sand bar, but Espedal disappeared. A fisherman discovered his body the next day at 7:55 a.m. about 20 yards from where he was last seen.

Riley was swimming with relatives near 78th Street when she was reported missing, Davis said. A bystander found her in the water and pulled her to shore. An off-duty Galveston police officer performed CPR until life guards arrived.

Davis said life guards moved about 4,900 swimmers from dangerous areas in one of the busiest weekends of the year. An estimated 400,000 to 500,000 people visited the beach over the weekend.

## **Family finds body of man swept away trying to rescue woman on Texas Gulf Coast**

<http://thescoopblog.dallasnews.com/2016/05/body-of-37-year-old-man-swept-away-trying-to-rescue-woman-on-texas-gulf-coast-found.html/>

May 30, 2016 Hannah Wise

The body of a man who was swept away while trying to rescue a woman in distress has been recovered near where he disappeared, the Coast Guard said.

The Coast Guard said in a statement that the body of 37-year-old Stephen Espedal of Kennard was found Monday morning by members of his family. They had been searching for him in the San Luis Pass between Freeport and Galveston, **KXAS-TV (NBC5) reports.**

Espedal disappeared Sunday when he was trying to rescue a woman who had been swept out with two others. The woman eventually returned to shore unharmed, and a boat rescued the two others.



The Coast Guard began a search for Espedal around 8:20 p.m. Sunday and searched throughout the night.

## **Off-duty Texas Firefighter Drowns Saving Teen**

[HTTP://WWW.FIREHOUSE.COM/NEWS/12214714/OFF-DUTY-KINNARD-TEXAS-FIREFIGHTER-DROWNS-SAVING-TEEN](http://www.firehouse.com/news/12214714/off-duty-kinnard-texas-firefighter-drowns-saving-teen)

MAY 31, 2016 HARVEY RICE : HOUSTON CHRONICLE

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## Stephen Espedal

<http://www.callawayaltee.com/stephen-espedal/>



Stephen John Espedal, age 37, of Kennard passed away May 30, 2016 in an act of bravery rescuing another life. He was born February 13, 1979 in Arlington to parents, Justin Boyd and Anne Espedal. Stephen was a member of the Kennard Volunteer Fire Department, attended Angelina College and was a certified mechanic, who worked for the Fast Track Construction Company. Stephen was a down to earth kind of guy, who liked to fish, loved to watch baseball games, especially the Rangers, and loved spending time at the beach. Stephen was a hands on type of father, his children were his whole world. He was a very loving and kind hearted guy who would help anyone in need.

He is survived by his children, Aidyn Espedal of Kennard, Ashlyn Espedal of Kennard, Harley Espedal of Kennard, and Hunter Espedal of Kennard; best friend and mother of his children, Denna Espedal of Kennard; girlfriend, Amanda Henson of Kennard; parents, Justin Boyd and Debra Sloan of Arlington; brother, Lloyd Boyd of Arlington; sisters, Lindsey Kennedy of Arlington, Heather Spencer and husband, Kacey of Arlington, Rachel Gaston and husband, Jonathan of Arlington, Jamie Long of Arlington, Deidre Long of Arlington, and Wendy Long of Arlington; grandmother, Helen Boyd of Arlington; aunts, Lundra Boyd-Klish and husband, Kenny of Arlington and Bessie Ely; and numerous other nieces, nephews and other relatives.

He was preceded in death by mother, Anne Espedal Kennedy; and grandfather, Lee Boyd.

Funeral Services for Stephen John Espedal will be held Saturday, June 4, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. in the Callaway-Allee Memorial Chapel with the Rev. Keith Smith officiating. The family will receive friends from 10-11 prior to service. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Kennard Volunteer Fire Department Memorial Fund.

CALLAWAY-ALLEE FUNERAL HOME