



Division 3 Operator
William Michael

Operator William Michael's Quick Action Prevented Serious Accident

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Jan. 11, 2002) Things happened so fast last Tuesday evening that Division 3 Operator William Michael was operating on instinct when, in a dramatic effort, he steered a fatally injured man's car out of oncoming traffic.

Michael's Line 180 bus and another Metro Bus had just pulled away from a bus stop about 5:30 p.m., Jan. 8. They were westbound on Los Feliz Boulevard, about to make a left turn onto southbound Vermont Avenue. Without warning, a car whipped around Michael's bus and ploughed into the rear of the bus just ahead.

The impact lodged the vehicle under the bus's rear bumper and, as the bus moved ahead, the car was pulled along. Suddenly, the car broke free and began rolling slowly toward the oncoming traffic.

Hoping to forestall another accident, Michael secured his bus, jumped out and raced toward the out-of-control car. The driver, bleeding profusely, was slumped over in his seat, apparently unconscious.

Without hesitation, the bus operator reached through the window and began steering the car out of harm's way. "I could feel the breeze from the cars as they passed us," he recalls. Running alongside and steering, he directed the car onto a vacant lot, then turned his attention to the injured man.

Michael, 30, a native of Belize who joined the MTA last September, also has had First Aid and CPR training. He felt the injured man's pulse. It was weak and he was still unconscious and bleeding. Grabbing his cell phone, Michael dialed 911 and requested emergency assistance.

Then, he ran back to his bus, and moved it to the curb. Again, he returned to the injured man. This time with a passenger who said she had medical training. Paramedics arrived shortly thereafter and transported the man, who later died.

But, Michael still wasn't finished. He ran back to the other bus and helped the operator deal with the four passengers injured in the accident. The passengers later were transported to Queen of Angels Hospital.

"William has been a conscientious employee in the short time he's been at the MTA," said Division 3 Manager Dan Frawley. "His actions were heroic and undoubtedly saved others from incurring a serious accident or injury."

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