

A Widow's Awakening

By Maryanne Pope

Reader Testimonials for Workplace Safety Niche Markets

“Thanks so much for sharing your story through *A Widow's Awakening*. I loved it – and I'll be encouraging my colleagues to consider this book. Reading the book puts into much greater context the work that you're doing through the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund.”

Barrie Harrison, WorkSafe Alberta

“As emergency services workers, we are tasked with protecting our community in environments that are never predictable, always volatile, and often beyond our control. We tread into environments that demand skill and knowledge; where putting one foot in front of the other is a way of life. Still, there are unsafe elements that exist in our workplace that we cannot expect, where only the unexpected happens.

John's death and Maryanne's life bring to the forefront the issue of workplace safety after hours – when our community is asleep we are protecting their businesses, properties and investments, which are often themselves the very menace we face. Maryanne inspires us to carefully continue putting one foot in front of the other while demanding that the community protect us as we protect them.”

Staff Sergeant Darren Leggatt, Calgary Police Service, ILEETA Review

“Maryanne Pope and her story of what she has gone through since John's death opened my eyes. As a firefighter, I am somewhat ashamed to admit that it took meeting Maryanne and learning about the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund (JPMF) to make me realize why the issue of workplace safety is so important. When I became a firefighter in 1998, I just assumed that the dangers that exist “are just part of the job”. But as I have progressed in my career, I have realized that the majority of those dangers can – and should – be mitigated.

Now I do my best to ‘see’ the dangers before they happen...and I speak up about it. I routinely enter a situation and ask myself, “What's the worst thing that can happen here? What's going to hurt me?” Maryanne's message caused a change in me. So much so that I became part of the JPMF, as I believe it is that important.

John died because somebody didn't ‘see’. They didn't realize the dangers or mitigate them. They didn't know how their ‘inaction’ would lead to the events that claimed John's life – and they didn't know how his death would affect others, which is what Maryanne's book, *A Widow's Awakening*, illustrates so strongly. The tragedy in John's death is that it *was* preventable – and that's why the JPMF does what it does.

It is everyone's responsibility to ‘see’. Maryanne's story and her work with the JPMF sheds light on the need for the public to consider workplace safety from the perspective of emergency responders. Workplace safety doesn't end when **you** go home....we all deserve to go home.”

Dean Krupa, Calgary Fire Department; John Petropoulos Memorial Fund

“In her book, *A Widow's Awakening*, Maryanne Pope speaks of the profound impact a workplace fatality can have on those left behind. From a workplace safety perspective, her message reinforces how important it is that *every* workplace is made safe for everyone. As a safety professional, it reinforces the importance of the work that we do.”

Denise Howitt, EHS Partnerships Ltd.

“*A Widow's Awakening* serves as an outstanding wake up call to the public regarding workplace safety for emergency services personnel. It lays out, in heart wrenching detail, what happens when a first responder doesn't come home because of an unsafe workplace. The book acts as a poignant reminder of the constant dangers faced by emergency services workers every day. This book should leave everyone asking: ‘What can I do to make my workplace safer? How can I prevent this from ever happening again?’”

Ian Wilson, Managing Director, John Petropoulos Memorial Fund

“It was a gripping read, so intense that I read it in small bits so I could absorb the information. Thank you for sharing this very personal journey...I know it will help so many people. Anyone who experiences the loss of a loved one and all of the crazy emotional roller coaster that accompanies will benefit from the knowledge that they really are not alone, and not crazy. Your book has also made me more aware of my surroundings, not only at work, but everywhere. I'll be recommending your book to many others.”

Lesley, Paramedic, Halifax, NS

“I just received your book, *A Widow's Awakening*, at our book club. I must admit, your book is painful to read and raw at times, but I have not been able to put it down. Tonight I can't sleep. I am not finished but already know from radio commercials that you somehow summoned the strength to establish a memorial fund and highlight the importance of workplace safety for all emergency personnel. I want you to know that John is not forgotten and that his memory is being kept alive by people like me; who are talking about your book and having to do some deep soul searching as a result. I also have some writing to do in my life (a master's thesis) and have been continually putting it off for fear of failure. Your words speak to me in a way that touches me deeply and reminds me of my own reason for living. I thank you for sharing yours.”

Lorraine Bauer, Strathmore, AB

“I received the *A Widow's Awakening* book and *Put Yourself in Our Boots* safety video last week. I watched the video first so it was nice to put faces to the book once I began reading it. I finished reading the book a few days later as it was very good. I really enjoyed Maryanne's smart ass sense of humour and her rawness of exactly what she was experiencing during the most difficult time of her life. It truly is heartbreaking that she had to fulfill her dream of becoming a writer through the death of her husband. However, her pain and suffering has not gone unnoticed and John will never be forgotten. Her dedication and hard work with others in the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund is getting through to those responsible for providing a safe work environment for their employees – and for emergency responders as well. I have also noticed an increase in the “Put Yourself in Our Boots” commercials. Keep up the great work!”

Anna Mast, Peace Officer, Cypress County, AB

“I have been reading your book, *A Widow's Awakening*, and want to say thank you. It's so beautiful and so real, that I can't describe it. Like you, I lived it. The love of my life was killed at work in September 2000, when he fell putting up rafters for a building. He was 52. I miss him so much and it still hurts. Your book is a wonderful gift and I treasure it – and the knowledge that someone else felt and feels the same as I do. Somehow I don't feel so alone. Thank you.”

Sherry Smith

“I purchased the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund's DVD, *Put Yourself in Our Boots*, shortly after it was released & have used it several times in different safety meeting formats at various employers. I also have & have read your book, *A Widow's Awakening*. Currently it is out on loaner to another industry colleague, as it has been to several of my industry friends. I truly enjoyed it, as many times you don't ever actually get to hear the other side of a tragic story, or necessarily what good can come from something tragic. Thanks for sharing your story, loss & grief with the industry, along with all your efforts behind making the workplaces for all, including emergency workers a safer place. Keep up the good work on the safety front.”

*Henry Ridders, Contractor HSE Management & Transportation Specialist
North American Operations - HSE/OI Personal Safety*

“*A Widow's Awakening* is a powerful non-fiction book that brings the impact of workplace safety home. We hear of workplace fatalities and injuries from an industry perspective but Maryanne writes with such raw emotion that the reader understands when someone doesn't make it home from the end of a work shift, soul-mates are abandoned, mothers are crushed and families are left with scars that never heal. As a speaker within the OH&S industry it is important to be reminded that the loss reaches much further than the employee roster... it reaches everyone.”

Jody Jones, OH&S Educator

“I have had an opportunity to view the *Boots Yourself in Our Boots* safety video and it is very good. I can only imagine the strength it took for you and the officers to speak on it...but it has such a big impact on the viewers. I will be fortunate enough (in a manner of speaking) to be the first here to read your book, *A Widow's Awakening*, however there are many requests for it when I am done. Thank you for having the strength and the courage to share your life with the rest of us – and to champion a cause many would not give a second thought to.”

Sgt Ramona Ryan, Brantford Police Service