

# WILLIAMSON A.M.

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## Fourth grader wins first Roderick Award of Courage

Mayor honors girl for saving grandmother from choking

By Bonnie Burch  
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**THOMPSON'S STATION** — Her classmates might have a mantle full of soccer trophies and fair participation ribbons.

But it's guaranteed that nobody can claim the award that 10-year-old Maddie Adams recently received under the statue of a horse.

The Johnson Elementary School fourth-grader is the first person in history presented with the Roderick Award of Courage, which included a crystal trophy and a check for \$1,000.

"I think it's fitting indeed that we give this to a young lady who represents the future," said Thompson's Station Mayor Leon Heron.

Last year, Jan Adams was babysitting her grandchildren, Maddie, who was then 9, and her 7-year-old brother Hayden while their parents Craig and Deanna Adams were out. Jan was talking to Deanna on the phone while she took a bite of chicken.

Suddenly, the food lodged in Jan's windpipe. She couldn't speak, breathe or make a sound.

Maddie noticed her grandmother was in trouble. So she braced her back against the kitchen counter. While holding Jan firmly around the midsection, Maddie was able to deliver four quick thrusts to her diaphragm, dislodging the



**Maddie Adams, 10, of Franklin receives the Roderick Award of Courage from Thompson's Station Mayor Leon C. Heron for saving her grandmother's life.** SUBMITTED

chicken so her grandmother could get oxygen into her lungs once again.

Jan suffered no injuries

from the ordeal, thanks to her granddaughter's quick, decisive action known as the Heimlich maneuver. Maddie said she learned the life-saving technique on the Disney Channel television show *The Suite Life of Zach and Cody*.

"It's quite remarkable. I don't think I would have had the presence of mind to think of that as a 9-year-old," said Heron.

The Founder's Committee, an association of Williamson County community leaders, was considering a number of nominees for the honor who demonstrated heroic actions. But once they heard about Maddie, she was a natural lock.

"I think if you look at her age and what she did, anybody would be impressed," said the mayor, who formed the committee in honor of

Roderick, Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest's favorite horse.

While engaged in the Battle of Thompson's Station on March 5, 1863, the chestnut gelding was killed after galloping to be at his master's side even after suffering three gunshot wounds. He was buried on the battlefield, now on land owned by Heron and his wife, Cynthia.

Maddie received her accolades on the 146<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War battle next to Roderick's statue, which was installed last year.

"Thank you everybody who put lots of effort into this. Thank you for the award and the money. Thank you, Mr. Mayor, and all my friends and family," she said while clutching the trophy.

Her parents, brother and, of course, her grandmother beamed with pride beside her.

The award will be presented annually to a deserving Williamson County resident "who like Roderick demonstrates courage in the face of adversity," Heron said.

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