

Minneapolis Police Honor Four Lock Operators For Rescue Effort

Four lock operators from St. Anthony Falls Locks and Dam were recently honored for their efforts in rescuing boaters following a boating accident above St. Anthony Falls in which one boater died.

During a May 31 ceremony at Minneapolis City Hall, Chief of Police John Laux presented the department's Citizen Award of Valor to Jim Nelson and Chris Granum and the department's Certificate of Appreciation to George Rodriguez and Jeff Anderson. The four lock operators were among 14 people honored by the Police Department for their efforts in the May 11 rescue.

One boater was killed in the accident after a cruiser lost power above St. Anthony Falls and was pulled by the fast current over the 11-foot-high horseshoe weir above the falls. Four other passengers in the 24-foot cruiser were rescued through the combined efforts of the four lock employees, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Department, Minneapolis Police, Minneapolis Fire Department rescue teams and a contract helicopter crew.

Nelson was cited for making his way out the overflow wall connecting the lock guide wall to the horseshoe weir after the cruiser was drawn over the weir. The concrete overflow wall is narrow and had about a foot of water flowing over it. Getting to the accident site in the middle of the river, he worked with other rescuers to lift one woman from the wrecked boat to the top of the weir. However, they were unable to lift a second accident victim against the strong current to top of the weir. A third passenger was swept from the wreck and carried by the current over St. Anthony Falls.

Finally, a helicopter, which happened to be on the scene, was called down to lift one boater at a time out to safety. The helicopter crew, which



Minneapolis Police Chief John Laux presents Department's Citizen Award of Valor to lock operator Jim Nelson.

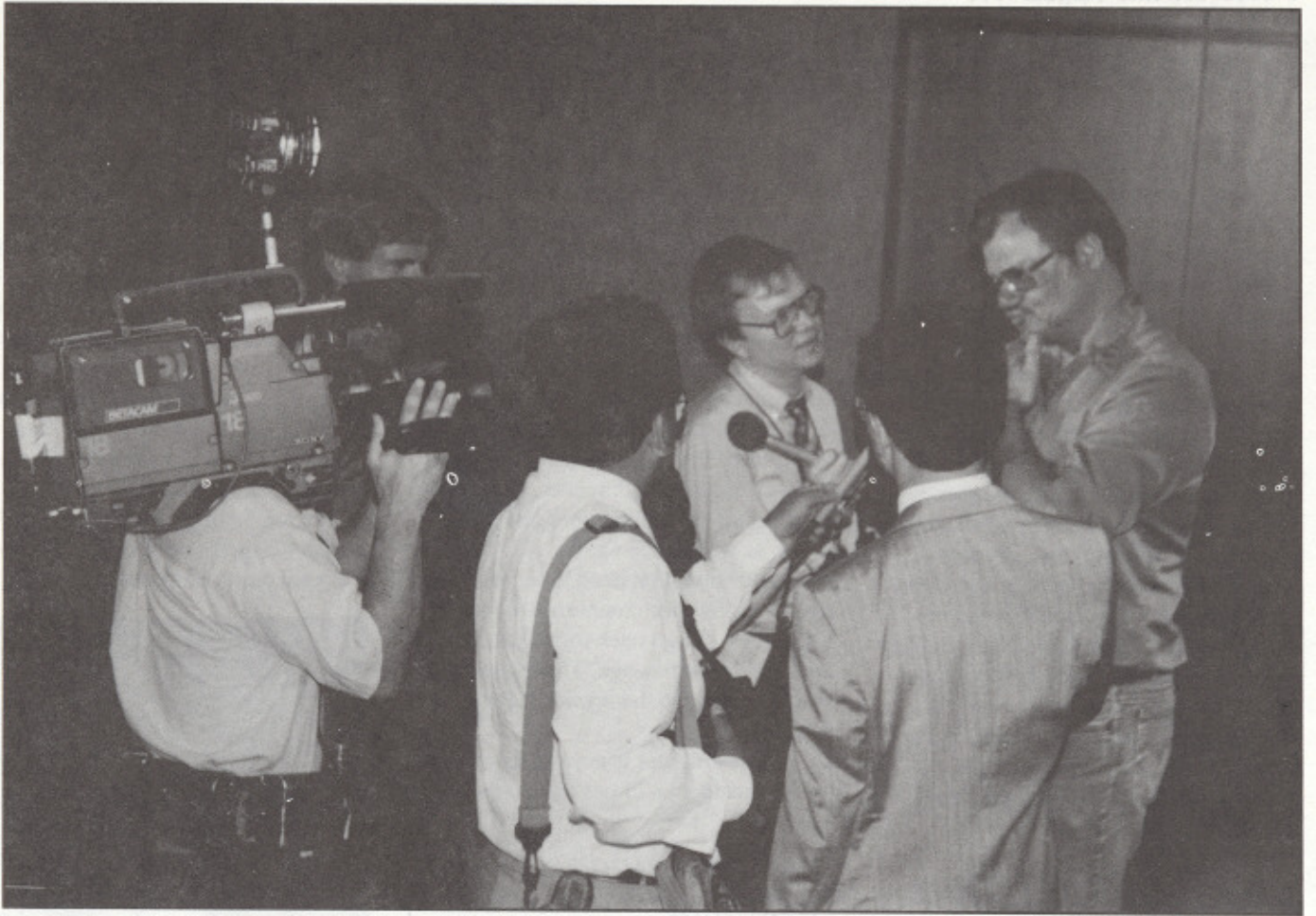
contracts to a local television station, was also honored at the ceremony for their efforts.

Granum, who was working at the lower lock at the time of the accident, was cited for rescuing the woman who had been swept over the 50-foot high St. Anthony Falls and was carried by the 32,000 cubic-feet-per-second current downstream toward the lower dam, less than one-half mile away.

Piloting a rescue boat against the strong current, he pulled the woman into the boat just before reaching the lower dam structure. However, one of the twin outboard motors stalled after he had the woman in the boat and the remaining motor didn't have enough power to allow the boat to move against the current.

At this point, Rodriguez, who was on duty at the lower lock, saw Granum's boat struggling against the current next to the dam structure. He was cited for this quick thinking and response in closing the dam tainter gates, which decreased the flow right at the dam and allowed the boat to pull away from the dam to safety.

Anderson was presented the department's Certificate of Appreciation for assisting the various emergency units which responded to the accident and rescue. The Certificate recognized the importance of his efforts in coordinating, assisting and helping to maintain communications between Police, Fire, Sheriff and ambulance crews during the hectic rescue.



Top: Lock operator Chris Granum is interviewed by Twin Cities' reporters after receiving the Citizen's Award of Valor from Chief of police John Laux. **Right:** Police Chief John Laux congratulates lock operators Jeff Anderson and George Rodriguez after presenting them Certificates of Appreciation for their efforts in the May 11 rescue operation at St. Anthony Falls.

