

Shannon Dresser, 29, represented Katy at the Miss Texas International pageant

# Beauty and the BADGE

Beautiful and tough, Katy ISD police officer and pageant queen, Shannon Dresser, serves her community in two diverse ways - as a police officer for Katy ISD and the current Miss Katy International

Written by Tassie Hewitt | Select photography by Lara Massey

## *Beauty on Duty*

Shannon Dresser's occupation and hobby could be considered polar opposites, which is why people find her so fascinating. "I love the reaction I get," says Dresser, who has been a police officer for Katy ISD for two years and has competed in 15 pageants. "People who know me from work would never guess that I compete in pageants. If they know me from pageants, they rarely believe that my profession is in law enforcement."

Dresser, the daughter of two police sergeants, grew up in California. She first started baton twirling when she was 6 years old and won a scholarship to the University of Hawaii for her talent. She competed in her first pageant in 2009 when she was a senior in college and has not stopped since.

"I really enjoy the atmosphere," says Dresser who was first runner-up in the Miss Hawaii pageant in 2011 and fourth runner-up in Miss Hawaii USA in

2013. "It pushes me to be healthy. It helps me have a goal and something to strive for."

"I want to encourage our youth to never give up on a goal or aspiration. What better way than being a Katy ISD police officer and Miss Katy International, all at the same time?" Dresser says participating in pageants and being a police officer gives her the opportunity to give back to the public. In fact, the Miss Texas International system allows contestants to choose which area of Texas they want to represent. "I chose to represent Katy as Miss Katy," says Dresser, who loves the small-town feel of the community.

### *Role Model*

Dresser is also in a unique position to break traditional stereotypes. "One of my favorite things is when I meet a student and they comment later that I'm a cool cop," she shares and adds that some students have never even seen a female police officer. One little girl called her Princess Officer Shannon when she met her at a library read-along and discovered the beauty wearing a crown and banner was also a police officer. "I was able to change a negative stereotype. That is one of my favorite memories of being a police officer."

She admits that sometimes it's a challenge to juggle her two roles, often to the amusement of her coworkers. "I was in the academy when I was competing for Miss Hawaii. I was worried about how my nails were going to look on stage since I'd been loading bullets in my gun all week at the range," says Dresser.

When it came time for the semifinals for the Miss Hawaii pageant, her classmates and the staff at the police academy tuned

in to watch her compete. While performing her twirling routine, she dropped her baton. "I picked it right back up and continued to smile and twirl. The next day at work, one of the instructors came into our classroom with a foam baton, pretending he was twirling. He even dropped it and looked right at me. I felt so embarrassed."

### *Never Give Up*

Still, participating in pageants has made Dresser a better police officer, and being in law enforcement has helped her in competitions. "Pageants help me at work because they teach me how to communicate with people," she says. "At work, we never give up because it's life or death. Never being able to give up has helped me work harder in pageants."

Dresser recently competed in the Miss Texas International pageant representing Katy. She earned second runner-up in her first time competing in this type of competition, plus fitness winner, the audience choice winner, and the advertising winner. Despite not winning the crown, she says she is proud of herself for giving it her all and performing at her best.

She hopes her example will send a positive message to the community. "My mom has always taught me that if you believe it, you can achieve it," says Dresser. "I try to encourage other young female adults that they can do anything they want to do, even if it's in a male-dominated workforce. Don't stop. Never stop trying to reach your goals." **KM**

*TASSIE HEWITT is a freelance writer who raised two daughters and believes there's nothing more beautiful than a strong woman.*

Dresser's swearing in ceremony



She has competed in 15 pageants



Dresser encourages girls to never give up on their goals or aspirations

