

## Pickering follows father into first responder career, adjusts to serve during pandemic

[googleplus](#)

04/13/2020 ASHLAND, Ohio – When other children were out on the playground or building blanket forts, chances are a young Travis Pickering was hanging out at the firehouse.

When your dad's a firefighter, said Pickering, that's just the kind of thing you do.

Fast forward to 2020: Travis Pickering is still in the firehouse, only now he's a firefighter and emergency medical technician.

His now-retired dad (also named Travis), he said, had a lot to do with his career choice. "My dad was my childhood idol. He lived and breathed the (Ashland City) Fire Department," said Pickering, a 2019 Ashland University graduate. "The sacrifices he made made it possible (for me to attend AU). I look up to him a lot. He's my biggest mentor."

But when Pickering graduated from Mapleton High School and headed to AU, his intention was to complete a degree in criminal justice. Still, the memories of the firehouse lingered, strong enough that he went to his father for advice.

His father suggested changing his major to nursing would give him a solid foundation in emergency medicine that would be useful to a firefighter. Pickering made the change, which he admitted put him on a rigorous academic track. At the same time, he said, when he walked across the stage to accept his degree at the December commencement, "It was the most rewarding thing I'd done."

His time over the past few years wasn't only dedicated to classrooms and clinicals – Pickering also completed roughly two-and-a-half years of firefighter and EMT training at the Wayne County Regional Training Facility in Apple Creek. When the training was complete, Pickering found part-time work at area fire departments that helped him make money to pay college expenses.

Now Pickering is a first responder in the time of a pandemic, pulling shifts at the Springfield Township and Madison Township fire departments in Richland County, while also helping at the Savannah Volunteer Fire Department near his northern Ashland County home. COVID-19, he said, has brought a whole new dimension to his job. "Everyday at 5 p.m., there's a briefing" with updates, potential mutual aid changes in the event of a surge and COVID-19-specific protocols. And "every patient we're seeing is treated as though they are COVID-19 positive," he said.

Fire departments and medical facilities have long had emergency plans, but "not of this magnitude," he said.

Any exposure to the virus means a firefighter will lose hours to stay home in quarantine, as will an elevated temperature, which is checked four times in a 24-hour shift. And should Pickering ever test positive, his lack of full-time standing means he will have to medical benefits to cover his treatment or potential hospitalization.

Though he wears normal protective gear, as well as respirator, gloves and safety glasses (a Tyvek suit would be worn if Pickering is called to treat a person who has been exposed to the virus), he admitted working on the front lines of a pandemic presents "a definite unknown and that's what's more unsettling. ... It's not just a matter of worrying about myself," but his family as well.

Still, Pickering said, the working conditions are just part of the job he signed up for. "I love every minute of being here," he said, especially the camaraderie of his co-workers.

At the same time, he's also mapping out the next steps in his career, planning to study to become a paramedic – which opens up more full-time opportunities – and going through the licensure process so he can work as a registered nurse in a clinical setting. "It's like my dream to be in emergency medicine," Pickering said. "I like solving the puzzles and moving fast."

If he can make the scheduling work, Pickering can work both as a firefighter/paramedic and nurse and as someone who's already working with an Explorers group, he wouldn't rule out teaching -- when his firefighting career is over.

*Ashland University is a mid-sized, private university conveniently located a short distance from Akron, Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio. Ashland University ([www.ashland.edu](http://www.ashland.edu)) values the individual student and offers a unique educational experience that combines the challenge of strong, applied academic programs with a faculty and staff who build nurturing relationships with their students.###*

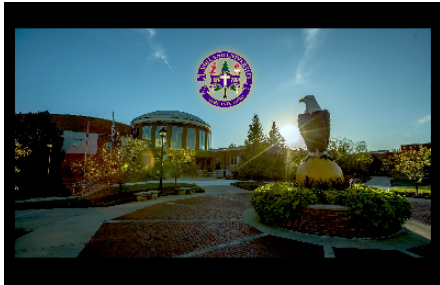
3/19/20 – Christopher Chartier tells Scientific American that his PSA is taking COVID-19 behavioral health online research proposals AU Associate Professor of Psychology Christopher Chartier told Scientific...

2/25/20 – AU's Rene Paddags note downs of living in a capital city for WalletHub

## Upcoming Events

MAY 9 AU's Spring 2020 Commencement

## Featured Video



[View All Videos](#)

[Request News Release](#)

## Faculty/Staff Headlines

---

[Dr. Amy Klinger interviewed for 'False Alarms' article in The Atlantic](#)

[Dr. Judy A. Alston presents national webinar](#)

[Klingers Present National Webinar on School Safety and Crisis Response](#)

[See All](#)



[Visit AU Social Media Directory](#)

### PR Office Contact

Tamara Mosser  
Public Relations Coordinator  
[tmosser@ashland.edu](mailto:tmosser@ashland.edu)  
office: 419.207.6282

Steve Hannan  
Communications Manager  
[shannan@ashland.edu](mailto:shannan@ashland.edu)  
office: 419.289.5007

#### About AU

- [About Us](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [News Center](#)
- [The Value of AU](#)
- [Rankings & Awards](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [Leadership & Divisions](#)
- [Giving Opportunities](#)
- [Social Media](#)
- [Publications](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [The Ashland Community](#)

#### Campus

- [Hours of Operation](#)
- [Campus And Location](#)
- [Virtual Tour](#)
- [A-Z Directory](#)
- [Health Services](#)
- [Disability Services](#)
- [AU Weather Center](#)
- [Calendar of Events](#)

#### Policies

- [Policies and Disclosures](#)
- [Emergency Information](#)

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Consumer Information

Campus Safety

Student Complaints

**Athletics**

Eagle Athletics

Sport Clubs

Intramural Sports

**Academics**

Majors & Degrees

Graduate & Adult Studies

Online Degrees & Certificates

Library

Campus Store

Commencement

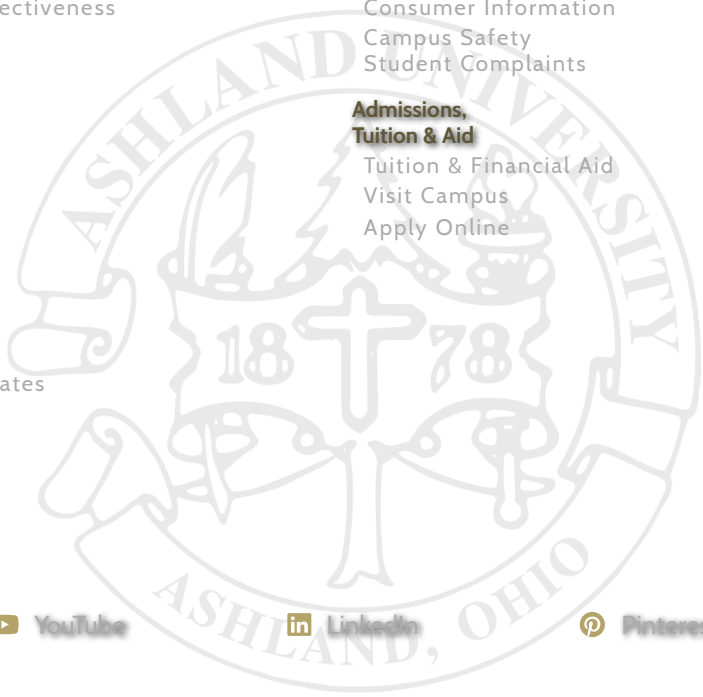
**Admissions**

**Tuition & Aid**

Tuition & Financial Aid

Visit Campus

Apply Online



401 College Avenue, Ashland, OH 44805. 419.289.4142, 800.882.1548. © Copyright 2020.  
Ashland University. An Equal Opportunity/Equal Access Institution.

