

Fire destroys Arlington Street home

Residence owned by former manager/head cook at Blue Light Cafe

By Chris Butler
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August was already a month of anguish for the employees of what was the Blue Light Cafe in Ruston.

The owners closed the restaurant, perhaps permanently, earlier this month for unspecified reasons.

On Friday afternoon, some of the employees with the closest emotional ties possible to that restaurant felt sorrow for another reason.

Blue Light manager/head cook Nina Venzant and her family lost their home on Arlington Street to a house fire. Their home was within walking distance of the old restaurant, which was also on Arlington.

Venzant was in shock and too distraught to talk Friday afternoon. Venzant's daughter, Kamita Patterson, another employee of the Blue Light Cafe,



Kamita Patterson, resident of the house that caught fire, reacts with emotion while watching firefighters try to save her home.

however, said she lived in that house her entire life and shared it with her children, her brother and her mother. Her grandmother originally owned it. Patterson and her children were elsewhere when the fire began, as were its other occupants, she said.

"I don't know what happened. My mom got a phone call and said

the house was on fire. She called me to make sure I had all the kids. When I got here, the house was in flames," Patterson said.

"We all worked at Blue Light. We just lost our jobs — and now we've lost our house. I just don't know how to feel right now," a very emotional Patterson said.

Officials with the Ruston Fire Department responded to the scene and fought the fire soon after it began, but they were apparently unable to save Venzant's home.

The fire appeared to start inside the house. Neighbors who came out of their homes to watch firefighters battle the flames saw nothing unusual before the fire ignited, they said.

Authorities at the scene had no details on what started the fire, they said.

"The fire is still under investigation," said Nick Bowman with the Ruston Fire Department, on Saturday.



Leader photos by CHRIS BUTLER

Firefighters from the Ruston Fire Department worked Friday to extinguish the blaze that destroyed a home on Arlington Street.