

# *Remembering*

NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS  
MEMORIAL WEEKEND  
OCTOBER 3RD AND 4TH, 2009



James Earl Arthur • Johnny Bajusz • Ryan T. Barker • Raymond Barrett • Louis P. Berra • Robert L. Blankenship • Shawn Patrick Blazer • Rick H. Borkin • Kirk Owen Bowdrige • John A. Brenckle • Christopher Ryan Brown • Wayne D. Brown • Christa Dawn Burchett • Tyler H. Casey • Scott A. Charlson • John Clasby • Joshua L. Crisp • George Everett Crocker Sr. • Terrance Dale Crockett • George H. Crotts Jr. • Michael David Crotty • George R. Davidson III • Roger Dennis Jr. • Terry W. DeVore • Jarrett A. Dixon • Charles C. Fraley Jr. • Edrik J. Gomez • Gregory J. Gonsioroski • James J. Gonzales Sr. • Dale W. Grider • Lee Grubor • Stephen Hagan Sr. • Robert A. Hales • Matthew Hammer • Walt P. Harris Sr. • Robert H. Hegney • Curtis R. Hillman Sr. • Bradley P. Holmes • Matthew P. Hubly • Ryan A. Hummert • Victor Anthony Isler Sr. • Curtis Jessen • Herman S. Jones • Stephen L. Jones • James Earl Arthur • Harvey Jordan • Joe P. Jordan • Edward A. Junginger • Jeremy L. Jylka • Bret Kaneshiro • Charles Eugene Kessel • Gary Wayne Kistler Sr. • Raymond Barrett • Louis P. Berra • Robert L. Blankenship • Shawn Patrick Blazer • Rick H. Borkin • Kirk Owen Bowdrige • Eugene Kessel • Gary Wayne Kistler Sr. • Robert Leland Knight • Norman Koch • John A. Brenckle • Christopher Ryan Brown • Wayne D. Brown • Christa Dawn Burchett • Tyler H. Casey • Scott A. Charlson • John Clasby • Joshua Carl F. Lambert • Gerald R. Leduc • Leon J. Lehmen • Jarrett Lee Little • Larry J. Lockhart • L. Crisp • George Everett Crocker Sr. • Terrance Dale Crockett • III • Roger Michael J. MacDonald • George H. Crotts Jr. • Michael David Crotty • George R. Davidson • J. Gomez • Gregory • Terry W. DeVore • Jarrett A. Dixon • Charles C. Fraley Jr. • Edrik J. Gomez • Gregory J. Gonsioroski • James J. Gonzales Sr. • Dale W. Grider • Lee Grubor • Stephen Hagan Sr. • Robert A. Hales • Matthew Hammer • Walt P. Harris Sr. • Robert H. Hegney • Curtis R. Hillman Sr. • Bradley P. Holmes • Matthew P. Hubly • Ryan A. Hummert • Gert H. "Jerry" Marais • John Victor Anthony Isler Sr. • Curtis Jessen • Herman S. Jones • Stephen L. Jones • Harvey Jordan • Joe P. Jordan • Edward A. Junginger • H. Martinson • Jeremy L. Jylka • Bret Kaneshiro • Charles Eugene Kessel • Gary Wayne Kistler Sr. • Robert Leland Knight • Norman Koch • Carl F. Lambert • Robert Lee Gerald R. Leduc • Leon J. Lehmen • Jarrett Lee Little • Larry J. Lockhart • Brent A. Lovrien • Michael J. MacDonald • Jay C. Maddy • Gert H. McAtee Sr. • "Jerry" Marais • John H. Martinson • Robert Lee McAtee Sr. • Dennis G. McClenahan • Tony McGough • David P. Meron Sr. • Walter William Michl • Bill "The Doze" Miller • Walter R. "Squire" Minich • Justin Edward Monroe • Richard L. Montgomery • Rickey S. Morris • Brian J. McClenahan • Munz • Brian Dennis Neville • Jean L. Nuckols Jr. • Daniel B. Packer • Andrew Jackson Palmer • Jerry J. Parrick • Donald G. Paterson • McGough • Michael J. Penovich • Nicholas V. Picozzi II • Kevin Patrick Pryor • James N. Ramage • Gary D. Remling • Adam "Cody" Renfroe • Steven "Caleb" Renno • Bryan James Rich • Leonard Riggins Sr. • James Lee Robeson • Robert Roland • Diana S. Rosene • David P. Meron Sr. • Robert J. Ryan Jr. • Thomas James Santner • Brian W. Schira • Roark D. Schwanenberg • John W. Schwartz Jr. • Jamel • Walter William M. Sears • David T. Sherfick • Michelle L. Smith • Michael David Snowman • Bruce F. Spaulding • Eric D. Speed Sr. • David Elijah Steele • Richard P. Steele • Shane M. Stewart • Miller • Walter R. "Squire" Minich • Justin Gary Lawrence Studer • Carol Irene Taylor • Riley J. Terrebonne Jr. • Edward Monroe • Colin Gene Thomas • Vance R. Tomaselli • Thomas "Rusty" Topping • Cecilia R. Turnbough • Joseph E. Turner • Zachary Jake VanderGriend • Rafael Vazquez • Richard L. Montgomery • Rickey S. Morris • Brian J. Calvin Gene Wahlstrom • Walter Clyde Walker Jr. • Clarence O. Watson II • Sean T. Whiten • Frank L. Wichlacz • Munz • Brian Dennis Neville • Jean L. Nuckols Jr. • Daniel B. Packer • Andrew Jackson Palmer • Jerry J. Parrick • Donald G. Paterson • Michael J. Penovich • Nicholas V. Picozzi II • Kevin Patrick Pryor • James N. Ramage • Gary D. Remling • Adam "Cody" Renfroe • Steven "Caleb" Renno • Bryan James Rich • Leonard Riggins Sr. • James Lee Robeson • Robert Roland • Diana S. Rosene • Robert J. Ryan Jr. • Thomas James Santner • Brian W. Schira • Roark D. Schwanenberg • John W. Schwartz Jr. • Jamel M. Sears • David T. Sherfick • Michelle L. Smith • Michael David Snowman • Bruce F. Spaulding • Eric D. Speed Sr. • David Elijah Steele • Richard P. Steele • Shane M. Stewart • Gary Lawrence Studer • Carol Irene Taylor • Riley J. Terrebonne Jr. • Colin Gene Thomas • Vance R. Tomaselli • Thomas "Rusty" Topping • Cecilia R. Turnbough • Joseph E. Turner • Zachary Jake VanderGriend • Rafael Vazquez • Calvin Gene Wahlstrom • Walter Clyde Walker Jr. • Clarence O. Watson II • Sean T. Whiten • Frank L. Wichlacz • Robin M. Zang-Broxterman

*...May our fallen heroes live on  
In our every act of courage,  
In every deed of honor,  
In every discharge of duty,  
In every mark of kindness,  
In every expression of compassion...*

— BILL MANNING



*For those  
who have  
answered  
their last  
call...*



Before the Memorial Weekend, the Foundation asked families to submit information about their fallen firefighters for the Remembrance Book. If no information was received, the best information available to us for each firefighter was used. We regret any inadvertent errors or omissions. Fallen firefighter profiles can be viewed on the Foundation's Web site at: [www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org)



*... we  
honor  
you and  
your  
loved  
ones.*



# Remembering



## Adam "Cody" Renfroe Crossville Fire Department — Alabama

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: October 29, 2008

Age: 24

Cody answered his last call on October 29, 2008. He was 24 when he sacrificed his life in a search and rescue effort while battling a house fire. Cody fearlessly and without hesitation went in to locate an elderly lady believed to be trapped inside, but somehow fell victim himself. We lost our precious hero shortly after that.

We still wrestle with God's decision of why he took someone so young and dedicated. Cody was already our hero, but suddenly he became our community and surrounding communities' hero. Now we realize he had an uncontrollable passion for firefighting. If it was his time to answer his last call, he left this earth the best way anyone could, as a true hero. He died doing something he loved. Somehow, a hero deserves heaven.

Cody had a special quality about him. When he entered the room, he always had that silly smile on his face that somehow became contagious. He always had a joke or funny story to tell. He also had an overwhelming compassion for people, and a drive to serve. Cody loved the feeling of accomplishment and importance that he felt helping people, and he relied on that feeling when he went on a call. Everyone knew they could rely on him and that he would do whatever it took to help them. Cody put in countless hours as a volunteer firefighter. If we wanted to see him, we knew where to find him; it wouldn't be

at home. He was always at the fire hall or at the shop where he worked on his other passion, hotrod cars and drag racing.

Our mayor stated that, at the moment he heard that a firefighter had sacrificed his life, he knew in his heart that it was Cody.

Cody served with the Crossville Volunteer Fire Department for two years. He continues to serve his fellow firefighters and community by an annual car show, with all proceeds benefiting the fire department so they can better serve and protect the community. He volunteered his time at the local school and nursing home educating students and the elderly on fire safety.

The City of Crossville honored Cody's memory with the dedication of the new fire engine #6, in recognition of Cody's call number. He received resolutions from both the house and senate for his heroic death. He received an award for his service from Crossville Health & Rehab. The Town of Crossville issued a proclamation declaring April 18, 2009, "Cody Renfroe Celebration of a Life Day."

Volunteer firefighters everywhere are a very special group of people. They do not receive a paycheck or retirement plan, but just a longing desire to serve their community.



*Remembering*

# Tony McGough

**Amity Fire Department — Arkansas**

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: August 14, 2008

Age: 44

Tony McGough was killed in a vehicle accident while responding to a medical

call in his personal vehicle. He had served with the Amity Fire Department for one year.



# Remembering

## Curtis R. Hillman Sr.

**TNT Construction, USDA Forest Service Contractor — California**

Career Heavy Fire Equipment Operator

Date of Death: September 11, 2008

Age: 76

Curtis Ray Hillman Sr. died September 11, 2008, from injuries sustained on August 25, 2008, in an accident while doing rehabilitation work on the Siskiyou Complex Fire.

Curt was born in Orleans on November 8, 1931, and was the youngest of eight children of Grant Ulysses and Mattie Hillman. He joined the United States Army and served his country in Germany from 1951 to 1953. He met his wife, Sue, in 1962.

Curt was a proud Karuk Tribal Member. He will be remembered by all who met him for his sense of humor and the unique sound of his

laughter. He loved life and lived it to its fullest, playing his guitar and visiting his friends and family often. Curt was known for his strong work ethic. As hard as he played, he loved to work twice as hard.

Curt Hillman was survived by his wife, Susan Hillman, of Happy Camp, California; a brother, Grant Hillman; five children, Charlene Neaf, Curtis Hillman Jr., Leon Hillman, Shelly Niewinski; and Skooter Hillman; 14 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; and extended family and friends, all of whom he loved dearly. He was preceded in death by two brothers, four sisters, and a son, Leroy Green Hillman.







# Remembering



## Brent A. "Lovey" Lovrien

### Los Angeles City Fire Department — California

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: March 26, 2008

Age: 35

What can one say about a fellow that his colleagues called LOVEY? Born December 13, 1972, Brent Allen Lovrien, nicknamed "Lovey," because of the kind of person he was—a big, lovable, do-anything-for-you type of guy.

Brent's dynamic personality and humor, coupled with his strong work ethic, put him out there, on or off duty, for anyone who needed his help. Never seeking praise or wanting recognition, but always willing to lend a helping hand. If it was a donation to help a family, the homeless, changing a stranger's tire, or just talking to someone's child trying to get him on the right track, that was my son.

In remembrance of Brent, one colleague named his firstborn son after him. Another honored him with a tattoo on his arm with pictures of turn-outs and an axe with "Lovey" written on it.

Ever since he was a child, it was his way in life to help others. From kindergarten, he wanted to be a firefighter, and right out of high school, he pursued it until it happened. After fire science at Rio Hondo College, he started as auxiliary for the City of Downey. Then he became a federal firefighter, stationed at the naval base in Long Beach for three years. In 1997, he completed the LAFD Lateral Fire Academy and joined the Los Angeles City

Fire Department, where he served for just over 10 years and was going for his captain's test.

Brent was known as the "get 'er done guy." Anything around the firehouse that needed to be done, he would lead the way. He never let meekness get in the way of what he felt to be true, honest and the right thing to do. "First in, last out" fit him to a tee!

He worked hard and played hard. It was said he lived more life in 35 years than do most in a full lifetime. His life here was short, but he never wasted a minute.

Brent also was in real estate and had a great talent for refurbishing houses. He was a great seamstress also and did a lot of sewing for the fire department. His love of the outdoors and his hobbies took him from lakes to the mountains to the deserts.

His talents were limitless, his devotion to family and friends unbelievable. But what he did for complete strangers was astounding!

On March 26, 2008, this amazing young man's life was lost in an explosion in the line of duty, but not before he got everyone out of harm's way. This angel is now able to watch over us all as he joins those who have gone before him.



# Remembering

## Kevin Patrick Pryor

### Newport Beach Fire Department — California

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: June 17, 2008

Age: 31

Kevin Patrick Pryor was born on December 4, 1976, in Oak Park, California. Early in his high school years, he displayed a desire to become a firefighter. In 1994, he became a volunteer for the Ventura County Fire Department. Two years later, Kevin left Southern California for Butte Community College and Fire Academy. He was hired by C.D.F. in 1996, and worked on wildland fires all over Northern California and Oregon. In 1999, Kevin was hired by Pismo Beach Fire Department, where he was named "Rookie of the Year" and 2002 "Fireman of the Year." While at Pismo Beach, Kevin attended Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and earned his bachelor's degree in history. In 2003, Pismo Beach was taken over by Cal Fire, and Kevin transferred to Riverside County. That same year, he was named valedictorian of his academy class.

In 2005, Kevin joined the Newport Beach Fire Department. Due to his wildland fire experiences, he was placed on their strike team. He later taught CERT classes. In spring of 2008, over 200 wildland fires consumed Northern California. As a member of the strike team, Kevin traveled with his team to Butte County. His brother firefighters recalled that Kevin was all smiles, as he was "home again," right where he began his career 12 years earlier. He was able to renew old friendships



with both firefighters and supervisors. After five days on the line, his squad was relieved, and Kevin drove them home. A few hours later, he suffered a massive hemorrhage and went into a coma. He died the following day, June 17, 2008, at the age of 31. His fellow firefighters recalled his great sense of humor and his hilarious impressions of fellow coworkers.

Kevin was intelligent, loved history and knew every movie quote. He loved the outdoors, hiking, fishing, and camping in remote locations, as well as the beach with his older brother, Eric. He recently completed a triathlon in Paso Robles, climbed Mt. Whitney for the second time, and scaled Mt. Talac in Lake Tahoe.

BUT, Kevin Pryor lives on. Following his passing, in the ultimate act of compassion, Kevin saved seven lives as an organ donor. With the approval of his family, Kevin's heart, liver, pancreas, both kidneys, and both lungs were donated to seven people desperately in need of life-saving organs. Kevin's corneas, as well as other tissues, were also harvested to help others.

Kevin's two nieces, Delaney, age 5, and Avery, age 3, said, "Uncle Chi-Chi is in Heaven, at God's house, helping Him. That's why there are no fires in Heaven."

# Remembering

## James N. Ramage

### USDA Forest Service — California

Career Pilot

Date of Death: August 5, 2008

Age: 63

James “Jim” Ramage died August 5, 2008, in a helicopter crash, along with the pilot and seven firefighters. An aviation leader with extensive flying experience and knowledge, he was performing his duties as a helicopter inspection pilot for the U.S. Forest Service. Jim dedicated himself and his career to help provide for the safety of others.

Jim’s aviation career began as a helicopter pilot for the U.S. Army from 1966 to 1970. He served a tour of duty in Vietnam and was awarded a Bronze Star. He served with Air America in Southeast Asia from 1970 to 1974. In 1974, he began his firefighting career with Evergreen Helicopter, Inc. and flew as a contract pilot for both the U.S. Forest Service and CAL Fire until 1978. He then worked as a contract pilot for Redding Air Service in Redding, California, flying across the western United States.

Jim worked for CAL Fire for 20 years and was their first forestry pilot. He carried Badge #1 for forestry pilots. He was promoted to air operations officer and served

as CAL Fire’s chief helicopter pilot, and later as aviation safety officer, until his retirement in 2003.

Jim had a real passion for aviation. In fact, his love of firefighting and helicopters was so strong that, after eleven days of retirement, he began working for the U.S. Forest Service as a helicopter inspection pilot working out of McClellan, California. In 2006, Jim and his family moved back to Redding with the U.S. Forest Service.

Jim received a Medal of Merit from the Ventura County Peace Officers’ Association. He was also awarded the Governor’s Safety Award from the California Department of Forestry.

He is survived by his wife of 38 years, Diane, and his daughter, Ginger.

Jim’s passion for aviation and his love of the job and the people he worked with made him one of the most highly respected aviators in the industry. Jim always had a ready smile and a twinkle in his eyes.





# Remembering



## Robert Roland

### Anderson Valley Volunteer Fire Department — California

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: July 3, 2008

Age: 63

Firefighter Robert “Bob” Roland died July 3, 2008, after experiencing fatigue and respiratory distress the previous day while serving as a lookout on the Oso Fire near Boonville, California.

Bob grew up in southern California and was a volunteer firefighter for CDF in Riverside as a teenager. He was a Marine pilot from 1967 to 1977 and flew F-4 fighters. He retired from an aeronautical engineering firm in San Diego County and relocated to Anderson Valley six months prior to his death.

Though he was active with the Anderson Valley department for just a few months, he

was an enthusiastic recruit who volunteered with all department projects, from fundraising to maintenance. He loved his connection with the department.

Bob Roland was survived by his wife of 33 years, Carol; his sister, Lynda; her husband, Dar; and nephews, Eric and David.

In Bob’s memory, the family requested that to honor Bob Roland’s sacrifice, all energy be put into successfully fighting the Mendocino Lightning Complex Fires. Recognizing the importance of family, the family urged all firefighters to spend as much time with their families as possible.





# Remembering



## Vance R. Tomaselli

### San Bernardino County Fire Department — California

Volunteer Captain

Date of Death: February 21, 2008

Age: 60

Vance was born June 21, 1947, to Bruno and Beth Tomaselli, in Ogden, Utah. In 1948, the family moved to California, where Vance's brother, Michael, was born. They grew up together, playing ball and doing what young boys do. Beth enrolled the two boys in tap dancing, and they were awesome together. When Vance turned 14, the family moved to Lakewood, California, where his brother, Marty, and sister, Jeri, were born. Vance graduated from Lakewood High School in 1965.

In 1966, Vance married his high school sweetheart, Janice, and they soon became parents to Caryn Leigh and James Roland Tomaselli. Vance's new brood lived in Buena Park, down the street from Knott's Berry Farm. He worked at South Gate General Motors Corporation.

In 1972, Vance and family moved to Angelus Oaks, into the new cabin that the family had built on weekends. Vance continued to work for General Motors, making the two-hour commute every morning and evening for approximately 12 years. After General Motors closed its South Gate plant in 1983, Vance worked at various jobs before he came across the glass business, where he continued to work until his passing.

In 1979, Vance joined Station 15 as a paid-call firefighter. That same year, he also joined the San Bernardino County

Sheriff Reserves, where he was named "Reserve Deputy of the Year" in 1985.



In 1987, Caryn married Joe Todd, and in 1992, Vance's granddaughter, Carlee Ann Todd, was born. She was the joy and sparkle in his eyes, and he spoiled her terribly. Vance helped his daughter and son-in-law build their first home in Angelus Oaks. He loved to "talk shop" about fires with his son, James, who was moving up in his career as a firefighter with the Forest Service.

In 2004, Janice passed away, and Vance lost his friend and sweetheart of 38 years. Vance dove deeper into his work at Station 15, spending much of his time at or near the station. He was very committed to the welfare of the people that worked there. Through the years, he planned pancake breakfasts, Christmas parties, and many other events.

Sadly, on February 16, 2008, Vance suffered a massive stroke while driving to the scene of a structure fire. He passed away on February 21, 2008.

Vance loved baseball, fishing, hunting, skiing, cooking, and going to church. The lives he changed by selflessly giving his love are immeasurable. We take comfort in knowing Vance died doing what he loved. Vance will be missed. Thank you, Vance, for all you did.

# Remembering

## Terry W. DeVore

### Olney Springs Volunteer Fire Department — Colorado

Volunteer Chief

Date of Death: April 15, 2008

Age: 30

Terry was born on August 19, 1977, to Bruce and Deborah DeVore at Parkview Medical Center in Pueblo, Colorado. He was a rambunctious child, not afraid of anything. This was true to his life. There was never anything he couldn't do, in his eyes. If someone was afraid to try something, he would volunteer. He wanted to live life to the fullest and experience as much as possible. He loved riding dirt bikes. It was his passion. Then, as he got older, he got involved in working in corrections and volunteering as a firefighter. He loved helping others, and he did it in every way possible. He volunteered to be on the Emergency Response Team at the correctional facility where he worked. Also, he volunteered with the Olney Springs Volunteer Fire Department since he was in his teens. In 2007, at only 30 years old, he was voted fire chief. He was so eager to fill the position with high expectations of the department and wanted to bring fresh ideas and good times to the town of Olney Springs.

Terry had three children, Breann, Kathleen, and Jeremiah. Terry also had a stepson, Ryan, who he helped raise since Ryan was two years old. His children were

also everything he lived for. He taught them to ride dirt bikes, go camping, sledding, and many other fun things. The children miss him so much. He met his wife, Jennifer, in July of 2000, and they were inseparable as well. He was married once for three years before he met Jennifer.

There is so much to be said about Terry. He was a lover of all things, and a friend to anyone who needed a friend. As one of his friends once said after Terry died, "Terry may have had many friends, but I only had one, and it was Terry." He will be missed greatly.

It was a hot day on April 15, 2008. Terry had just left the house to pick up the kids from school. His wife worked graveyard and was sleeping. He got home early with the kids and yelled for his wife. She was in the bathroom. He said, "Give me a kiss; I gotta go. Half the county is on fire!" She was unable to leave the bathroom and yelled, "I love you; be careful," and that was the last they saw of him. His truck went off a collapsed bridge that had burned from a huge fire that was consuming the town of Ordway, Colorado. The smoke was so thick he and his partner never saw the road was out.





# Remembering



## Gert H. "Jerry" Marais

### Aero Applicators, Colorado State Forest Service Contractor — Colorado

Career Pilot

Date of Death: April 15, 2008

Age: 42

Jerry was born January 1, 1966, in Bloemfontein, South Africa. He grew up in South Africa and lived there for most of his working life. He was born with and followed his passion for flying and life itself and worked as a pilot in many different places. Jerry did it all, from cargo to passengers and from crop dusting to firefighting. Everything he attempted he did to the best of his ability. He was an inspiration to many around him and touched the hearts of many along his way.

Jerry relocated with his wife and three children to Fort Benton, Montana, in August 2001. In October 2002, a fourth bundle was added to the family, a born Montanan. Jerry became involved with firefighting and also worked on getting his AMP license.

Many will remember his stories. Jerry had the ability to captivate his audience and carry them through all the details of the story. Young and old alike could hang on to his every word. The stories he told and the games he played will be part of his lasting memory.

Jerry loved to help all in need. He was a pillar to many a friend and a friend for all in need of one. That was

part of the reason he loved his job as a firefighting pilot. He was able to get into places and create safe passage for those on the ground. He loved to be a part of that. He did not take unnecessary risks; his own safety and that of his fellow firefighters was always very high on his priority list.

Jerry was a family man. His wife, Esmé, and his four children, Chris (21), Gert (19), Leandra (13) and Nicholas (6), were part of his every adventure. Due to his job, there was lots of time spent apart, but in heart and spirit this family unity was carried out and enjoyed by all. Jerry was a great father and a wonderful husband. He loved spending time with all of them, and hunting and fishing were things he loved to share with his family. Jerry worked tirelessly to ensure their future.

Jerry died on Tuesday, April 15, 2008, when the firefighting plane he was flying crashed near Fort Carson Army Base in Colorado. He will be greatly missed by his family and the community. We are proud to say: "We know we will see each other again. For the moment, you are safe in the arms of your Creator and Friend." May God grant us compassion and mercy always. We will miss you, Jerry. Love always.



# Remembering

## John W. Schwartz Jr.

### Olney Springs Volunteer Fire Department — Colorado

Volunteer Firefighter  
Date of Death: April 15, 2008  
Age: 38

Firefighter John Wesley “Wes” Schwartz, along with Fire Chief Terry DeVore, died April 15, 2008, while responding to a wildland fire. In heavy smoke conditions with near zero visibility, their fire apparatus fell from a bridge that had collapsed due to the blaze.

DeVore and Schwartz both worked as corrections officers at the Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility. They became friends, and DeVore helped spark Schwartz’s interest in becoming a volunteer firefighter.

Schwartz served with the U.S. Air Force as a mechanic on B-1 bombers during the Persian Gulf War. Before joining the Department of Corrections, he worked as a diesel mechanic and truck driver.

A father of four sons, Schwartz wanted to raise his children in a rural setting. He lived on a large plot of land in the country, where he raised livestock and enjoyed hunting, fishing, and shooting with his boys.

Friends remembered his quiet strength and described his sons as “his heart and soul.”





# Remembering

## Shane M. Stewart

### Ault-Pierce Fire Department — Colorado

Volunteer Captain

Date of Death: February 23, 2008

Age: 33

Shane Stewart was born in Sterling, Colorado, to Paul and Jeanette (Rathbun) Stewart and was raised in Greeley, Colorado. He graduated from University High School in 1994 and attended Aims Community College for the auto-body repair program and fire training. He married his wife, Cyndee, on September 13, 1997. Shane worked in the autobody industry for several years, then joined the Colorado Department of Transportation as a road maintenance worker.

Family time was very important to Shane, and he loved doing activities with his sons, Blake and Logan, and his niece and nephews, Zachary, Shawna, and Luke. He enjoyed the mountains, four-wheeling, camping, and fishing with his family. He was an avid bow hunter and a member of the Colorado Bow Hunters Association. Shane always enjoyed wrestling as a boy, and he found a way to put his knowledge to use as a coach through the Highland Recreation Association. He enjoyed coaching his sons and nephews and often ended up helping the other coaches when the boys played football.

Shane and his family moved to Pierce in 2004. He wanted to find a way to participate in the community, and he remembered how his brother, Sean, enjoyed being a volunteer firefighter. Shane became a volunteer

with the Ault-Pierce Fire Department in 2005. He especially liked fighting fires, although he soon learned that in a small community most of the calls were to respond to traffic accidents and medical emergencies. It made him feel good to help those in need. Shane recruited his brother and father to join the department, and he really enjoyed serving with them and the new friends he had made.

Shane didn't just participate in emergency response for the department, but also in other department functions. He enjoyed driving the trucks in the local parades, and his family usually rode with him. He participated in the annual pancake breakfast and helped with Ault Days. He liked to volunteer to stand by for high school athletic events and to go to the elementary school to help with the smoke house. Shane felt like he had found something that he could turn into a career, and he had always hoped that one day the Ault-Pierce Department would need to hire full-time employees so he could be one of them.

Shane died in the line of duty early February 23, 2008, when he lost control of the fire truck he was driving while responding to a medical call for a stroke victim. He will be greatly missed, but his family takes comfort in knowing that he died doing what he loved.





# Remembering



## Gary D. Remling

### Belltown Volunteer Fire Department — Connecticut

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: April 25, 2008

Age: 56

Gary's involvement with firefighting began almost as soon as he was born; he was only four months old when his father joined the volunteer fire department in their neighborhood of Belltown. Gary's father would later serve as fire chief, a position he would hold for eighteen years. Gary followed him into the department in 1968.

Gary served his department with great enthusiasm, and was elected to the rank of lieutenant in April 1975. In September of that same year, he was hired as one of Belltown's small staff of career drivers. Gary finished his term as lieutenant and stepped aside to allow a younger member to rise up the ranks, since he was working full-time at the firehouse. In 1977, Gary married his high school sweetheart, Joanne. Gary and Joanne welcomed their daughter, Nicole, to the family in 1981.

Gary continued to advance professionally, becoming a fire marshal in 1979. In 1983, Gary was honored by his fellow firefighters, when he was awarded the department's "Firefighter of the Year," an award which he would win once more almost twenty years later in 2002. He was given another award in 1993 for saving the life of a child with a severe head injury. In 2004, Gary joined the rest of his fellow volunteer firefighters in receiving

the Secretary of State's Public Service Award.

During this time, the fire service was not Gary's only community involvement.

Gary was a steadfast supporter of the American Red Cross, including serving as an emergency blood courier, responding at all times of the day and night to shuttle blood from one hospital to another. Gary recruited friends and fellow firefighters to this job as well, often passing the pagers between one another to ensure coverage.

No matter what was going on, Gary was a fixture in the firehouse kitchen, cooking for "the boys," as he called his fellow firefighters. Gary asked for no recognition for this work and rarely, if ever, attended the annual Christmas party where the awards were given out. In 2002, arrangements had to be made covertly with his wife to get him to stop by briefly, in order to give him his "Firefighter of the Year" award.

In 2008, Gary retired as a career firefighter with 33 years of service. Just as he did before he was hired, Gary returned to active volunteer service after he retired. It was as a volunteer firefighter that Gary responded to his last call the night before he died. Gary's legacy continues in Belltown, as his daughter, Nicole, serves as vice president, and his wife, Joanne, is now an associate member.



# Remembering

## Michelle L. Smith

### Delaware City Fire Company No. 1, Inc. — Delaware

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: December 22, 2008

Age: 29

While attending to a patient who had been critically injured in a motorcycle accident, Michelle Smith was struck by another vehicle and later died from the injuries she sustained. Her death helped lead to changes that further protect first responders in Delaware.

Michelle was very committed to the fire service and was involved extensively with the fire department in educating the public in fire safety awareness. She was an active member of the Delaware City Ladies Auxiliary and served as its secretary. She was co-chair of the department's fire prevention committee and actively contributed to emergency response, fire prevention, and community awareness efforts. She took pride in her numerous contributions.

Michelle received the following awards:  
Delaware State Fire Prevention Commission

Edward C. McCormack Award, 2<sup>nd</sup> place for excellence in fire education; Chief Arthur B. Hope Heroic Firefighter of the Year; and Vincent F. Malloy First Responder of the Year.



Michelle worked for Coventry Healthcare. She was also an active member of Volunteer Hose Company of Middletown, Delaware.

House Bill 204, enacted by the Delaware House of Representatives 145<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, was named "Michelle Smith's Law." This bill amended Delaware State Code to help ensure that any person who recklessly kills one of Delaware's first responders is eligible to be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Michelle was a very loving daughter, sister, and mother. She is survived by her 12-year-old daughter, Emily.

*Remembering*

# Johnny Bajusz

**Layton Volunteer Fire Department — Florida**

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: July 18, 2008

Age: 69

Firefighter Johnny Bajusz was seriously injured in a vehicle accident while responding to the scene of a recreational vehicle fire in January 2008. He was treated for six months at Ryder Trauma Center in Miami and died from complications of his injuries on July 18, 2008, one day after returning home.

A Monroe County firefighter for 25 years, he was active with the Conch Key Fire Department before joining the Layton Volunteer Fire Department.

He was remembered as a very involved and dedicated firefighter who responded to almost every call and was willing to do any task necessary, from fundraising to cleaning to active fire duty. He believed in training and took many classes at the Florida State Fire College.

Bajusz originally came to the Florida Keys from Philadelphia and worked as a commercial fisherman on Conch Key. He retired from the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority in 1999.



*Remembering*

# Rafael Vazquez

**Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue Department — Florida**

Career Fire-Rescue Lieutenant

Date of Death: March 3, 2008

Age: 42

Lieutenant Rafael “Ray” Vazquez died March 3, 2008, when he was shot by a gunman while on a lunch break from a department training session. Four other people were injured in the shooting before the shooter turned the gun on himself.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Ray lived in Florida for many years. He worked for Palm Beach County for 15 years. Before becoming a firefighter, he worked for the Town of Lake Park and for American Medical Response.

Ray and his wife, Michele, met while working for American Medical Response, he as a paramedic, she as an EMT. They married in 2000. Each brought two children to the marriage, and they had one additional son together.

In 2000, Ray was trapped in his wife’s burning apartment and suffered serious smoke inhalation. Though doctors said he would need to use an oxygen tank, he recovered well enough to enroll in the fire academy six months later and became a fire-rescue officer in 2001. He was promoted to rescue lieutenant in 2007 and, at the time of his death, was assigned to Rescue 28 in Royal Palm Beach.

Ray was survived by his wife, Michele Vazquez, an officer with Palm Springs Public Safety; his five children, Rafael Jr., Tiffany, Shaun, Austin, and Adrian; his father, Federico Vazquez; and his six sisters, Maria, Sondra, Louisa, Trina, Cathy, and Michelle. Ray was an inspiration. He had a God-given gift of compassion. He was an outstanding father and the most giving husband.





# Remembering



## Jarrett Lee Little

### Walker County Fire & Rescue — Georgia

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: December 31, 2008

Age: 24

Jarrett was born July 24, 1984, in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. He is survived by his parents, Kenny and Becky, and his younger brother, Sean.

Jarrett's interest in becoming a firefighter began at age twelve. He saw the firemen testing the hydrant in front of our house and was hooked from that moment on. He joined Ft. Oglethorpe Fire Department's Explorer Post 2305 and volunteered all of his free time at our local Fire Station #8. He helped the team win several awards in competitions.

Jarrett kept a scanner in his bedroom and would wake his daddy up when the tones sounded for his station so he could go on a call. Jarrett couldn't wait until he was old enough to drive so he and his brother could go on calls together.

While in high school, Jarrett was a member of the JROTC and won the Minuteman and the Purple Heart Award. He often talked about the need for volunteers and how it helped others in their community. There are several people who are firefighters today because of Jarrett, one of those being his younger brother, Sean. In May 2007, Jarrett, Sean, and Jarrett's best friend, Lance, took off from their regular jobs to help fight wildfires in southern Georgia.



Jarrett received many certificates as an Explorer and as a firefighter, including: National EMT-I, HAZMAT, Swift Water Rescue & Rope Rescue Tech; Crash Victims & School Bus Extrication, Public Fire & Life Safety Educator I, HUMAN Factors on the Front Line, and Georgia Certified Fire Fighter. He completed the CEVOII-Fire course to become a driver so he could make sure that a fire truck got en route when the tones sounded. Jarrett received the 2002 "Rookie of the Year" award and the 2005 "Fire Fighter of the Year" award at Station 8.

Jarrett enjoyed spending time at the lake with his best friends, Angie and Lance, and with his little buddy, Tyler, riding his Sea-Doo. He enjoyed rock climbing and rappelling with his girlfriend, Shannon. Known as "The Radio Guy," Jarrett also enjoyed putting LED lights and radios in people's vehicles and programming scanners for anyone who wanted it done.

Jarrett wore many hats and worked several jobs at the same time. He wasn't afraid of working hard. He would give you his time, physical or financial help, or the shirt off his back. Jarrett is greatly missed by his family, friends, coworkers, and people of the community. He loved his job and always had a smile on his face. Jarrett Lee Little was a firefighter to the very end.

*Remembering*

# Joseph E. Turner

**Homerville/Clinch County Volunteer Fire Department — Georgia**

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: February 22, 2008

Age: 48

Firefighter Joseph “Joey” Turner died February 22, 2008, after collapsing during a training drill at the Georgia Fire Academy at Forsyth.

Turner was manager of an auto parts store in Homerville. He

was a master sergeant and 22-year veteran of the United States Marine Corps Reserve.

He was survived by his wife, Suzanne; his son, Jeb; his stepdaughter, Crystal; and his stepson, Matt.



*Remembering*

# Bret Kaneshiro

**Honolulu Fire Department — Hawaii**

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: December 30, 2008

Age: 37

Firefighter Bret Shinichi Kaneshiro died December 30, 2008, after responding to an EMS call the previous day. A 10-year veteran with the department, he worked at Engine 38.

Born in Tachi Kawa, Japan, Bret lived in Pearl City, Hawaii. He was survived by his wife, Paige; his sons, Takoda and Raven; his daughter, Haeli; his father, Bob; and his sister, Jami.







# Remembering



## Lee Grubor

### Lewistown Fire Protection District — Illinois

Volunteer Deputy Chief

Date of Death: March 22, 2008

Age: 42

As a young boy, Lee lived a block away from the fire station. When the alarm would sound, Lee would run to the end of the block and watch the fire trucks roll out of the station. As he waited to turn twenty-one to join the fire department, he filled his other passion for racing. He started with go-carts at the age of five, often placing first. Then the go-carts turned to stock cars, which Lee raced and built. Winning most of the races in his G4orce car, he had a huge fan base. Lee also was recognized for the rollover simulator he built.

His interests and achievements are too many to list. He owned Lee Grubor Welding with his wife, Mary Lou. They shared a daughter, Candy, and three grandchildren, Kierstin, Stephanie, and Coltin, whom Lee referred to as his best friends. Lee loved to give people nicknames, especially his wife. He loved to joke around with his many friends. He was very funny and loved to laugh. At the time of his death, he was in the process of remodeling his home.



Lee loved everything about the fire department.

He was a diver when water rescue was needed and was named “Firefighter of the Year” in 1995. He was chosen for a ride along with the arson investigator, which he felt was a great honor. Lee loved helping everyone; they didn’t even have to ask. He was working on plans to rebuild the fire station. He loved to spec a fire truck.

On March 22, 2008, a little after midnight, Lee returned home from mutual aid on a structure fire. He told his granddaughter Stephanie goodnight and that he loved her and would see her in the morning. He talked to his wife about the fire and his plans for the next day. He went into cardiac arrest and died from a massive heart attack a couple hours later in the ER. Lee was 42 years old.

Deputy Chief Lee Grubor will be forever missed and loved by his family and friends.



# Remembering



## Matthew P. Hubly

### Kankakee Township Fire Protection District — Illinois

Volunteer Chief

Date of Death: February 7, 2008

Age: 43

*M*att would have been truly humbled by the outpouring of remembrance that has been given to him over this last year. It was a lifelong dream of Matt's to become a firefighter. He was told early on in his life that, because of allergies, he would not be able to become a firefighter, but that did not stop him. Matt joined the fire service because he truly believed in helping people and LOVED the profession.

He joined the Kankakee Township Fire Protection District in October 1991 and worked his way from the rank of firefighter to be appointed fire chief in 2003. As a 17-year member of the department, Matt obtained numerous fire certifications, including Certified Firefighter III, Fire Apparatus Engineer, Vertical 1 Ops, Firefighter Instructor 2, Confined Space Rescue, Trench Ops, Vehicle Machinery Operations, HAZMAT Technician 2, HAZMAT Advisor, CPR/First Aid Instructor and had recently obtained his Fire Officer 1. Matt was also a past president of both the Kankakee Valley Tactical Rescue Team and the Kankakee Township Firefighters' Association. He served on the governance committee for the Kankakee Valley Fire Academy, where he had been an instructor since its inception in 1999.

Matt was hired by the Kankakee Area Career Center in August 2003 as the fire/rescue instructor. Through Matt's



involvement with the career center, he was able to bring to numerous students the joy and compassion that comes with being a firefighter. While with the career center, Matt was a SkillsUSA Advisor and a National SkillsUSA contest advisor. Through his instruction, Matt was able to have students compete on the national level for the first time in June 2007.

He also served as a contest supervisor at the state level. In addition, Matt served on the I-KAN Emergency Response and Crisis Management Project Leadership Team. He worked on behalf of improving school safety by implementing the red and green cards that are now present in classrooms across Kankakee and Iroquois County.

On February 1, 2008, while attending a fire department meeting, Matt was stricken with a heart attack after shoveling snow at the fire station. He died on February 7, 2008, surrounded by family, friends, students, coworkers, and fellow firefighters from the community.

His laugh was contagious and brought a smile to everyone he met. He lived his life to its fullest with no regrets. Remember the laughter and lessons; don't dwell on the tears. That would be the best way to remember Matt.



# Remembering



## Bill “The Doze” Miller

### Blue Mound Volunteer Fire Protection District — Illinois

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: October 13, 2008

Age: 24

Billy was born on December 6, 1983, in Ramsey, Illinois, to proud parents Meredith and Diane Miller. The family moved to Blue Mound, Illinois, in March of 1990.

Billy graduated from Meridian High School in 2002. In high school he played four years of football. During his sophomore year, the team took second place in the state championship. Billy’s love for football continued on throughout the rest of his life.

Billy graduated from Richland Community College as a certified welder. After college, Billy worked for Caterpillar until 2007, when he decided to pursue a career as a professional driver. He received his CDL and began driving a truck for C and J Excavating.

Bill was an active member of the Blue Mound Lions Club. He had many interests, such as his love for music, automobiles, farming, but most of all his love for friends and family.

Billy, even when he was little, had the utmost respect and admiration for all adults. It would be just a matter of time before he found the most admirable adults of



all. In 2005, Billy joined the Blue Mound Fire Department family. They gave him his nickname, “The Doze.” If they needed a door or wall knocked down, they called on him. He was a great asset to the department and formed an unbreakable brotherhood with each and every member.

On October 13, 2008, during a routine training exercise, Billy and another firefighter traveling in Tanker 38 came to an intersection and were involved in an accident, leaving Billy pinned in the truck. Firefighters extricated Billy from the apparatus, then airlifted him to Springfield Memorial Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The other firefighter escaped with minor injuries. Even during his last moments of life, Billy was only worried about his brother firefighter who was involved in the accident.

Even though the life of William Joseph Miller was so short, he made a tremendous impact on so many lives. His dedication and determination were so graceful in everything he did. The loss of Billy has greatly affected the Lions Club, the Blue Mound Fire Department, and his family and friends. He will forever be remembered as a hero.



# Remembering



## Brian J. Munz

### Fairbury Fire Department — Illinois

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: July 22, 2008

Age: 24

Brian was born on January 22, 1984, in Fairbury, Illinois. From the time he started walking, he was an outdoorsman. By the time he was two years old, Brian spent most of his time outdoors with one of his parents or his grandfather. His toys were farm equipment, trucks and earth moving equipment, and his choice of a ride was a pedal tractor.

By the time he was six years old, Brian was riding his small, red bicycle to Kilgus Dairy, a couple miles from his home. He loved to help with chores and spend time with the Kilgus family. His home was on the golf course, and he enjoyed talking with the head groundskeeper to learn about caring for fairways and greens. Even before he started first grade, he was wading in the creek to find golf balls and then selling them to golfers at the tee next to his home. At nine years old, the young entrepreneur had invested thousands of dollars from golf ball sales and other jobs in John Deere stock.

Later, Brian took on additional jobs—working at the golf course, mowing lawns, helping at the Dairy Farm, etc. He purchased his first four-wheeler ATV and later a pickup truck. His first truly heroic act was on an ATV; Brian and friends were racing across a frozen pond when

a friend broke through the ice. Brian sped back and dove into the water to assist his pal to safety. He was an avid hunter and fisherman. He loved canoeing and kayaking with friends.



Brian started Big B's Lawn Care shortly after graduating from high school. He was known throughout the community for superior work and for endless acts of kindness. After his funeral, scores of residents reminisced about how Brian had stopped what he was doing to provide assistance. Elderly citizens felt a deep loss, because Brian always found time to visit, even on his busiest days.

Brian always wanted to be a firefighter. The minimum age to join the department was 21. He relentlessly campaigned and finally convinced the fire chief to lower the age requirement to 18. He loved fire training and always wanted to attend additional fire training courses. He never wanted to be with the truck at a fire; he wanted to be the first firefighter in the building. His final fire call was a house fire in a neighboring community. Brian gave his life doing what he loved most.

Everyone remembers Brian for his big smile, crazy antics, and his passion for helping people.

# Remembering

## Jay C. Maddy

### Eaton Volunteer Fire Department — Indiana

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: May 24, 2008

Age: 41

Jay C. Maddy was born on December 8, 1966, in Marion, Indiana. He was raised in Eaton all of his life. When he was little, Jay just lived a block from the fire station, so every time the fire whistle went off, Jay went up to the station to see if there was anything that he could do to help the firemen at the station. It was Jay's desire and passion to become a firefighter like all the guys he knew on the department when he was little.

He did become that firefighter. He was at one time or other a training officer and a captain on the department, until he couldn't find a good job to support his family. So Jay gave up his position as captain so he could become a truck driver for P.A.M. Transport. It was very hard for him to make this decision, but it did not stop him from being a firefighter. When Jay was home, he would be right up there if the fire alarm went off. It didn't matter if he had just walked in the door from two or three weeks on the road, he would head for the fire department.

It was Jay's passion to be able to help his community out. He devoted 20 years to the department. He would make sure to take his vacation so he would be able to help at the fire department Memorial Day car show and hog roast.

In May of 2008, Jay never got to help at the car show and hog roast. Just a few days before, Eaton Volunteer Fire Department responded to a rash of arson fires, and there was a community watch on, with firefighters and police patrolling the town. With the lack of sleep and the stress of all that was going on in the community, on Friday evening Jay was at home when he complained of chest pains. He passed away on Saturday at Ball Memorial Hospital.

Jay left behind his wife, Traci, and two sons, Cory and Kevin. He is missed by his loving family and his fire department family.





# Remembering



## David T. Sherfick

### Brown Township Fire-Rescue — Indiana

Career Captain

Date of Death: February 4, 2008

Age: 40

David was born on July 21, 1967, in Indianapolis, to Karla and John Sherfick, and was raised in the small town of New Palestine, Indiana. He graduated from New Palestine High School in 1985 and received a soccer scholarship from Indiana Central University.

David loved playing soccer. He began playing at age six and played in elementary, middle, high school and college. Later he coached soccer at Mooresville High School and around the community of Mooresville. He played at Indy Indoor Soccer Club. The best coaching job he had was coaching his son's soccer team for several seasons for Mooresville Optimist Club.

David wanted to be a firefighter from the time he was five years old. He had a pedal car that he painted to look like a fire truck. He began his firefighter career as a volunteer with Warren Township Fire Department. While attending college, David made the decision to pursue a career in the fire service. In May 1990, he was hired full-time to Brown Township Fire and Rescue in Mooresville. He also worked part-time as a deputy fire marshal for White River Township Fire Department in Greenwood, Indiana, for several years.

During his 18 years of service with Brown Township Fire and Rescue, David attained the rank of master fire-

fighter, advanced EMT, training officer, rescue diver and captain. In 1994, the department voted David "Firefighter of the Year," a well-deserved honor.

David's personal life blossomed with the birth of his son, Joel. He loved being a father, and Joel was the center of David's life. They were more than just father and son; they were the perfect example of best friends. David enjoyed coaching his son in soccer, as well as watching him play. They shared many interests, including golf, reading, and Star Wars. Joel was ten years old at the time of his father's death.

On February 4, 2008, David made his last call. As he drove the ambulance back to the station after transporting a patient to the hospital, the ambulance was hit head-on by an oncoming vehicle that had crossed over into their lane. David's efforts to avoid the oncoming vehicle helped save the life of the other firefighter riding with him. Because of his quick actions, David was awarded the Medal of Valor from the State of Indiana.

Captain David T. Sherfick was a great firefighter and a great friend, but most of all was a great father to his son.

He is survived by his son, Joel; parents, John and Karla; and sister, Julie.





# Remembering



## Christa Dawn Burchett

### Paintsville Fire-Rescue-EMS — Kentucky

Career Assistant Chief/EMS Director

Date of Death: January 22, 2008

Age: 33

Early one crisp winter morning, Christa Dawn Burchett set out to do what she has spent most of her adult life doing, saving a life. A 911 call for help, which started out like most other calls, ended very differently and changed the lives of all who knew and loved Christa.

Christa Dawn (Lemaster) Burchett was born September 2, 1974, in Columbus, Ohio, to Redford and Melinda Lemaster. She was their first child and their only daughter. Redford and Melinda watched Christa grow from a young child who was always willing to lend a hand, to a strong woman who went above and beyond daily. At the age of 18, Christa became a mother when she had her daughter, Olivia Burchett. Christa always placed Olivia and her needs first; she was a mother first and foremost. Christa took great pride in the relationships she had with her family and cherished her friends dearly.

In 2003, Christa became a paramedic, and in August 2005, she began working with the Paintsville Fire Department and EMS. Less than two years later, Christa was named assistant fire chief and director of the emergency management services and rescue services. Christa loved working with the EMS and was grateful that she could offer comfort and help to those in need.



On the morning of January 22, 2008, Christa responded to a call for help from a young mother-to-be who had lost control of her car on an icy road. She rushed to the scene in an ambulance and was helping the young woman to get into the ambulance. At the same moment, a tractor-trailer loaded with coal began sliding on the highway and hit Christa and the mother-to-be. The mother was killed on impact. Christa died at Paul B. Hall Regional Medical Center in Paintsville at 10:04 a.m.

Christa's name and legacy will live on through the lives and people she has touched. Christa left too early, and not a day goes by that her family and friends don't think of her and miss her dearly. Christa left behind a beautiful daughter, Olivia Burchett (16), who had to grow up way too soon. Being left without a mother at such a young age has changed her life forever. Christa's parents, Redford and Melinda, miss her more with each passing day. Her brother and sister-in-law, Redford and Jennifer, have a huge void in their lives.

Christa's friends and coworkers have also been impacted by her absence and have promised to ensure that her dedication and devotion to caring for others will continue through them. In Memory of Unit 106, Christa Dawn Burchett.

# Remembering

## James J. Gonzales Sr.

### Saint Bernard Parish Fire District — Louisiana

Career District Chief

Date of Death: May 29, 2008

Age: 46

District Chief James Gonzales Sr. died May 29, 2008, when he suffered a heart attack after responding to multiple emergency incidents during a work shift. He was a 28-year veteran with the department.

During Hurricane Katrina, Chief Gonzales headed one of three evacuation task forces and participated in search and rescue efforts that saved many lives. He was a member of IAFF Local #1468.

Gonzales was survived by two sons, James J. Gonzales Jr. and Micheal Gonzales; two daughters, Mindy Sakobie and Be Be Nunnery; his mother, Joan Gallardo Gonzales; his fiancée, Libby Pulley; his brothers and sister; stepchildren; grandchildren; and many extended family members and friends.

He was a dedicated firefighter and a giving friend.





# Remembering

## Eric D. Speed Sr.

### Caddo Parish Fire District #2 — Louisiana

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: March 28, 2008

Age: 33

Firefighter Eric Speed died March 28, 2008, when his tanker truck overturned as he responded to the scene of a house fire. A 12-year veteran with the department, he had wanted to be a firefighter since he was a boy. Fellow firefighters remembered him as passionate about saving lives and as someone who “always had your back.”

Eric DeWayne Speed was born to Linda Joyce (Houston) Speed and Albert Speed on May 25, 1974, in Shreveport, Louisiana. He graduated from Green Oaks High School in 1993 and was a faithful employee of Wal-Mart, where he worked as a night-shift stocker.

He was survived by his mother, Linda Speed; four children, Erica, Teara, Shaterica, and Eric Speed, Jr.; his sister, LaToshia Speed; his brother, Corey Speed; and a host of extended family members and friends. He was preceded in death by his father, Albert Speed.

*You were my first born, and I have loved you from the beginning to the end. My love will always continue to follow you. Your soul is at rest, and now you have peace. Don't worry about me, because the Lord will continue to keep me strong. I promise to keep your wish, to love, pro-*

*tect, and keep your children with knowing the Lord is on their side.*

Love, Mom

*Dad, we have always loved you. Even though we fussed and fought amongst ourselves, you were always there. You showed us many times just how much you cared for us by merely being there. You have always loved us, and we could always depend on you for everything. You were someone very special to us, and you always told us, no matter what happened, to love one another, be strong, and trust in God. Daddy, we love you dearly, and you will forever be in our hearts.*  
Your children

*You have left us full of sadness and tears, but you have left us with the remembrance of years past where you've made us so happy and proud to call you our brother. Eric, we will miss you so much, especially your smiles. Someday we will see you again up in that special place, which is free from sin.*  
Your brother and sister

Eric was a hero. His children were his heart, and being a fireman came next. He was always smiling, always happy, and always trying to help everyone he could. His legacy will live forever and ever.



# Remembering

## Riley J. Terrebonne Jr.

### Springfield Fire/Rescue, Livingston Parish Fire Protection District 2 — Louisiana

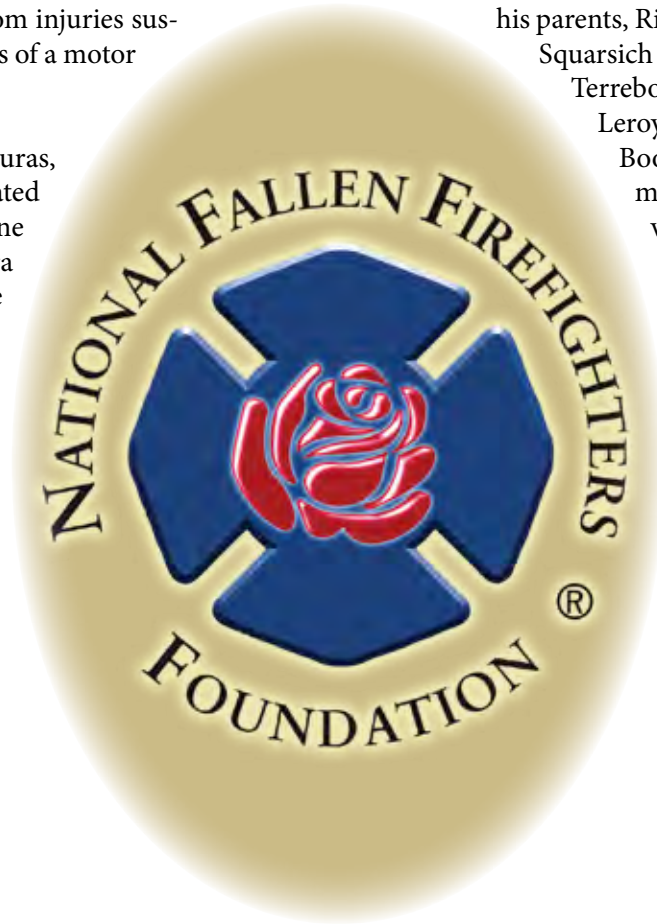
Volunteer Firefighter  
Date of Death: April 21, 2008  
Age: 29

Firefighter Riley “Noodles” Terrebonne Jr. died April 21, 2008, from injuries sustained while assisting victims of a motor vehicle accident.

Riley was a native of Buras, Louisiana. His family relocated to Springfield after Hurricane Katrina. Employed by Ferrara Fire Apparatus, Inc. at the time of his death, he had previously been employed by Jade Marine in Belle Chase and Jellystone Resort of Robert.

He was survived by his son, Andre Terrebonne; his parents, Riley Terrebonne Sr. and Pamela Squarsich Terrebonne; his sister, Jennifer Terrebonne; his nephews, Dylan and Leroy Latham; his niece, Hailey Book; and many extended family members, friends, and brotherly volunteer firefighters.

Riley was an everyday hero, one who puts his life on the line every day. He brought joy into the lives of many people.





# Remembering



## Michael David Snowman

### Hartland Volunteer Fire Department — Maine

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: November 17, 2008

Age: 49

Michael David Snowman was born November 23, 1958, in Waterville, Maine. Mike's heroic aspirations came to light when he was five years old. Confident of his Superman power to fly, he donned a cape and leaped out of his bedroom window. Gravity, the ground, and a broken leg proved only temporary interruptions!

Growing up in the small town of Detroit, Maine, Mike was well known and well liked by all as he enthusiastically joined the Boy Scouts, and played sports. In 1978, Mike graduated from high school and married his sweetheart, Laureen. In 1980, Mike helped start the first fire department in Detroit, Maine.

Mike's love of country led him to join the Army in 1982. He and his young growing family served six years at posts in Oklahoma, Washington, Hawaii, and Kentucky. Always wanting to give his children the small town life he had loved, he decided in 1988 to bring them to Maine.

Settling in Hartland, Maine, with his wife and three children, Mike joined the Hartland Volunteer Fire Department and the First Baptist Church. At Hartland Baptist Church, Mike served as SS superintendent, chil-



dren's church and SS teacher, school mascot, and youth worker. Combining Christian faith, his firefighting skills, and contagious enthusiasm, Mike entertained and shared Jesus' love with the children, which now included five of his own grandchildren. He made a real fire-breathing dragon and treated the Christian school children to breakfast at the fire station.

Mike served many hours with the fire department and was often the first on the scene. He was the safety officer and took that job very seriously. Mike thought of some of the men as his own sons, because he had seen some of them grow up with his children.

On November 17, 2008, Mike went on his last fire call. He went to assist another department at a house fire. While pulling hose at the scene, Mike suffered a fatal heart attack.

The inscription on Mike Snowman's gravestone—"A Man Missed By All"—reflects the thoughts of all who knew him. It was the way he lived his life. No one remained a stranger to Mike, and he gave a helping hand to anyone. Mike's life verse was James 1:22 which reads, "...Be ye doers of the Word not hearers only ..." That sums up the way he lived and died.



# Remembering



## Jarrett A. Dixon

### Baltimore County Fire Department — Maryland

Career Fire Apparatus Driver Operator

Date of Death: January 12, 2008

Age: 36

Jarrett Aliber Dixon was born September 3, 1971, in Baltimore. On January 12, 2008, God welcomed Jarrett into the beautiful sunset of immortality. Jarrett has always been a loving joy to his family and friends.

Jarrett was an alumnus of the University of Maryland College Park, where he earned a bachelor's degree in criminology and criminal justice. A faithful member of St. Bernardine's Roman Catholic Church, he completed his religious education there and, for many years, was an audio technician at the 8:30 AM Sunday mass. Jarrett's employment began on his grandfather's farm in Lothian, Maryland, where he learned the values of hard work and self-discipline and that "to those that much is given, much is expected." Jarrett always had several jobs, activities, and adventures in progress. He worked at McDonogh School's horse riding hall and as a counselor and lifeguard with the Camp Red Eagle Program.

In 1995, he graduated from the University of Maryland Police Academy and joined the UMCP Police Department as a campus police officer. His plan was to work a couple of years as a police officer and then go to law school.

Jarrett's plan changed after he was bitten by the "fire-fighter bug." He joined the Liberty Road Volunteer Fire Company in 1993 and served in many capacities, including firefighter, EMT, 1st fire lieutenant, and member of the board of directors. He was recognized several

times for being one of the top ten fire and EMS responders.



In 1997, he graduated from the Baltimore County Fire Department School. With Baltimore County, Jarrett was a Fire Fighter II, Fire Officer II, Fire Instructor III, Fire Inspector I, public fire educator, and was certified to drive all fire equipment. His special achievements and certifications are numerous. He was an active member of Local 1311 and represented the union in annual MS softball tournaments. Jarrett also worked for STAT MedEvac as a flight paramedic.

Although it may seem that he was all work and no play, Jarrett loved sports, both as a participant and observer. He was a college wrestler, a softball player and coach, and a certified scuba diver. He was also a Ravens fan and enjoyed working the home games.

Throughout his short life, Jarrett filled many roles: son, brother, cousin, devoted father, friend, role model, and comforter. He was a strong believer in family, education, and physical fitness.

He is survived by his beloved son, Gavin Aiden Conner Dixon; his parents, Alexander and Dolores Dixon; sisters, Etosha Dixon, MD, and Annette Dixon; his special friend, Priscillia Johnson, US Navy; and a host of relatives, friends, and brothers and sisters of the emergency services.



# Remembering



## Brian Dennis Neville

### Baltimore County Fire Department — Maryland

Career Firefighter/Paramedic  
Date of Death: October 16, 2008  
Age: 32

Brian Dennis Neville began his fire career at age 16 as a volunteer in Howard County, Maryland. He graduated from Anne Arundel Community College with an A. A. degree and his EMT-P. He began working for the Baltimore County Fire Department in 2001. For six years, he was assigned to Station 11 in Hillendale and was a preceptor to other paramedics.

Brian was a part-time ALS provider with Harford County Volunteer Fire EMS Foundation and was one of the first medics hired into the system. He served on the QA board and was a friend and mentor to the staff. He loved his job and often shared this love with school children, talking to them about the fire service on his days off. A week before he died, he gave a presentation to his son's preschool classes.

Brian loved his family, and they enjoyed visiting him at the station while he was on duty. The night that he died, Brian was serving as a district EMS lieutenant

at Station 17 in Texas, Maryland. He suffered a sudden cardiac arrest while working the nightshift.



Brian's EMS shift commander wrote: *Paramedic Neville treated every patient, on every call, with only the utmost in professionalism and compassion. The community has suffered a tremendous loss in Brian's death.*

Posthumously, in July 2009, Brian received the 2009 Maryland region American Legion EMS "Provider of the Year" award for saving the life of a ten-year-old boy who was severely bitten by a neighbor's dog. The boy's femoral artery was severed, but he underwent surgery and has returned to a normal life, including playing football.

Brian, who was 32, is survived by his wife, Katie; two sons, Carson, age 5, and Cameron, age 4; his one-year-old daughter, Carleigh; a sister, Kristen; his parents, Jane and Dennis; an aunt; two uncles; and several cousins. We love you, Brian, and you will always live on in our hearts.



# Remembering



## John Clasby

### Hull Fire Department — Massachusetts

Career Firefighter/EMT

Date of Death: November 11, 2008

Age: 45

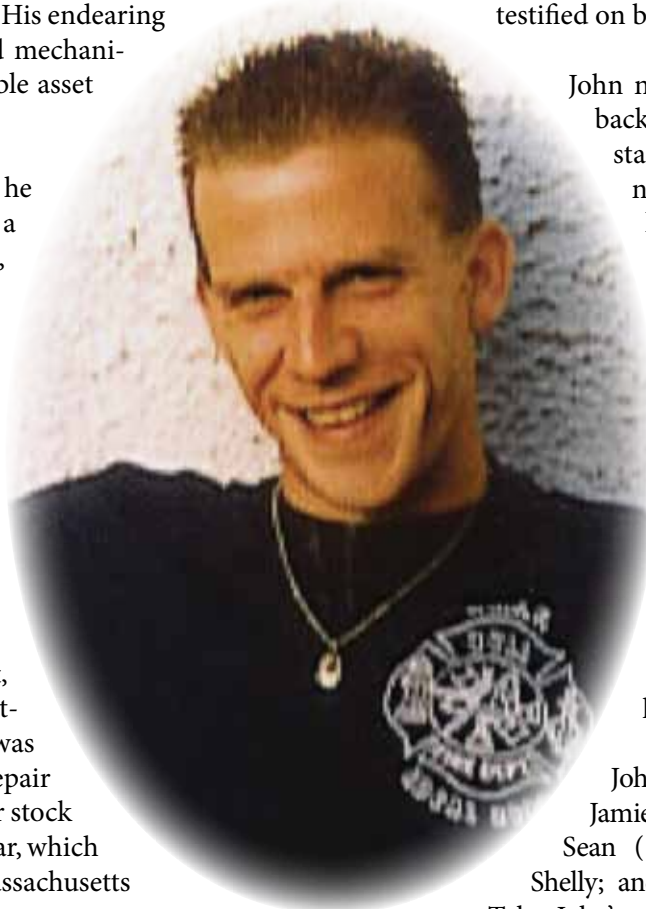
John was hired as a firefighter for the Town of Hull on August 15, 1989. His endearing personality, compassion, and mechanical ability made him a valuable asset to the department.

John was 35 years old when he was injured while fighting a multiple alarm fire on June 29, 1999. A gun had been abandoned in a garage wall, and when the gun heated from the intense fire, the bullet discharged and severed his spine, leaving him confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

John could set his mind to do just about anything and excel at it. Before his accident, he was quite skilled in operating and repairing boats and was proficient at auto body and repair work. He developed a love for stock car racing and built his own car, which he successfully raced in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

John was the man you wanted with you at a structure fire. He knew his job and performed his duties with the skill of someone way beyond his years. If it had not been for the accident, he would be a paramedic and an officer today. He saved many lives and received commendations, including an award from the governor of Massachusetts for heroism during the fire where he was injured. John was a torchbearer for the tenth anniversary

of the Americans with Disabilities Act and testified on behalf of Bill 1194.



John never let his injuries hold him back, even though he was constantly in pain. Medically, he never gained the quality of life he strived for. His love of his family was the major factor that kept him alive. He was still a father to his children and a role model for his niece, Colby. He was more of a hero for his life after the accident than for what happened that day. His sense of humor was renowned. He always had a smile and some funny tale to tell. If there was a practical joke performed on someone, he was part of it.

John is survived by his daughter, Jamie (16); twin sons, Daniel and Sean (14); his mother, Janet; sister, Shelly; and Shelly's children, Colby and Tyler. John's mother became his primary caregiver after the accident, and she cared for him with the same dedication John had for his profession. John also received support from friends, coworkers, and the town.

John Clasby died twice, once on that fateful day, and finally on November 11, 2008. He was honored with one of the highest tributes in the history of the Town of Hull and was laid to rest in the Hull Cemetery, next to his father and brother.

# Remembering

## Walt P. Harris Sr.

### Detroit Fire Department — Michigan

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: November 15, 2008

Age: 38

Firefighter Walter P. Harris Sr. was killed in a roof collapse while fighting a fire that had been intentionally set in a vacant residential structure. A 17-year veteran with the department, he worked his entire career at the Squad 3/Engine 23 firehouse.

Walt grew up on the east side of Detroit and graduated from Detroit De La Salle High School. After graduation, he went to the fire academy.

Walt was a minister at Community Christian Fellowship Church.

Walt Harris was survived by his wife, Syri; and his six sons, James, Robert, Patrick, Caleb, Walter Jr., and Christian.

His son, James Hill Harris, also a member of the Detroit Fire Department, said: "He taught life lessons about integrity and hard work. His favorite saying was, 'I can sleep when I'm dead, but for now I've got work to do.' He showed me: This is what it means to be a father and husband. This is what it means to be a man."





# Remembering



## Donald G. Paterson

### Kimball Township Fire Department — Michigan

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: January 1, 2008

Age: 65

Don's family was important to him. He left his wife, Pat, of 45 years; his daughter, Lori; his son, Don Jr.; his daughter-in-law, Amanda; and his grandchildren. His grandchildren brought him joy, and he loved to show them off.

Don was also a member of the St. Clair County Chapter of the Red Cross. He helped with disaster victims. He was an instructor of the Red Cross Clown Department. He was known as "Lucky the Clown" and loved to make animal balloons for people.

Don also played and coached baseball over the years. He loved to play practical jokes on people. His hobby was collecting and shooting guns. He enjoyed bird watching.

Don would help anyone that he could. He was a good listener and would only give advice if you asked him. He was a role model for many people around him. He supported his grandchildren in their many activities, including helping his oldest grandson earn his Eagle Scout award in Boy Scouts. Each grandchild

was special to him in their own way. Even after his death, Don continued to help others through the Gift of Life.

Don joined the fire department in 1972. He served for 35 years and saw many changes through the years. His son, Don Jr., has followed in his footsteps and become a firefighter.

Don is missed by his family, friends, and his firefighters he worked with on calls. We are proud of the legacy he left behind. Although we miss him, he has left us with many good memories.

Dad showed his loyalty to the people around him.

He showed his dedication to his family and friends.

Dad showed his kindness in words and action.

He showed his love in his hand helping others.

Dad was one of the best.

Now with God he rests.

Dad, you are missed, and we all love you.

—Your Family





# Remembering

## Jeremy L. Jylka

### Pine City Fire Department — Minnesota

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: April 29, 2008

Age: 34

Firefighter Jeremy Jylka died after suffering a medical emergency while responding to a wildland fire.

His proudest moments were his marriage to Kelly, the birth of his daughter, Anika, and becoming a firefighter.

Jeremy was born in Two Harbors, Minnesota, to Carol Kort and Gary Jylka. He graduated from Staples-Motley High School in 1993 and served in the U.S. Navy from 1993 to 1995. He married Kelly Horton on December 22, 2001.

Jeremy joined the Pine City Fire Department in May 2007. He completed firefighter training, fire instructor training, building fire code inspector, auto extrication, and EMT-basic training.

Jeremy was survived by his loving wife, Kelly; his daughter, Anika; his mother, Carol Kort; his father, Gary Jylka; his sisters, Tammy Myrick, Gina Tavares, and Tashia Birkholtz; his mother-in-law, Crystal Boylan; and many other relatives and friends.

Jeremy was a loving, caring, loyal, dependable man who loved and protected his family and friends with all his heart and soul.



# Remembering

## Charles C. Fraley Jr.

### Macon Fire Department — Mississippi

Volunteer Chief

Date of Death: April 12, 2008

Age: 65

Chief Charles Carter “Charlie” Fraley Jr. died April 12, 2008, after becoming ill at the scene of a structure fire. A dedicated Macon firefighter for more than 50 years, he served as fire chief for 27 of those years. During his tenure, he was named “Firefighter of the Year” and was responsible for making the Macon Fire Department one of the best equipped and highest rated small volunteer departments in the state of Mississippi.

Charlie grew up in Macon and attended Ole Miss, where he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon. When his father became ill, he left college and returned home to help with the family business.

Charlie was a member of Independent Methodist Church, a charter member of Pineview Country Club, and a member of the Frith Lake Club. He was the former owner-operator of Fraley’s Big Star Food Store, as well as Superior Cleaners, and was a partner, with his son, in Anthony’s

Restaurant in West Point. He loved serving the children of Macon snow cones on hot summer days.

A Boy Scout in his youth, Charlie retained a lifelong love of the outdoors. He was an avid hunter, fisherman, and dog lover, who enjoyed long hikes in the woods.

He was survived by his wife, Ellenor; his daughter, Shannon; his son, Charles Fraley III; his mother, Dorothy Wilkins Fraley; and his sisters, Abbie Fraley Franks and Patty Fraley McAlexander.

Whenever that alarm went off, it didn’t matter what we were doing or where we were, he was coming, and just get out of his way. He loved Macon. He didn’t want anything to happen to it. He loved his men, and he always put their safety first. His loyalty and dedication to the fire department were reflected by the love and respect of all who served under him.



*Remembering*

# Richard L. Montgomery

**Hobo Volunteer Fire Department — Mississippi**

Volunteer Captain

Date of Death: December 31, 2008

Age: 54

Captain Richard Montgomery died December 31, 2008, when he suffered a heart attack while fighting a residential structure fire. A 15-year veteran with Hobo, he was also a member of the Pisgah Volunteer Fire Department.

He was born January 30, 1954, in Corinth, Mississippi, to Roy Lee and Avo Whisenant Montgomery. Montgomery was a U.S. Army veteran of Desert Storm. He enjoyed fishing.

He was survived by his daughter, Korina Dodson; and by three sisters, Nancy Ashmore, Rona Mathis, and Lisa Huguley. He was preceded in death by his parents and a nephew.

He was remembered by fellow firefighters as very involved and dependable, a good guy who loved helping people.





# Remembering



## Walter Clyde Walker Jr.

### Collinsville Volunteer Fire Department — Mississippi

Volunteer Chief

Date of Death: January 26, 2008

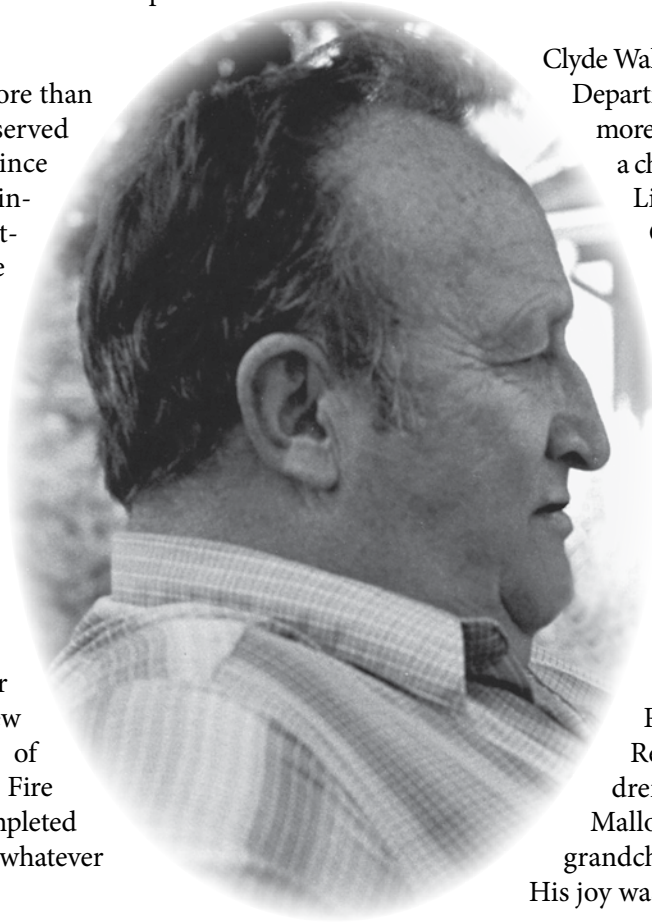
Age: 68

Chief Walter “Clyde” Walker died January 26, 2008, in a motor vehicle accident while responding to an emergency call.

it took, he worked diligently for three years to get a new brush truck for the department.

A volunteer firefighter for more than 35 years, Clyde Walker had served as chief of the department since the 1970s. He focused on training and upgrading the department in order to provide the best service possible to the community. He led quietly, by example, and was known as someone who always responded when there was an emergency in the community. Walker’s two sons are also Collinsville firefighters.

Though modest about his accomplishments, Chief Walker was instrumental in the new location and construction of the Collinsville Volunteer Fire Department, which was completed in 2007. Always willing to do whatever



Clyde Walker retired from the Mississippi Department of Human Services after more than 30 years of service. He was a charter member of the Collinsville Lions Club and a member of the Collinsville Community Club. A lifetime member of the First Baptist Church of Collinsville, he served as Sunday school director, teacher, and deacon for many years.

Clyde Walker was a wonderful son, husband, father, grandfather, brother-in-law, uncle, and cousin. He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Ellen Walker; his children, Randy Walker (Joann), Ricky Walker (Chris), and Renee Vance (Max); grandchildren Davey, Luke, Emily, Randel, Mallory, and Jacob; and great-grandchildren, Conner and Caroline. His joy was serving as fire chief.

# Remembering

## Louis P. Berra

### West County EMS & Fire Protection District — Missouri

Career Firefighter/Paramedic  
Date of Death: January 18, 2008  
Age: 49

Firefighter/Paramedic Louis “Lou” Berra died at the fire station during a duty shift that included department-mandated physical training. He was a member of IAFF Local 2665. A 12-year veteran with West County EMS & Fire Protection District, he had previously served 12 years with the Frontenac Fire Department.

Committed to physical fitness, he ran 70 miles a week and competed in six or seven marathons annually. He also participated in runs to benefit St. Jude’s Hospital and on the Trek Bicycle Racing Team.

Lou and his wife, Lori, were together for 27 years and had a son, Victorio, and a daughter, Alexis. In addition to his wife and children, Louis was survived by his parents, Victor and Mary Ann Berra; his sisters, Mary Jo Cone and Laurie Lohbeck; and many extended family members and friends.

Lou’s life was devoted to his family, the fire department, and the community. He was the pillar and strength of his family.





# Remembering



## Tyler H. Casey

### Seneca Area Fire Protection District — Missouri

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: May 12, 2008

Age: 21

Tyler Casey was born August 19, 1986, in Joplin, Missouri. Following in his step-father's footsteps, Tyler became a volunteer firefighter and trained storm spotter with the Seneca Area Fire Protection District. He served with the department for four years. With a growing passion for the fire service, Tyler enrolled in Fire 1 and 2 and EMT classes and was looking forward to getting on with one of the local career departments. With the eagerness to learn and his strong accountability, Tyler became a well respected firefighter, not only in his own department, but throughout the surrounding area departments as well.

Another passion of Tyler's, was being a father to his three-year-old daughter. He loved spending every spare moment with her and watching her grow up before his eyes. Being brought up in a large family, Tyler hoped to give his daughter the same family atmosphere he had as a child.

On the evening of Saturday May 10, 2008, a county-wide call went out for storm spotters to mobilize for severe weather and possible tornados. With his training and knowledge, Tyler jumped into action and headed to one of the fire district's designated spotting areas. While at the intersection of Highway 43 and Iris Road in Newton County, Missouri, he left his vehicle to alert a family

that was parked on the side of the road watching the weather condition. At this exact time, an EF-4 tornado was heading straight for them. The family managed to escape, but Tyler was caught in the path of the oncoming tornado as it struck. He sustained serious injuries and was transported to Joplin's Freeman West Hospital, where he was admitted and placed on life support. On Monday, May 12, 2008, at 1:35 p.m., Tyler was removed from life support. A total of 14 people were killed by the tornado, with 200 injuries, including 90 people sent to the hospital.

Fellow firefighters remembered Tyler as very determined. Even before his initial probation period ended, he was helping teach the newer firefighters what he had just learned. After his death, Missouri's Governor Matt Blunt issued a proclamation declaring May 17, 2008, Tyler Heath Casey Day.

Tyler was survived by his daughter, Taryn; his mother and stepfather, Rayma and Kyle Hinz; his father and stepmother, Jerry and Jackie Casey; five brothers; and one sister.

He was a good guy and a great firefighter. He was the littlest guy in our department, but he had the biggest heart. Even though he was soft spoken, his actions spoke loud and clear.



# Remembering

## Terrance Dale Crockett

### Kansas City Fire Department — Missouri

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: March 17, 2008

Age: 48

Terrance Dale Crockett was born February 11, 1960. He was reborn again in September 1982, and every day since that day Terrance proclaimed his Salvation to everyone he met. He would bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you knew Terrance, you would know that he was an example of God's Love and his Spirit was a reflection of the Faith that he had.

Terrance was married for 23 years to Chandra A. Crockett, and out of this marriage were born Darnisha, April and Ariel, three beautiful daughters that he loved dearly. He graduated from Central High School in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1978.

Within his lifespan, Terrance was employed for the City of Kansas City for 29 years of service, starting with the Animal Control Division of Kansas City, then moving forward to security for the Leeds Correctional Facility. Terrance

was always a people person and didn't stop there. Later he decided to join the fire department and originally became a dispatcher. Ultimately, he decided to pursue his lifelong dream to become a fire fighter in 2000.



Terrance loved his fire fighter family just as if they were his brothers and sisters. On March 17, 2008, was the last official call of this GREAT MAN, Terrance Dale Crockett. He was preceded in death by his father, Jerome Crockett, and grandson, Dion Lamont Crockett. Terrance "Terry" Crockett was a great father, grandfather, friend, coworker, brother, brother-in-law, uncle, husband and Godfather.

Terrance, you will be missed dearly and FOREVER.....

WE LOVE YOU



# Remembering



## Ryan A. Hummert

### Maplewood Fire Department — Missouri

Career Firefighter/Paramedic

Date of Death: July 21, 2008

Age: 22

Ryan possessed many qualities that make a person a great firefighter. He was confident, intelligent, athletic, conscientious and genuinely committed to helping others in their time of need. Even though his career with the fire service was brief, Ryan was awarded a Clinical Save within his first few months on the job, for successfully resuscitating a patient in cardiac arrest.

Ryan lived in St. Louis County with his parents, Andy and Jackie, and was very close to his sister, Ashley, who was two years older. Always an athlete, Ryan played soccer, baseball, track, roller hockey and his favorite sport, football. As a high school sophomore, he earned a starting position on the Summit Falcons varsity team and became a team captain his junior and senior years. He had a great group of friends and managed to stay focused on his career goals while enjoying an active social life. Trips to Panama City and Cancun, as well as vacations with family and friends, were some of the times he appreciated most.

Ryan was awarded a football scholarship to Missouri Valley College in Marshall, Missouri, and spent a year sharing a house near campus with friends. After a knee



injury his first season, Ryan returned to St. Louis to pursue his interest in becoming a firefighter/paramedic. He completed his paramedic training and passed his practical and written exams with top scores. In September 2007, he was hired by the city of Maplewood, Missouri, where his father had served as mayor for ten years. Ryan attended the St. Louis County Fire Academy and graduated with the 74<sup>th</sup> class in March 2008.

In the early morning hours of July 21, 2008, as the firefighters of Maplewood's C crew answered a call to a vehicle fire, Ryan was shot as he exited the truck and prepared to extinguish the flames. A 52-year-old resident of the community had set the fire across the street to lure the first responders. With the crew gathered around him, Ryan died at the scene. The ambush lasted for several hours. Two police officers were also shot and fortunately survived. The gunman set fire to his home and fatally shot himself.

Ryan's promising young life was taken in an instant in a senseless, cowardly act perpetrated by someone he had never even met. He left behind many grieving family members, coworkers, citizens and inseparable friends.



# Remembering

## Rickey S. Morris

### Sedalia Fire Department -- Missouri

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: April 17, 2008

Age: 54

June 21, 1953 – April 17, 2008

Rick Morris was critically injured April 8, 2008, in an apparent flashover while fighting a house fire. He was airlifted to the University of Missouri Hospital in Columbia. He died from his injuries on April 17, 2008.

Rick was the son of Leo L. and Frances J. Morris. On September 15, 1979, he was married to Mary Lou Morris. He is also survived by his four children, Nathan Andrew, Christine Lynn, Ryan Joseph, and Timothy Logan Morris.

Rick served as a firefighter for 33 years and received a Valor Award from the Sedalia Fire Department on July 28, 2004. Rick loved Sedalia and loved the firefighters. He was well known by local school children as "Fireman Rick."

In addition to his career as a firefighter, Rick worked a second full-time job to support his family. He was a proud family man and always wanted the best for his children. He was always there to fix things for his fam-

ily and friends. He took pride in the academic successes of his children and in their activities.

Rick was a man who loved his family, had a meticulous nature, and enjoyed being in a crowd. He loved to travel, ride his motorcycle, go boating, and play golf. He had held a private pilot's license since 1984.

In Rick's eulogy, his brother-in-law, Mike Ziesel, referred to the poem "The Dash" by Linda Ellis. It says that what matters the most in life is the way people live between their birth and death. Rick loved life and was always there for his family and friends.

*"Rick spent his dash on this earth as a friend and as a family man and is truly missed,"* said Mike Ziesel.

Mayor Bob Wasson said: *Rick Morris was a dedicated professional who touched the lives of many people, not only on the job but as a member of our community, during his long career with the Sedalia Fire Department. Rick will be missed by his fellow firefighters, and the City of Sedalia.*





# Remembering



## Leonard Riggins Sr.

### St. Louis Fire Department — Missouri

Career Captain

Date of Death: November 5, 2008

Age: 52

Leonard Riggins Sr. was born October 16, 1956, to John and Hattie Riggins. He was stolen from his family, who loved him more than words can explain, from his church who he inspired each time he spoke, and from the fire department doing what he loved—helping others.

After being educated in the St. Louis public schools, Leonard attended junior college. He began working for City Parks and Recreation and was soon promoted to park supervisor. Leonard married Darnita in 1989 and had two sons, Antwan and Leonard Jr.

Leonard had wanted to be a firefighter ever since he was a little boy, but life's twists and turns took him on many different journeys. Though he missed the age cut off for becoming a firefighter, Leonard always said anything was possible with God. He was right; in 1993 the age limit was lifted, and Leonard became a St. Louis City firefighter. It was one of the happiest days in his life.

Leonard loved helping people. He had morals and high standards and believed there was some good in every human being, no matter how hopeless one's situation may be. He was a friend, confidant, and counselor to many and a minister whenever they had a problem that they could not solve. He loved young people, inspiring them to reach for the mountaintop and giving them

hope. He started his own home health care, which served over two hundred clients. Leonard was attending Bible college and writing a book on marriage.



Leonard was a family man. He was a complete package to his wife—a husband, lover, father to her sons, and her very best friend. He loved family gatherings, showing off the cooking abilities that he had acquired from his mother in-law and fellow firefighters. He loved to hang out with his sons and nephews, playing and watching basketball, cooking his famous cupcakes, cracking jokes, and reminding them how funny looking they all were when they were growing up. Leonard had a soft spot for his nieces, who always greeted him with bear hugs.

Leonard loved going gospel skating and watching his son and only grandson skate and do floor tricks. His grandson loved to spend all "Papa's" quarters on video games. Leonard loved traveling with his wife and seeing parts of the world he had never seen. His last cruise, two weeks prior to his death, was special because he and his youngest son shared their birthdays together.

Leonard's faith in Jesus Christ was his greatest asset, and he often said, "I am not going to hide my blessings, because God is the head of my life." He loved life and loved living.



# Remembering



## Clarence O. Watson II

### Hematite Fire Protection District — Missouri

Career Lieutenant

Date of Death: November 29, 2008

Age: 35

Clarence began his quest to be a firefighter at age 14, as an Explorer with the City of Festus Fire Department. From that point on, if it wasn't about becoming a firefighter, it wasn't registering!

Married at age 26, Clarence was blessed with a tiny precious son, Alexander William Joseph Watson, on May 14, 1999. At age 4½, Alex proudly accepted the role of #1 Sidekick when his daddy was awarded full legal custody. Exemplifying fatherly qualities learned from his own dad, Clarence was a model father and looked forward to instilling the importance of education and dedicating his life to raising his son. Seldom apart, their love of life was reflected in their attitudes; mutual admiration and dutiful respect defined their relationship. Alex shares his daddy's love of firefighting and hopes to one day fill his daddy's boots as a proud firefighter.

Clarence volunteered for five years at Festus Fire Department. He joined the Hematite Fire Protection District as a volunteer in 2003. Committed to preparedness, he completed HAZMAT Awareness and HAZMAT Operations courses in 2003; UMC Winter Fire School and First Responder courses in 2004; Bobtail Propane Emergency in 2005; and Bullard Save-A-Life and Firefighter I/II in 2006. Promoted to full-time career firefighter in November 2006, Clarence led and directed the district's fundraising for Missouri Burn Camp and the MDA "Fill the Boot" campaign. A strong mentor

to his peers and advocate for young firefighters, Clarence was promoted to lieutenant on April 22, 2008.



Quick witted and possessing a great sense of humor, Clarence loved a good practical joke—whether target or prankster. He had a positive "can do" attitude that often found him helping friends, family or even strangers. Grounded in strong faith and family values, he conquered life's challenges with optimism, laughter, love and spirit of caring. Everyone that met Clarence loved him.

Hematite Fire Chief Robert Hipes Jr: *He was the most helpful man we had. He'll be difficult to replace.*

Sister, Angela: *Family, friends, fathering Alex, and firefighting made him happy. I promise to help Alex achieve his dreams and will proudly remember, love, and miss my brother forever!*

Friends, Kenny & Lisa Franklin: *He was a reliable man that gave his word and followed through. He has touched every life he has known, saved, helped, and befriended.*

Clarence passed away at home just a few hours after a shift involving three emergency calls. He will be forever remembered by his family as a beloved father, son, and brother and by the brotherhood as a man of true character whom they proudly called "brother."



# Remembering



## Gregory J. Gonsioroski

**Neptune Aviation Services, Inc.,  
USDA Forest Service Contractor — Montana**

Career Pilot/1<sup>st</sup> Officer

Date of Death: September 1, 2008

Age: 41

Greg was born on November 24, 1966, to Jerry and Jean (Wyrick) Gonsioroski, in Baker, Montana. He grew up and attended schools in Baker.

Greg went to be with Jesus on September 1, 2008, while doing what he loved to do, flying an air tanker while fighting fires to save other people's lives. He was killed in a plane crash near Reno, Nevada, as he was taking off with a full tank of fuel and retardant headed to a fire. Greg has always loved to fly and received his pilot's license from the University of North Dakota in 1993. He was working for Neptune Aviation as an aircraft mechanic and pilot until the time of his death.

He married Kim Karr of Helena, Montana, on August 12, 1995, and they had celebrated 13 years. Greg was the most amazing person; anyone who had the privilege of knowing him knew that. He was a gentle giant and never spoke a harsh word to anyone. The loves of his life were his wife and three darling children. He always said Kim was his soulmate. Above all, Greg loved the Lord Jesus Christ and knew Him as his personal savior. He always told his family when it was his time to go, he'd be ready. He was the most caring, loving, and patient husband, father, son, brother and friend, and was devoted to whatever he did.



Greg was an avid hunter. You would usually find him on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of hunting season out with his boys, Gabe and Grady, looking for a buck. He taught them everything he knew about hunting and airplanes.

Under Greg's big physique was a special spot for his little girl, Gracie, and he always had his eye out for something pink he could bring home to her.

Greg was talented at whatever he did. He was a pilot, carpenter, taxidermist, and woodworker, and was in the process of building his children a two-story playhouse. If anyone had a question on how to do something, they called Greg. He will be missed by everyone who knew and loved him.

Survivors include his wife, Kim; his children, Gabriel Jess (6), Grady Gerald (4), and Gracelyn Marie (3); his parents, Jerry and Jean Gonsioroski; his grandma, Ellen Gonsioroski; three brothers, Joshua (Launa) Gonsioroski, Ben (LeAnn) Gonsioroski, Charles (Katina) Gonsioroski; three sisters, Kathy (Mark) Loveland, Cyndi (Jason) Mayes, and Debbie (Darren) Dunham; numerous nieces and nephews who adored their Uncle Greg; and several aunts and uncles. He was preceded in death by Granddad Gonsioroski, Grandma and Granddad Wyrick, and a very special uncle and aunt, Jerry and Terry Faye Wiseman.

# Remembering

## Michael J. MacDonald

### Chief Mountain Hotshots — Blackfeet Tribe, Bureau of Indian Affairs — Montana

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: June 29, 2008

Age: 26

Firefighter Michael J. MacDonald was killed when two medical helicopters collided near Flagstaff, Arizona. At the time of the crash, Michael was being airlifted to a hospital after developing life-threatening complications while being treated for an insect bite. The crash killed six people and critically injured one.

Michael was a three-year member of the Chief Mountain Hot Shots, an elite federal firefighting crew based on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Browning, Montana.

Michael was born September 23, 1981, to Raymond and Laurie Hall MacDonald. He grew up in Browning and graduated from Browning High School in 2001. He was a standout athlete and helped lead the Browning Indians to a state basketball championship title his senior year. He loved basketball, football, and baseball, as well as horse racing and participating in Indian relay races. He was a good student and a talented artist and enjoyed taking pictures.

Michael learned the value of hard work at a young age, bagging groceries at IGA when he was in fourth and fifth grades. He began firefighting at age 17, and it had been his passion ever since. He shared this passion by recruiting friends to fight fire.

Michael attended Montana State University-Northern in Havre and later transferred to the University of

Montana at Missoula. He graduated from Blackfeet Community College with an associate's degree in elementary health and physical education, along with his coaching certification. He completed his education field experience at De La Salle Catholic School in Browning and planned to teach in Missoula in the fall of 2008.

He was survived by his mother and stepfather, Laurie Dee Hall Belkham and Larry Belkham; his partner, CeCe Corcoran, and unborn son, Sean Taylor MacDonald; brothers, Raymond MacDonald, Warren Upham, Stephen Upham, and John "Tubs" Hall; grandmother, Hazel Hall; extended family; and a host of friends who are considered family. He was preceded in death by his father, Raymond MacDonald, who died two weeks before Michael was born; his infant brother, Craig Allen MacDonald; and several grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

Friends and family remembered Michael MacDonald as someone who was hardworking and always happy. *Mike was a great guy. He had friends all over. He left a little bit of himself with everyone he knew. His happiness, joy, and willingness to work were incredible. He was a strong young man, very safe and very conscious of those around him. He worked hard and was a good leader. He had a passion for everything. He was one of our shining stars.*



*Remembering*

# Jerry J. Parrick

**West End Volunteer Fire and Rescue — Montana**

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: December 17, 2008

Age: 59

Firefighter Jerry Parrick died December 17, 2008, when a tractor-trailer struck his vehicle at the scene of a previous motor vehicle accident. Jerry had positioned his truck on the shoulder, with lights flashing, to help alert other vehicles to the accident scene.

Always concerned with the safety of others, he outfitted his truck with emergency lights, oxygen, and a medical kit, and was known for arriving first at an emergency scene to help protect emergency personnel and civilians. He served with the department for ten years.

Jerry was born August 2, 1949, in Sacramento, California, to Everett Parrick and Loraine Silva. He was a United States Marine Corps scout sniper who served in Vietnam and was awarded a Purple Heart. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and playing poker at the O-Aces.

Jerry was survived by his son, Tanner; two daughters, Thais Parrick and Mary Elliot; and seven grandchildren. Jerry was honored to serve his community and to help anyone in need. You could trust him with anything. He was just an amazing man, with so many talents and so much to offer.





# Remembering



## Zachary Jake VanderGriend

**Neptune Aviation Services, Inc.,  
USDA Forest Service Contractor — Montana**

Career Crew Chief

Date of Death: September 1, 2008

Age: 25

Zachary was born on June 1, 1983. From the age of two, Zach wanted to fly and become a missionary pilot. God put Zachary in locations where the right people were in place to mentor him and help with his dream of flight. Early on, Zach learned how to handle tools from his 'PopPop' Jake. As he grew, Zach was involved in museum work as a docent, detailer and aircraft restorer; there his love of old warbirds and radial engines grew.

Zach then became acquainted with EAA 579 and their Young Eagle program. Zach never missed a 'free flight' day. He spent many hours volunteering, giving tours of the B-17, grilling burgers and working as lineman during free flight days. Zach was awarded a scholarship to attend the EAA's Air Academy in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He was given the Presidential Youth Service Award at the unveiling of the Butch O'Hare memorial at O'Hare Airport, an aircraft Zach helped restore. Zach received his private pilot's license six weeks after he started training and then began giving free flights to children. Because of Zach's willingness to give back and his love of service, he was given the first ever Eagle Award by EAA 579.

Zach attended Moody Bible Institute, where he served as president of the aviation club; Moody School of

Aviation; Spokane Community College; and Grace University in Omaha, Nebraska. Zach became an airframe and power plant mechanic and earned his degree in business aviation. From the time Zach could work, he was around the aviation community; working at detailing war birds and corporate jets, lineman at several fixed base operations across the country, as well as an A&P mechanic.

Zach started his dream job on Memorial Day 2008. It was at Neptune Aviation where Zach's love of people, service and history all came together. He was called to fight fires on August 1, 2008, and was called home en route to the Smitty Fire in California on September 1, 2008.

Zach loved life; he was passionate about his faith in Jesus Christ. He loved his family and adored his little sister. He enjoyed working; whether it was restoring a car or an airplane, Zach loved to "turn wrenches." He loved to travel, fish, hunt, read, ski, and he always enjoyed a good laugh. A talented musician and actor, Zach loved people; he had friends of every age all over the world. He was a joy to be with, and his smile could light up a room. Zach loved to fly because it was there he felt closest to God. Zach was compassionate and generous to a fault. He was loyal, energetic, and he will always be loved.





# Remembering



## Raymond Barrett

### Apshawa Volunteer Fire Company — New Jersey

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: March 9, 2008

Age: 62

Service to his country and his community and love of his family—that was Ray Barrett’s life.

When he was 18, he entered the Army and served in Vietnam. The word “hero” was appropriate for the young 19-year-old who earned a Bronze Star and Purple Heart. Helping and serving were not things you talked about with Ray. It was what a man did that mattered to him.

When Ray returned from Vietnam, he married his high school sweetheart, Elaine. They settled in West Milford, New Jersey. Ray and Elaine were blessed with two sons and, at the time of his death, were close to celebrating their forty-second wedding anniversary.

In 1977, Ray joined the Apshawa Volunteer Fire Company and quickly established himself as a man that could always be counted on to do his duty. If a piece of apparatus needed fixing, Ray fixed it! That did not only apply to machines; it was true of people as well. If anyone in the company had a problem, Ray was there to offer his wisdom. But his wisdom came with a price; “Uncle Ray” expected you to work hard to solve your problem and do your duty.

Ray served the citizens of West Milford for over 31 years. He held every firematic line officer’s position including

chief. Ray always had the respect of the other firefighters, since he never asked anyone to perform a task that he wouldn’t, couldn’t, or hadn’t—at one point or another—done himself. He’d earned the life medals of respect and honor, and he also respected his fellow firefighters.



Ray’s sons, Wayne and Tim, have followed in their father’s footsteps. Tim is a Tech Sergeant in the U.S. Air Force with over 15 years of service. Wayne is a 21-year veteran of the Apshawa Volunteer Fire Company, and Tim is a member on military leave. They learned from the wisdom of their father. Today when they have a problem or a decision to make, they think, “What would Dad do?”

On Sunday, March 9, 2008, when the call came in, Ray responded, never expecting it was his last call. He got on the engine with Wayne and two other firefighters and was with the first units that entered the structure. After the fire was extinguished, Ray suffered a fatal heart attack.

He knew the terror of war and survived. He loved his family, and had a twinkle in his eyes whenever he saw his granddaughter, Sarah.

Though Ex-Chief Barrett is not here, he is with every person that ever knew him.





# Remembering



## Dennis G. McClenahan

### Princeton Junction Volunteer Fire Co. #1 — New Jersey

Volunteer Driver

Date of Death: December 27, 2008

Age: 54

Dennis McClenahan died on December 27, 2008, from a heart attack after responding to a reported commercial alarm.

A lifelong resident of Princeton Junction, New Jersey, he was employed by the maintenance department of West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District for eight years and was previously self-employed for Mac Tools for sixteen years. He was a hard worker who was always doing something. If he was not at one job, he would be off on a second, part-time job.

Dennis was a skilled mechanic who loved working on vehicles and equipment of all kinds. He had just built a garage on his house and planned to add a lift so he could tinker with cars after his retirement. His mechanical skills came in handy at the fire department. As an engineer, he did equipment repair and truck maintenance.

A 37-year veteran with the Princeton Junction Volunteer Fire Company, he was the driver/pump operator for 15 years and a former trustee, lieutenant, and engineer. He was named one of the department's top ten responders nearly every year.

He was known for his reliability and quick response to fires and other emergencies. He understood the meaning of volunteerism, and enjoyed the camaraderie in the firehouse.

Dennis also headed the decoration committee during the holidays, decorating both the firehouse and his own home. He started a scholarship program at the firehouse for junior members who continued to volunteer during the summers while they were in college.

Dennis's wife, Cathy, and his daughters, Sandy and Cindy, are all involved in the fire company.

Family was an important priority for Dennis. He enjoyed taking his family on camping trips years ago, being a band parent, and going on cruises. He followed his daughters to every football game and competition with the marching band for six years. He enjoyed all kinds of fish and had saltwater and freshwater fish tanks and koi ponds in the backyard. He enjoyed following the Yankees and Eagles.

Married for 33 years, Dennis is survived by his wife, Cathy McClenahan; two daughters, Sandy (William) Gancarcik, and Cindy McClenahan; his father, Stanley McClenahan; two sisters; and two brothers.









# Remembering



## Ryan T. Barker

### West Hill Fire Department — New York

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: July 8, 2008

Age: 25

Ryan T. Barker was born February 9, 1983, to Tom and Linda Barker. He grew up in the small town of Horseheads, New York, the oldest of three boys. From a young age, Ryan knew he wanted to be a firefighter. Ryan is remembered as a spunky child, smiling and mischievous, and always a step ahead. He had a contagious smile and brightened any situation. Ryan loved soccer, lacrosse and hunting. He shared his love for the outdoors with his father, grandfather, and uncle and, most recently, with his daughter, with whom he watched hunting shows and took long walks in the woods.

Ryan began his firefighting with the Horseheads Fire Department's Explorer Program while still in high school. His love and dedication was apparent from the beginning. After high school, Ryan attended Corning Community College to work on an associate's degree in fire science. He worked part-time as a firefighter for the Corning City Fire Department, while volunteering at Horseheads Fire Department. He was always in the middle of the firehouse antics and is remembered fondly for his wholehearted love of the job. Ryan anxiously accepted any duty put before him and carried out his duties with everything in him. Whether it was a friend in need or a stranger on the side of the road, Ryan was always willing to lend a hand.



Ryan began his full-time employment as a firefighter on July 4, 2004, at the West Elmira Fire Department. This is where he met his future wife, Jane Barker, who was a volunteer. Ryan and Jane fell in love, and Ryan quickly became a role model to Jane and her four children. Ryan was dedicated to his new family and loved being an integral part of this new challenge. He coached the kids' sports teams and was involved in every aspect of their lives.

In 2006, Ryan took a job as a full-time EMT at Erway Ambulance Service and continued to volunteer as a firefighter at Elmira Heights Fire Department and then West Hill Fire Department. In April 2006, Ryan and Jane added a baby girl, Madison Grace Barker, to their family. On June 7, 2008, Ryan and Jane were married on Canandaigua Lake surrounded by their children, family and friends.

A month later, July 8, 2008, Ryan responded to a gas grill fire. Alone in the 1978 pumper truck, Ryan was returning to the station when the fire truck lost control and overturned. He was transported to the hospital by Erway Ambulance, but succumbed to his extensive injuries. Ryan will be greatly missed by his saddened, yet grateful family and community.

# Remembering

## Edward A. Junginger

### Levittown Fire Department — New York

Volunteer Fire Police Officer  
Date of Death: September 26, 2008  
Age: 82

Edward A. Junginger was born May 5, 1926, and grew up and attended school in Queens, New York. Ed's dad was a New York City police officer who always instilled in him the virtues of service to one's country and community. At the young age of 17, Ed joined the United States Army. He served in Italy during World War II as a proud member of the famous 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, receiving the Bronze Star.

Upon being honorably discharged, he married his sweetheart, Josephine Thompson. Together, they became one of the early homeowners in a community on Long Island, New York, called Levittown. This community was designed for veterans of World War II. Ed and his wife, Jo, raised their family of a son and three daughters. For almost 50 years, Ed commuted to his job as a salesman in New York City for the same company.

Levittown was quickly growing, and so was its young fire department. The department was looking for new members, and Ed was looking for a way to serve his community. For 49 years, he loyally served the depart-

ment, making many friendships with fellow firefighters and becoming honorary chief.



Ed left his Levittown home for his last fire call on September 23, 2008, to assist at a motor vehicle accident. While at the scene of the accident, he was assigned to move a vehicle for an operator who was too upset to move it. While doing so, he suffered a massive heart attack. Ed was revived and placed on life support for a few days. His wife, four children, and many fire department members, taking turns, remained with him until God took him home.

Edward A. Junginger was a humble, gentle man. He was loved by his wife, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, all of whom miss his smile and kindness. His friends and members of the Levittown Fire Department were always close by to assist the family in every way during their sad ordeal. They remain true friends, still helping in every way.

God bless all firefighters, and keep them safe now and forever.



# Remembering



## Norman Koch

### East Pembroke Fire Department — New York

Volunteer Fire Police Captain  
Date of Death: December 30, 2008  
Age: 79

*M*y husband, a dedicated fireman for 58 years, had served all line offices and was a past chief, assistant chief, and captain. He was a fire commissioner for 20 years and had been elected to another five-year term. He was involved with three fire companies: Alexander, Cortu, and East Pembroke. He was named "Fireman of the Year" twice.

Norm always helped anyone who needed it. He was a member of the Cortu Presbyterian Church. He managed to work two jobs

and still found time to be very active in the community. I have been told many times by many people that Norm was the nicest man they ever knew.

His children loved him so much and showed great respect to him.

As his wife, he certainly was the best husband in the world. We had 59 years married and a year and a half together before we married. They were wonderful, wonderful years. I miss him so very badly.



# Remembering

## John H. Martinson

### Fire Department of New York — New York

Career Lieutenant

Date of Death: January 3, 2008

Age: 40

John H. Martinson will forever be recalled as a brave, stern leader, a decorated police officer, a devoted father, a mechanical whiz who was rebuilding his grandfather's house, and an expert cook who blessed family gatherings with homemade carrot cake, stuffed mushrooms and baked clams.

John grew up in the Eltingville section of Staten Island. In 1989, at the age of 22, he joined NYPD and received an Excellent Police Duty medal for subduing a knife-wielding suspect.

Following in his father's footsteps, in 1993 John became a member of the FDNY. He worked with Engine 204 in Brooklyn and Engine 80 in Harlem. In 1996, along with his company, he received a unit citation. In 2002, he was promoted to lieutenant.

In 2004, John married Jessica, his "Sweetie Pie."

In March 2006, two things changed the course of John's life. His son was born, and he was assigned to Engine 249 in Brooklyn. The birth of John Patrick brought out the best in him. John Patrick was his pride and joy, and he was always in his arms. Regrettably, he never got to enjoy his daughter, Katherine Grace, who was sure to have John wrapped around her finger.

Being assigned with the *Rats* of Engine 249 was a source of pride for John. He was a mentor to the younger firefighters and a voice of reason at fires and emergencies. He was becoming the boss a firefighter father wants his firefighter son to be.

John lost his life protecting life and property while fighting a high-rise apartment fire on January 3, 2008, in Brooklyn's Ebbets Field Apartments.

His memory will live in us forever!



# Remembering

## David P. Meron Sr.

### Hoosick Falls Volunteer Fire District — New York

Volunteer Fire Police Officer

Date of Death: July 20, 2008

Age: 58

Fire Police Officer David Meron died July 20, 2008, after responding to an emergency call. He was born September 22, 1949, in Troy, New York, the son of the late Francis and Rosalie Chapman Meron.

After high school, David enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He proudly served his country as a jet engine technician and was honorably discharged in 1990, retiring as a technical sergeant.

From 1992 through 2002, he worked in Saudi Arabia as a contractor for McDonald Douglas. After returning to the Pittstown area in 2002, he worked for Jack Byrne Ford in Mechanicville. At the

time of his death, he was employed by Toyota of Clifton Park. David was an active member of the Hoosick Falls, Pittstown, and Raymertown volunteer fire departments and was a member of the American Legion.

David was survived by his wife, Linda Schmigel Meron, whom he married on December 9, 2006; his son, Staff Sergeant David P. Meron Jr., U.S. Air Force, RAF Mildenhall, England; his brother, Richard Meron; stepchildren, Stacy McCarthy, Ashley Bacon, and Taylor Bacon; grandson, Ryan McCarthy; and extended family. His first wife, Joyce Anderson Meron, died in 2005.





# Remembering

## Robert J. Ryan Jr.

Fire Department of New York — New York

Career Lieutenant

Date of Death: November 23, 2008

Age: 46

Bobby loved being a fireman. When he was burned in October 2006 and could have retired, his main focus was to heal so he could get back to the job he loved.

Bobby was a devoted father, husband, son, brother, uncle, and friend – a family man. He is survived by his wife, Kathleen, and his children, Christopher, Kayla, Alex, and Emma. He was loved by many.

Bobby was a man of great character—brave, humble, warm, and caring. He was a

lieutenant, a mentor to the probationary firefighters, and a prankster.

He was an outdoorsman, a meticulous painter, a hunter, a history buff, an avid reader, a lover of all kinds of music from rock to jazz to classical.

He was social and chatty, becoming more and more like his dad as he got older. He was loyal, an optimist, had strong morals and old fashioned values.

He died doing what he loved.





# Remembering



## Jamel M. Sears

### Fire Department of New York — New York

Career Probationary Firefighter  
Date of Death: November 11, 2008  
Age: 33

Jamel Micheal Sears, 33, a New York City fire fighter was taken by GOD on November 11, 2008. After completing his last FST training test for the academy, Jamel collapsed and went into a coma, never regaining consciousness.

Appointed to the Fire Department of New York on July 1, 2008, he was enrolled in the 23-week probationary firefighters training program. Whether it was a fire he was fighting, or a training exercise he was completing, Jamel passed on while doing a job he was so proud of.

A lifelong Bronx resident, Jamel graduated from All Hallows High School and



attended Bronx Community College. He was a United States Navy veteran and served aboard the USS Alaska. He also worked at TD Waterhouse as a customer rep and at Keyspan Energy as an operating mechanic before joining the fire department.

Jamel M. Sears leaves behind his wife, Sherita, and their two kids, Mahlek and Jya. His number one job was to take care of his family, and that he did. Jamel will always be loved and missed.

God took Jamel and gave him some wings so we could have our very own Guardian Angel.



# Remembering



## James Earl Arthur

### Cold Water Fire & Rescue – North Carolina

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: February 11, 2008

Age: 19

James Earl Arthur was born on July 29, 1988, at Cabarrus Memorial Hospital in Concord, North Carolina. The first child of Linwood and Terri Arthur, James was later blessed with two sisters, Shannon Lynn and Whitney Roxann. James was an enthusiastic child who loved being outdoors. Playing coach pitch baseball, soccer, hunting deer, and riding any type of tractor or mower were some of the many things he enjoyed doing.

In October of 1999, at the age of 11, James joined Boy Scout Troop 59 in Concord. As a Boy Scout, James received merit badges for crime prevention, fitness, camping, cooking, cycling, fishing, forestry, emergency preparedness, first aid, plumbing, motor boating, pioneering and electricity, as a result of excelling in these areas.

However, anyone that was acquainted with James could tell you that firefighting was his first love and true dedication. His desire to grow up and be like his dad was expressed in a variety of ways, and on November 18, 2004, at the age of 16, James' dream became reality when he was inducted into the Cold Water Fire Department.

James graduated from Concord High School on June 10, 2007. As a student, he was given an assignment to write

about himself. He wrote the following: *I live with my mom, dad and sisters. My favorite subject is math. When I have time to myself, I enjoy going to the fire department or working on cars. When I complete school, I intend to work as a full-time firefighter.*



James was anxious to finally have the opportunity to stay the night at the fire department with his father, who was also a firefighter. You could see James' face illuminate with pleasure as he accompanied his dad to rush out into the world of fire rescue. These were the days he enjoyed and loved the most. Knowing he was going out to help or possibly save somebody's life was an experience that brought passion into his eyes.

On February 11, 2008, while James was responding to a call, he was involved in a tragic car accident that resulted in the loss of James Arthur's precious life. He was unexpectedly taken from our lives and is truly missed. The entire community mourned the death of James Arthur. However, we know that James is at peace with the Lord and is looking down on us every day and smiling with pride. His sister Shannon is now following in his footsteps and is pursuing a career as a firefighter and EMT.



# Remembering



## George Everett Crocker Sr.

**Pine Level Volunteer Fire Department — North Carolina**

Volunteer Chief

Date of Death: June 22, 2008

Age: 32

George was born on June 1, 1976, in Mecklenburg County and raised in Johnston County. George's interest in fire fighting began early. He served as a junior volunteer at Pine Level Volunteer Fire Department when he turned 16. His love for the fire department and community continued to grow, as did his knowledge of fire fighting. George served as a volunteer and paid fire fighter for Pine Level. He soon became assistant fire chief and later became fire chief in 2007. George and his family, Cathy and Lil G, spent numerous hours at the fire department preparing for fundraising events such as Fireman's Day and the reverse raffle. George loved to take the new rookies in under his wing and teach them all that he knew.

George's career as a fire fighter went beyond Pine Level. He graduated from the Raleigh Fire Academy in 2002. He worked at Wake-New Hope Fire Department, Morrisville Fire Department and Archer's Lodge Fire Department (part-time) before getting his dream job as a fire fighter for the City of Raleigh. He served as a senior fire fighter at Station 1. George also earned several certifications and taught fire/rescue courses at Johnston Community College.



George will always be remembered for his love and dedication to his fire departments and his family. At a recent memorial held in George's honor, his Raleigh fire captain told tales of George driving the fire truck, even out in the middle of nowhere, and George would wave at everyone that passed by. That's the best way to describe a small town boy with a big town heart.

George's son, Lil G, wanted to share the following poem with everyone:

### *Fallen*

*Rest now my fallen brother  
Lay soft your suffering back  
Rest well and forever  
Your memory shall not lack  
Rest your tired hands  
Wipe clean your weary brow  
Rest with St. Florian  
Your spirit now endowed  
Rest here your breaking heart*

*We know you gave your all  
Rest easy, you've done your part  
You've answered your last call*

*Rest knowing that in God we sought  
Oh Lord, watch over another who just fell  
Rest assured your troubled thought  
As we ring the final bell.*

Poem by R Hoffman, SSgt. USAF/MOANG, Firefighter

We will always love and miss you!

# Remembering

## Victor Anthony Isler Sr. Salisbury Fire Department — North Carolina

Career Firefighter  
Date of Death: March 7, 2008  
Age: 40

Firefighter Victor Isler Sr. died March 7, 2008, along with Firefighter Justin Monroe, while fighting a five-alarm fire.

He was born December 31, 1967, in Brooklyn, New York. Victor was an electrician by trade. When the World Trade Center was attacked on 9/11, he raced to Ground Zero to search for one of his brothers, an NYPD officer. Though his brother fortunately was not injured in the attacks, Victor continued to work on the pile during the recovery efforts there. After 9/11, he felt called to become a firefighter.

In 2002, Victor joined the Deer Park Fire Department on Long Island, New York, as a volunteer firefighter. He quickly became a father figure to the younger recruits in the department. He worked as an EMT with the Fire Department of New York from 2005-2007. However, the age limit for applying to FDNY as a firefighter was 29, and Victor was too old to apply.

In 2007, Victor and his family moved to Salisbury, North Carolina, so he could fulfill his dream of becoming a professional firefighter. The second oldest rookie ever hired by the department, Victor was at the beginning of a bright career as a firefighter. His brief career in Salisbury was marked by passion for the job and intense bravery during rescue missions. He was a future star. Fellow firefighters remembered Victor as perpetually happy, someone who made the department a better place to be.

A devoted family man, Victor was survived by his wife, Tracy; son, Victor Jr.; daughter, Ryan-Anne; three brothers; and three sisters. He was preceded in death by his parents, Aaron Isler and Mary Ann Petrulonis Isler, and a brother, Edward Isler.

He was the sweetest man in the world and the biggest clown, too. We all miss him.



# Remembering

## Curtis Jessen

### North Carolina Division of Forest Resources — North Carolina

Career Assistant District Forester

Date of Death: August 21, 2008

Age: 32

Assistant District Forester Curtis Jessen died August 21, 2008, from injuries sustained in a fall while fighting a brush fire.

Curtis held a degree in forestry service from North Carolina State University. He joined the Division of Forest Resources in 2002 and worked as a forest inventory analysis forester and a service forester before being promoted to assistant district forester.

He combined use of modern technology with knowledge of forestry, which made him an excel-

lent forester. He was passionate about his work. In addition to fighting fire, he organized community outreach programs and helped landowners create forestry management plans.

Curtis loved being outdoors and was an avid hunter and fisherman. Family, friends, and coworkers remembered him as hardworking, soft-hearted, and down to earth.

Curtis was survived by his mother, Sue Jessen; his brother, Robert Jessen; and his grandmother, Jeanette Robertson.



# Remembering

## Herman S. Jones

### City of Raleigh Fire Department — North Carolina

Career Lieutenant

Date of Death: January 22, 2008

Age: 58

Herman Sylvester Jones was born December 31, 1949, in Raleigh, North Carolina, to Louise Penix Jones and the late Dallie Jones. He died on January 22, 2008, at the age of 58, from an injury incurred while on duty.

Herman was the oldest of six children and was preceded in death by his father and his brother, Donnell Jones. He attended Shaw University of Raleigh, North Carolina, and also served in the U.S. Army until 1977. In 1980, Herman began his career as a firefighter and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in 2001. He remained an active firefighter for 27 years until his sudden death.



He leaves to cherish his memories, his daughter, Tiffany N. Jones of Morrisville, North Carolina; her mother, Patricia W. Jones of Clayton, North Carolina; and his mother, Louise Penix Jones of Garner, North Carolina. He is also survived by three sisters, Carolyn Hartfield (Atron), Alma Gupton (Halvester), and Cynthia Murray (Larry); two brothers, Ronald Jones and Dr. LaRoy Penix (Sharon); three nieces, Roneesha Jones, Sharon Hartfield, and Stephanie Gupton; a nephew, Alexander Penix; a great-niece, Taylor Gupton-Lyon, an uncle, John Penix (Evelyn); an aunt, Madell Penix; and a host of relatives and friends.



# Remembering



## Walter William Michl

### Roanoke-Wildwood Volunteer Fire Department — North Carolina

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: March 16, 2008

Age: 77

Walter William Michl was born in Little Ferry, New Jersey, on March 12, 1932. He was a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and worked as a travel agent for Omega Travel.

He married twice. He met his first wife in Peru when he was a Marine, and they lived for 30 years in the Washington area. His first wife died of cancer. He married his second wife, Mary Jennings Michl, on Easter Sunday in 1997.

He put a lot of time in at the fire house. A skilled carpenter, he was the building maintenance officer for the department.

He loved to cook. He called himself a chef, and he could put a buffet out for a group in no time at all. Everybody loved him. He was always full of joy.



He battled cancer from 2001 to 2003 with radiation and surgery. He was a wonderful husband. He did everything to make life fun. He loved to travel. He and his wife went on a lot of cruises.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Jennings Michl; his three sons, Victor, William (Lynn), and Andre (Mary); his stepchildren; and eight grandchildren, who all miss him.





# Remembering



## Justin Edward Monroe

### Salisbury Fire Department — North Carolina

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: March 7, 2008

Age: 19

Justin was born on July 15, 1988. His love and dedication to helping others began at an early age. At the age of three months, he began visiting his great-aunt at a local nursing home and bringing much joy to her and the other residents. As he grew, it was obvious to everyone that he had a great love and compassion for others. He was a beautiful little boy with blond curls and a heart beyond his years. He had a love for life and nature and a desire to help others. He never met anyone he didn't like, and anyone who ever met him, loved him.

At age four, he began hunting with his dad. He thought he was a big boy because he got to carry a BB gun. Little did he know, his dad was teaching him lessons of life during these trips. Justin was an avid sportsman, and he loved to share the outdoors with his friends.

He knew at a young age he wanted to become a fireman, and he began to pursue his dream. At age 14, he became a junior volunteer at Miller's Ferry Fire Department, where he was named "Junior Firefighter of the Year." While in high school, he took many firefighting classes and became an EMT by his senior year. By his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, he was a lieutenant at Miller's Ferry Fire Department.



Justin began to pursue his fire technology degree in September 2006 at Central Piedmont Community College. He began working part-time at Salisbury Fire Department in May 2007. He also worked part-time at Spencer Fire Department and continued to carry on his duties at Miller's Ferry. His true loves in life were hunting and the fire department.

Justin was a member of Trading Ford Baptist Church, where he was active in the youth group. Justin grew up in a Christian home with a family who taught him how to love, care, and respect others. Someone once described Justin as "a young man with an old man's heart." That someone was Victor Isler, who died alongside Justin on March 7, 2008, while fighting a fire at Salisbury Millwork.

Justin accomplished more in 19 years than most people do in a lifetime. He is survived by his parents, Eddie and Lisa Monroe, and his brother, Mark. His legacy of love will never be forgotten by his family, who loved him dearly. We can never fill the void in our life, but the memories of a loving son and firefighter will live on forever. He was the love of our life and a true blessing from God.

# Remembering



## Carol Irene Taylor

### Goldsboro Fire Department — North Carolina

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: November 14, 2008

Age: 41

Carol "Irene" Taylor was born on July 29, 1967, in Belle Glade, Florida. She decided at age 12 that she wanted to become a firefighter, which was a surprise to all of us, as she was afraid of fire trucks. She would run and cry so hard when she heard a fire truck siren. Who would have ever thought that becoming a firefighter would become her love? She fell in love with the idea of becoming a firefighter.

I remember her saying when she was trying to become a firefighter that she was too short to take down the ladder from the truck and put it back without standing on her tiptoes. That, and whether she was strong enough to carry someone from a burning building, worried her a lot. She used me as a "dummy" to practice with. I weighed 195 pounds to her 110-120 pounds. She used to cry and say, "Bay-Bay, you're too heavy!" I would ask her, "Are you going to tell that to the person in that building whose life you must save?" She would then say, "OK, man, come on!" She would drag me about 5-10 feet every day and, by the grace of God, she made it. That was the proudest day of both our lives. Our mother passed several years ago, so I was very proud to be at the college watching Irene become a full-fledged firefighter.

Irene had gone from pickle packer to curtain maker to shoe turner to bartender to PROUD firefighter for the Goldsboro Fire Department. She said, "Bay-Bay, I got my career now!"



Irene's passion for her career made a lot of people think she was better than they were. They soon realized that she was not going to allow anything or anybody to tarnish her dignity and pride for her position. She loved life, her son, and her family more than anything else in the world. She had a passion for God and put Him first in her life.

The last eighteen months of her life were difficult for her. She and I lost touch with one another, but we found one another again. She lost her best friend, her dog Buddy, who was killed in front of her house. Then, ten days after losing Buddy, her son was shot and killed. He was the only child she had.

We will always remember Irene as someone who fought very hard to become a firefighter, a passion that she had for years and a job that she did well for 12½ years with much love and joy. She will be missed by her fellow firefighters and her family.



# Remembering



## Colin Gene Thomas

### Verona Volunteer Fire Department — North Carolina

Volunteer 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief

Date of Death: June 14, 2008

Age: 51

Gene Thomas would best be described as a silent servant. Gene was a man of little words and big actions. He presented with a shy and calm demeanor, but all you had to do was ask and Gene would unselfishly help you until the end.

Born on January 3, 1957, to Kenneth and Geraldine Thomas, Gene was the second of three children. He was raised with his older brother, Wayne, and younger brother, Toby, in Verona, the quaint community they call home. Gene never missed a day of school, receiving a perfect attendance award every year, and graduated from Dixon High School in 1975. Gene went to work in the auto body shop at Sanders Ford shortly after high school and worked there for 23 years. In 1999, Gene went to work for the North Carolina Department of Transportation and worked there until the time of his death.

On July 3, 1995, after many years of dating, Gene and his wife, Nancy, were married. Gene and Nancy spent all their free time together, and it was rare to see one without the other. They attended the Verona United Methodist Church. Gene was a collector of Coca-Cola bottles, NASCAR memorabilia, road signs and antique



tins. He also enjoyed woodworking, and all projects were completed with superior craftsmanship.

The fire service spans four generations of the Thomas family, and Gene took pride in carrying on the family tradition. He joined the Verona Volunteer Fire Department in 1975. During his time with the department, he held the ranks of lieutenant and captain before becoming 2<sup>nd</sup> assistant chief. No one can question Gene's tireless dedication to the Verona Volunteer Fire Department. Whether emergency calls, training, business meetings, or work days, Gene was usually the first one at the station and one of the last to leave. If something was broken, Gene was going to fix it no matter how late it meant he had to stay.

Gene answered his last call to duty in the early morning hours of June 14, 2008. The Verona Volunteer Fire Department was on the scene of multiple vehicle accidents, in near zero visibility resulting from heavy fog and dense smoke from a nearby woods fire. While searching for a female who cried out for help, Gene and an Onslow County sheriff's deputy were struck by a tractor-trailer. Gene died at the scene, doing what he had loved for so many years: serving and protecting his community.



# Remembering



## Brian W. Schira

### Colerain Township Department of Fire & EMS/ Delhi Township Fire and EMS — Ohio

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: April 4, 2008

Age: 29

On November 13, 2007, Brian William Schira, “Chico” to his friends, achieved the second phase of his long-term goal in becoming a career firefighter. Colerain Township is the largest township in Ohio, with over 9,000 fire/EMS runs per year. For someone serious about firefighting, this was the department to be on, and Brian had just been accepted as a part-time firefighter/EMT.

A year and a half earlier, Brian began his firefighting career as a part-time firefighter/EMT on the Delhi Township Fire Department. Here he was among friends from school days and worked in a community not unlike the one he grew up in, mostly residential with a small business section in the middle of town. Despite these limitations, Delhi is where Brian experienced his first working fire, when the local Jiffy Lube went up in smoke. His natural perseverance and high energy would serve him well that day. Brian’s cell phone minutes burned away rapidly as he later called each family member to give a full accounting of the event. You could not listen to him that day without smiling yourself, because you heard the excitement in his voice, and you knew that a big grin was spread across his face.

Those who worked with Brian remember him as a “firefighter’s firefighter.” Many firefighters have the

knowledge and education but lack the hands-on experience to put the right solution to the right problem. Brian acquired the technical ability and insight to view a situation completely and arrive at the right solution for the problem at hand from his eight years at Home Depot. These abilities and his genuine concern made him a valuable asset to both Colerain and Delhi Townships.

Phase 3 of Brian’s career plan was to obtain his paramedic certification and move on to becoming a full-time firefighter. Phase 3 will not be completed by Brian because of his untimely death. However, due to the generosity of the members of the Tri-State communities, Brian’s family has been able to establish the Brian W. Schira “102” Scholarship Fund. This scholarship will provide the funding for the paramedic certification courses needed by Colerain and Delhi firefighters in order to advance in their careers.

The greatest tribute the recipients of the scholarship fund can offer to honor Brian is to be men and women of conviction, dedicating themselves to serving their community as he did. Brian will live on through them. Every time we see a young firefighter with that look of excitement and enthusiasm, we will see Brian.



# Remembering

## Gary Lawrence Studer

### Whitehouse Fire Department — Ohio

Career Captain

Date of Death: June 28, 2008

Age: 61

Gary was a man of many talents. Most of all, he was a teacher. He taught firefighting for over 25 years at Bowling Green State Fire School. Gary believed that CPR was the most important thing every person should know to save a victim. He taught CPR to hundreds of people, including the teachers and bus drivers at Anthony Wayne High School, his alma mater. At his funeral, several people informed me that Gary had saved their lives. Though he despised cold weather, Gary attended a cold-water rescue class. Scuba diving and rescue training became one of his many passions. When the Ohio Turnpike needed someone to train their personnel in rescue, they turned to Gary. He was the training officer at Whitehouse Fire at the time of his death. He wanted to give something back, which he did more times than can be counted.

A firefighter/paramedic with Life Squad 9 since 1997, Gary was a 30-year member of Whitehouse Fire Department, a part-time paramedic at Swanton Fire Department, and a former volunteer firefighter for Providence Township Fire & Rescue. He was chairman of the Lucas County Local Emergency Planning Committee, a member of the Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors and the Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association, and a lifetime FFA alumnus. He had an associate's degree in fire science and safety from



Owens Technical College and was pursuing a degree from the University of Cincinnati. Prior to becoming a paramedic, Gary worked for Toledo Edison for over 24 years.

Gary was one great mechanic, and it was common to see him in our driveway working on one of his friends' vehicles. If someone needed help, Gary was going to be there. On his days off, he was at the station working on the trucks, repairing the chief's car, stringing Christmas lights, unclogging the sink or spraying for weeds. He rebuilt farm tractors and worked on antique Ford Model T's and Model A's in his "spare" time. He built a beautiful Model T Speedster from the frame up, which was his pride and joy. His love of antique automobiles was a passion he shared with Jeanette, his wife of 29 years, whom he referred to as "the love of my life."

A proud military veteran, Gary served his country for over 23 years. He retired as senior master sergeant and fire chief of the 180th Ohio Air National Guard. He served as the commander of the American Legion Post #384 Honor Guard. Every Memorial Day, he led his fellow honor guard members in the 21-gun salute at Whitehouse Cemetery. Gary is now buried at this cemetery, and the well-earned salute is for him.



# Remembering



## Robin M. Zang-Broxterman

Colerain Township Department of Fire & EMS — Ohio

Career Captain

Date of Death: April 4, 2008

Age: 37

Robin was never the biggest, but she was daring and very competitive. An accomplished artist and champion speed skater, she enjoyed softball, soccer, and loved riding Roscoe through the woods. Family gatherings, Sunday dinners, Disney vacations, and family reunions provide many cherished memories. We will always treasure Easter, our last family meal together the week before she died. Robin stuffed 400 eggs, some with broccoli as a joke.

Robin's passion for the fire service was exceeded only by her devotion to her girls, Courtney (8) and Sierra (10). She was their soccer coach, room mother, riding instructor and involved in all their activities.

The first inkling that Robin was good at saving lives came at age twelve. While all the adults were ducking, Robin threw herself in front of a toddler about to be struck by a baseball. The parents in the stands that day knew she was a hero in the making. It was her compassion and caring for people that prompted her to become a firefighter. She began her career as a D.O.D. firefighter/HAZMAT tech for Fernald and attained the rank of emergency chief.

A 17-year veteran, Robin was Colerain's first female fire captain. Her crew received the Ohio Star of Life and other accolades for their actions saving lives. She earned degrees in fire science technology and fire safety



engineering at University of Cincinnati. She wrote curriculum for Delmar's fire instructor text and adjunct faculty at Cincinnati State College and Great Oaks Institute. She was a member of Local 3915. Robin was enrolled at the National Fire Academy, but died prior to attending. Her class placed her helmet on her seat, carried her picture, and elected her president.

Robin was engaged to marry Green Township Firefighter Donald Patterson. Both vowed never to marry again, but their 20-year friendship turned to love when they both realized they were destined to forever be "soul mates." Their dreams came to an abrupt end during a catastrophic collapse at the house fire on Squirrels Nest Lane, April 4, 2008.

Robin was proud to be a Colerain Township fire captain. She embraced the rewards of being a firefighter—love of children, community admiration, and the sense of brotherhood within the firehouse. Robin truly lived life to the fullest. Her contagious smile, generosity and selflessness, always raised our spirits.

Robin died doing what she swore to do—protect property, save lives, and serve her community. Robin's life will continue to inspire us, cause us to search for the best in ourselves, and remind us of what we can become.



# Remembering



## Thomas “Rusty” Topping Barnsdall Rural Fire Department — Oklahoma

Volunteer Firefighter  
Date of Death: May 31, 2008  
Age: 28

Rusty was born on February 9, 1980, in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. He married Billie (Ford) Topping on September 9, 2006, and Billie was four months pregnant with their firstborn child at the time of Rusty’s death. Rusty Jr. was born on November 5, 2008. Rusty looked forward to starting a family and couldn’t have been happier about becoming a father.

He never met a stranger, making friends anywhere he went and enjoying their company. His favorite hobby was entering his 2003 Chevy low-rider in car shows, and nothing could excite him more than bringing home a trophy. He loved to laugh and have fun and made sure everyone around him was enjoying life with him. He loved and looked forward to taking vacations with his family every year. At the time of his death, he was working for the City of Bartlesville as a maintenance worker in the water department. There, he was loved by many, and everyone looked forward to coming to work because Rusty made it a fun place to be.

Rusty graduated from Bartlesville High School in 1999 and furthered his education at Rogers State University until he realized that firefighting was the only thing he was interested in pursuing. He lived a lifelong dream of becoming a professional fireman. His father retired

as battalion chief after 32 years with Bartlesville Professional Fire Department; his father-in-law retired as captain after 35 years with the same department. Rusty has many cousins, uncles, and friends who he called his brothers, who are professional firefighters. He looked up to them and wanted to follow in their footsteps.



Rusty was involved with the Barnsdall Rural Volunteer Fire Department for eight years. His reason for being a firefighter was the feeling that he got rescuing, helping, and even saving another’s life. He said it was the greatest feeling you could experience.

Every time a fire truck drove by, Rusty’s eyes grew as big as baseballs, and he never took his eyes off them until they were out of sight. He said the horns and sirens of a fire truck gave him chilling goose bumps because of the passion he had for being a firefighter.

Rusty’s life was cut short, but we thank God every day for the memories we have of him. The only reason God chooses to take firemen such as Rusty is because he needs the best with him as well. Everyone that knew Rusty has lost a huge part of them, but the moments that he gave us will live on with us forever and be passed to his son. He is greatly missed by all.



# Remembering



## Shawn Patrick Blazer

**Grayback Forestry, Inc., USDA Forest Service Contractor — Oregon**

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: August 5, 2008

Age: 30

Shawn was born December 16, 1977, in Queens, New York, and lived in the city with his mother until age three. They then moved to Oregon, where he was raised for the remainder of his life. Growing up in Oregon was the love of his life. The mountains were his serenity. Shawn was very outgoing, involved with the outdoors through activities such as hiking, fishing, camping, hunting, and swimming. When he was not in the woods, he was playing basketball, football, and baseball, or spending time with family and friends.

Shawn's interest in the fire service began at a late age, but it became his true calling and passion. He began working for Grayback Forestry in the summer of 2007. He completely and utterly fell in love with being in the mountains at all hours of the day and night. Working with his comrades and his crew bosses, who he called his fierce leaders, was the most joyous time of his life. It was all he could talk about. Shawn could not wait to get back out there with his brothers and fight those ferocious fires burning in the mountains. Growing up in Oregon, this made him feel complete, important, a part of something so radical, to have a brotherhood and—the best part—see the mountains as we will never see ourselves. "Like heaven," he would say.



Although Shawn never married, his true love was his family and closest friends. He watched over and took care of his disabled mother for three years, as well as fixing cars, cooking, cleaning, and doing all the heavy lifting when needed. He could fix or repair anything he put his hands on.

In the family he was known as "The Stomach," because he could eat as if he was a bottomless pit. He was the man in the family, with only his mother and little sister to attend to. He did whatever he could to help, and that's what made firefighting so important and complete for Shawn. He loved to take care of people, and through firefighting he could do so much more.

On August 5, 2008, Shawn Patrick Blazer was with his brothers, pretty jazzed about holding the line that day. They had accomplished what they came there to do. However, the helicopter carrying the firemen could not carry them out. It tragically crashed and burned on the mountain. As the song says, "*Fire on the mountain, lightning in the air, gold in them hills, and it's waiting for me there.*"

He is our family hero and will be greatly missed by all he touched. His life will live on forever in our hearts.





# Remembering



## Scott A. Charlson

### Grayback Forestry, Inc., USDA Forest Service Contractor — Oregon

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: August 5, 2008

Age: 25

Scott was born on January 4, 1983, in Portland Oregon. At a young age, Scott loved the game of ice hockey. One of his family's favorite memories is of him playing hockey in the basement as a child. It would sound like a real game going with the banging, hollering and the ref's whistle blowing. There was play-by-play action –and he scoores! But it was a one-man game and lots of imagination. At age five, Scott joined a hockey team, and it was a passion in his life until he died. You could count on his hockey bag always being in the trunk of his car.

As Scott grew, his love for sports grew with him. His favorite teams were the San Francisco 49ers, Portland Trailblazers, Atlanta Braves, Pittsburgh Penguins and the University of Oregon Ducks. Being wise to know he would not make it into pro sports, he decided he wanted to become a sports journalist, and he pursued this dream at Southern Oregon University. He had one year left to get his degree. He took to wildland fire-fighting with Grayback Forestry to earn money for his school expenses.

Scott's parents were visiting him when he was called to his first fire. They took him to the shop, and his mom

asked him to give her an early Christmas present. She asked him to call each evening when he got in to base camp so his family would know he was safe and could hear about his day. Scott faithfully gave that gift until August 5, 2008, when after being in a spike camp for three days, the helicopter that was carrying his crew back to base camp crashed, killing nine people.



Scott was a very caring and loyal friend with a great laugh. When asked how he was doing, he would often answer, "Just living the dream." He had the unique ability to have a good balance of work and responsibility along with pleasure and humor. When his crew boss was asked what he remembered about Scott, he said, "*Scott was never grouchy. Usually about the 10th day out on a fire people begin to get a bit gnarly, but not Scott. I never heard a bad word out of his mouth.*"

Scott loved his parents and brother, Jake, and was always there to do his part in keeping his family close. He was very comfortable with who he was in this world, largely because he knew the God that created him. He did not "play church," but had firm convictions regarding his relationship with God. He knew John 3:16 included him. He will never be forgotten.



# Remembering



## Edrik J. Gomez

### Grayback Forestry, Inc., USDA Forest Service Contractor — Oregon

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: August 5, 2008

Age: 19

Edrik was born in Oxnard, California, on November 4, 1988. He grew up in Coquille, Oregon, on a small farm on the southern Oregon coast. Edrik was serving his first summer as a wildland firefighter for Grayback Forestry to get himself through college. Edrik loved the outdoors and had a great sense of adventure.

Edrik was a junior attending Southern Oregon University, where he was double majoring in political science and communications. He had a passion for social activism and was heavily involved on campus with the Latino Student Union and the Multicultural Department, as well as his off campus community.

Edrik was a scholar and a revolutionary in every sense of the word. He loved to learn new ideas and took every opportunity to just have a good conversation with anybody he could. He had a unique brand of humor that blended his intellectual wit with his spontaneous quirky personality; you couldn't help but feel happy when you were around him. His passion for social work was the driving force behind his love for education. He had many plans and goals for his future that included public service.

His professor, Dennis Dunleavy, PhD, remembered: *Edrik, despite his youth, had already made an impact on*

*this world. Everywhere he went, Edrik left people feeling good about themselves and the world around us.*



And Dr. Jody Waters, Edrik's professor and advisor at Southern Oregon University, said this: *Edrik was truly one of the most joyous and special individuals I have ever known. He simply radiated with happiness, intelligence, and fun... He was truly filled with vision, passion for acquiring knowledge and using it, and a love for the world and the people in it...Edrik always reminded me that to live in this world is a joy, a privilege, and a responsibility. He spoke many times of the great respect he had for his parents in immigrating from Mexico and building a life for him and his brothers that meant that he had the opportunity to gain an education and to speak, question, challenge, and participate in the world around him...It is still difficult to believe that such a bright light could be extinguished.*

Edrik had a wide variety of hobbies and interests. He loved camping with family, hiking with friends, and working with his beehives. He was a talented writer and could often be found writing his thoughts in his journal. There isn't a day that goes by in which his smile and warmth are not missed! In his 19 years of life he touched many, and we are better individuals for having had him in our lives.



# Remembering



## Robert A. Hales

### Scappoose Rural Fire Protection District — Oregon

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: August 17, 2008

Age: 40

Robert was born September 4, 1967, in Oregon, to Robert and Carol Hales.

He graduated from St. Helens High School and joined the Army in 1985.

He began his training as a large equipment/diesel mechanic while in the Army and completed his Diesel Certification at Portland Community College.

Robert married his wife, Mary, in 1991, and they moved to Scappoose, Oregon, to be near Robert's extended family. In 1999, they bought a house just across the creek from the fire station and moved there with their three daughters, Heather (17), Katie (16), and Sandra (14).

In everything he did, Robert always put his family first. His interest in being a firefighter stemmed from the struggle his family went through with the premature birth of their second daughter, Katie. Her illness prompted him to learn all he could about her care and, because of this, he became an EMT-B after joining the fire department.

Robert worked as a mechanic for Hertz Equipment for 12 years. He loved the family atmosphere of the fire station and would often stop in at the station in town on his way home after work to chat with other fire personnel. He used his mechanic skills over the years to help in the maintenance of fire apparatus. He

was well respected for his ability to diagnose and repair equipment.



Robert loved his community, and he volunteered in many different areas. His grandfather had helped to found a farm museum in Columbia County, and Robert helped each year in growing and harvesting the wheat or oats that they ran through a 1926 Case thresher each summer during the county fair. He also helped out with maintenance at the fairgrounds, and he and his wife were the campground superintendents for the county fair. Everywhere he went, people recognized him from some time he had helped out someone they knew. Being a volunteer firefighter was just a natural step in his commitment to his community. His dedication was admired and, in 2001, he was awarded "Volunteer Firefighter of the Year."

Robert could always be counted on to respond to the fire/rescue call coming over the radio. On August 17, 2008, he responded to a fire call early in the morning and fought lightning strike fires for twelve hours. Shortly after returning home, he drove his daughter to work. Barely a mile from home, he suffered from a heart event that caused him to black out and crash. His daughter escaped from the accident unharmed. Robert died at the scene, surrounded by Scappoose Fire personnel.



# Remembering



## Matthew Hammer

**Grayback Forestry, Inc., USDA Forest Service Contractor — Oregon**

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: August 5, 2008

Age: 23

*M*att was born September 9, 1984, in Santa Cruz, California. He grew up in Ukiah, California, and moved to Grants Pass, Oregon, in 1999. He graduated from Grants Pass High School in 2003.

Friends and family describe him as having a great sense of humor, being humble, level-headed, relaxed, competitive, and always watching out for others. He enjoyed whitewater rafting, backpacking, shooting guns, playing basketball and football, traveling, playing games, and spending time with friends and family.

He had just graduated in May 2008 from Corban College,



with a multidisciplinary major focused on psychology and business. He married his college sweetheart, Monica Crumley, on June 28, 2008. After returning from the honeymoon and spending additional time with family, he began his last season fighting fire. He died with eight others in a tragic helicopter crash while fighting a fire in northern California.

He leaves behind his father, Rick Hammer; mother, Debbie Hammer; three sisters, Crystal, Melody, and Sarah; and his wife, Monica.

Matt will always be remembered because he lived as a hero.



# Remembering



## Steven "Caleb" Renno

**Grayback Forestry, Inc., USDA Forest Service Contractor — Oregon**

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: August 5, 2008

Age: 21

Caleb was born on August 18, 1986, a home-birth in the beautiful rolling hills of Summertown, Tennessee. We moved to Davis, California, when he was a year old. Then, when he was ten, we moved to Cave Junction in southwest Oregon. Caleb loved to roam his new backyard, one of the most pristine wilderness areas in the country. Always a courageous adventurer at heart, he explored the forest wilderness, engrossed completely in his own dreams and wonderful imagination.

Caleb found his true passion in sports during his freshman year in high school when he joined the track team. Caleb was inspiring to watch on the track. During his senior year, he broke the two-minute mark in the 800-meter race, a very hard-earned personal goal. He also received his most cherished award, "MVP in Track and Field for 2005." Caleb handled wins and losses with equal grace and mentored fellow students with encouragement and by example.

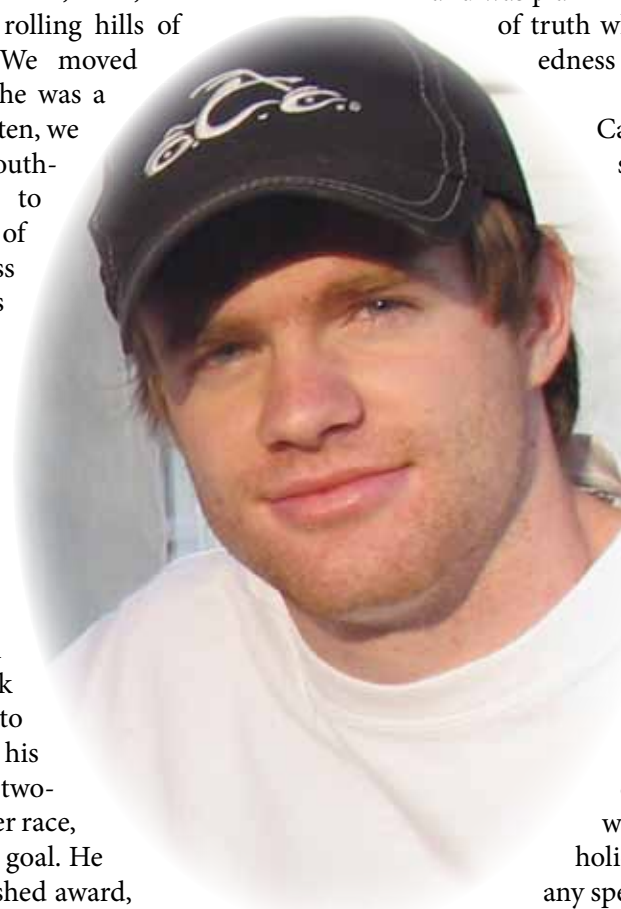
Caleb grew into a phenomenal young man with boundless enthusiasm and hope. He had a far-reaching belief and faith that God created everything and, therefore, everything is sacred. Caleb treated everyone with respect and kindness. At Southern Oregon University, he became very interested in anthropology. He spent most of his last year traveling through South America

and was planning a trip to Nepal. He was a seeker of truth who understood the interconnectedness and sacredness of all things.

Caleb was a warrior in the highest sense of that word—fearless when needed and always a defender of women and children. He died protecting the community with a crew of men he called his brothers. On August 5, 2008, after battling a fierce wildland fire line for many days, his crew was being airlifted back to their firebase camp. The helicopter crashed into the Trinity County wilderness in northern California; nine good men died and four survived the crash.

There was nothing Caleb held dearer than his family. He loved it when we gathered together for the holidays, our annual camping trip, or any special family occasion. Well known for his playful sense of humor, children loved Caleb for his gentleness, kindness, and ability to meet them in their world of play. He was the true kid magnet at every family gathering.

Beloved son of Catherine Renno and Bruce LeMay, and much-loved younger brother to Jason and Colleen Renno, Caleb is loved by all whose lives he touched. Caleb cherished and loved his family and was the heart and silent center of our circle. We will never be the same without him, but death has only made our love stronger. He will be loved and missed until we meet again.





# Remembering



## Bryan James Rich

**Grayback Forestry, Inc., USDA Forest Service Contractor — Oregon**

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: August 5, 2008

Age: 29

Bryan was born September 9, 1978, in Klamath Falls, Oregon, and spent his early years in Gold Beach, amid the beauty of the Oregon coast. He was very athletic and participated in all the sports he could. Bryan was very focused in whatever he did, a hard worker from a very young age. He loved animals and always had a well-trained dog as a companion.

When our family relocated to Gold Hill on the Rogue River, close to Medford, Bryan's love for the outdoors flourished. Fishing was a calming influence from the hustle and bustle of the city and working.

Bryan's love for the outdoors led him to become a framer. As his talent and skills progressed, he became a journeyman carpenter and owner of B Rich Construction. Though many have said that he was one of the best framers in the Rogue Valley, his bookkeeping was not on the same par. He would take care of friends, keeping them working at the expense of his own business survival. He was a very caring man and was loved by many people. He gave of himself and his talents to help others, taking no pay for many things he did. His sense of humor and smile were infectious. He was dedicated to his friends and employers.



When the building trade started to wane, he went to work for Grayback Forestry. His supervisor said that because of his athletic abilities, skills, and dedication, Bryan had progressed rapidly as a chain sawyer in the limited time he had been on the job. His foreman told us that they had planned to make him a lead. As he worked fighting fire, he gained a passion for the work. He planned to go to school to study structural firefighting after the season was over.

Bryan had been with his fiancée, Katie O'Donnell, for several years, and they had been friends since junior high school. Katie and Bryan were soul mates. I was working a shift at the hospital and checked e-mail to see how the fire was going where Bryan was working. I saw a stock photo of the Carson helicopter, with the headline, "Forest Fire Fighters Feared Dead Along With Pilot in Northern California Helicopter Crash." The next day, a call from Katie informed us of his death. We died some that day.

Bryan was the spark in our lives. He is also survived by his younger brother, Lee, and his nephews and nieces, Justin Lee, Isabel, and Bryan James Rich, who was named in his honor. He is missed by so many who will never forget him.

# Remembering

## Roark D. Schwanenberg

Carson Helicopters, USDA Forest Service Contractor — Oregon

Career Pilot

Date of Death: August 5, 2008

Age: 54

Roark David Schwanenberg came by flying honestly. He shared the passion of flying with his father. Roark was born in Long Beach, California, on January 19, 1954, to Don and Joyce Schwanenberg. The family moved to Klamath Falls when Roark was about 13. In school, Roark played football, and the Minnesota Vikings became his favorite team.

From 1974 to 1978, Roark served his country in the U.S. Army. During that time, he completed flight school, became a warrant officer, and was chosen as the Outstanding Airman at Fort Rucker, Alabama. His education included training for the 234 with the British Airways Flight Training School in Aberdeen, Scotland; Boeing 234 Flight Training School, and American Airline Flight Training School for SK 76's.

Roark loved flying and had over 40,000 hours of flight time. He had 33 years of helicopter flight experience, which included heavy-lift helicopter aerologging, airline transport piloting, firefighting, construction work, and offshore flying with an S 76. In November 1983, he made the cover of "Rotor and Wing" by flying a BV-234 (Chinook) accomplishing the ARCO Alaska 400-mile Bering Sea commute. He always felt responsible for making a difference in the work place and used his humor to help turn around tough situations among the fire and logging crews. If they were having a bad day, he tried to lighten the burden to keep them focused.



Roark truly had a caring and fun-loving aura and a deep appreciation and love for his family and friends. He would leave phone messages for his favorite dog, Beau, and would sometimes ask to talk to him. The phone also became a tool for teasing his family. Roark would sing a song on the message over and over so that tune would be embedded in everyone's brain. He was a jokester at heart.

He found refuge with his family in the Wallowa Mountains, embracing the quiet beauty and solitude, riding his motorcycle, camping, and target shooting. Roark and Christine observed their 20th wedding anniversary July 16, 2008, but deferred a real celebration until after fire season because of the untimely death of his brother, Jon, on July 5, 2008.

He is survived by his wife, Christine; daughter, Margo; son, Chris Tsiatsos; daughter, Deena Hahn (Darren); new grandson, Augustus Reed Hahn, born March 6, 2009; his father, Don Schwanenberg (LaVerne); brother, Kip Schwanenberg; and extended family. He was preceded in death by his mother, Joyce, and his brother, Jon.

Roark died the way he would have wanted to enter heaven, doing what he felt was important, making a difference in this world. He laughed...he loved...he lived... Always look up.



# Remembering



## David Elijah Steele

**Grayback Forestry, Inc., USDA Forest Service Contractor — Oregon**

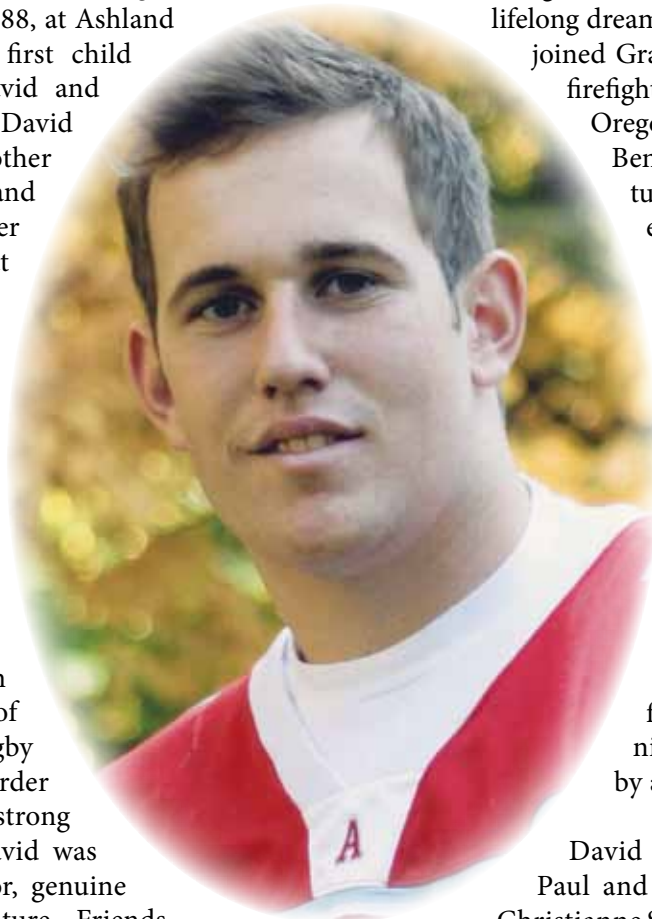
Career Firefighter

Date of Death: August 5, 2008

Age: 19

David Elijah Steele of Ashland, Oregon, was born November 29, 1988, at Ashland Community Hospital, the first child to proud parents Paul David and Susanne Elizabeth Steele. David was a kind and fun-loving brother to his sisters, Christianne and Laurana, and his younger brother, Nathan. Baptized at Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Church, David loved to participate in youth activities and church outings and felt a strong bond and belief in the Lord. He attended Sacred Heart Catholic School and Ashland Middle School.

David graduated from Ashland High School in 2007, a standout member of the AHS football and rugby teams, and an avid snowboarder and wake boarder. Building strong and lasting friendships, David was known for his goofy humor, genuine warmth and easygoing nature. Friends would be heard to say, "David always made your day a little bit better." They remembered David as "a strong guy," "a funny guy," and "a soft-spoken giant."



This strength of character led David to follow his lifelong dream of becoming a firefighter. He joined Grayback Forestry as a wildland firefighter and enrolled in Central Oregon Community College in Bend, Oregon, to study structural fire science and pursue his emergency medical technician certification.

David was called to the Lord on August 5, 2008, in a tragic helicopter accident following a Grayback deployment to the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, where his crew successfully and heroically defended a critical fire line in steep and rugged terrain. David was loved and respected by his family, friends and community and will be missed dearly by all.

David is survived by his parents, Paul and Susanne Steele; two sisters, Christianne Steele and Laurana Steele; and one brother, Nathan Steele, who reside together in Ashland, Oregon; and his grandparents, Carol and John Endsley, Sally Steele, and Lloyd Steele.

David's motto was, "Live for nothing, or die for something - it's your choice."



# Remembering

## Michael David Crotty

Lawrence Park Township Volunteer Fire Department — Pennsylvania

Volunteer Deputy Chief

Date of Death: April 8, 2008

Age: 24

Michael David Crotty came into the world on April 14, 1983. While in high school, Michael volunteered at the Lawrence Park Fire Department. He graduated from Iroquois High School in 2001. After graduation, Michael made the honorable decision to join the United States Air Force, where he was stationed at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska. Mike really enjoyed his time spent in Alaska, where he got to explore his favorite hobbies of backpacking, camping, and being one with his beautiful surroundings. Mike also loved weightlifting, the UFC, and the Kansas City Chiefs. While in Alaska, Mike became a member of the Chugiak Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department. After four years of service and several accolades, Mike was honorably discharged as an airman 1<sup>st</sup> class medic.



Upon discharge, Michael promptly returned to Erie to fulfill his lifelong dream and test for the Erie Bureau of Fire. He was hired, becoming a fifth generation firefighter. Mike was assigned to Engine Company No. 6 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon. Mike also took the written test for the Fire Department New York and passed with flying colors. He was awaiting reply to report for his physical examination, which he received post mortem. Mike

was truly dedicated to the job and also returned to the Lawrence Park Fire Department, where he was promoted to deputy fire chief. Mike was dedicated to training and being the best at his job. He was often quoted as saying, "Every day is a training day."

It was as deputy fire chief of the Lawrence Park Fire Department that Mike responded to his last alarm. At a mutual aid response for an automatic fire alarm, a water monitor on the end of Lawrence Park's aerial ladder truck catastrophically malfunctioned and struck Mike, the incident commander of the scene. Mike's Uncle Joe summed it up best, saying, "Mikey went from heaven on earth, running a fire ground, to the real thing in a split second." Mike was the second member of the Crotty family to die in the line of duty.

Mike was a great role model. He personified heroic qualities such as passion, discipline, dedication, courage, strength, and commitment. He had a great sense of humor and always looked at the bright side of things. Mike was a wonderful young man with many attributes who will be sadly missed by his mother, Barbara; father, David; brother, James; and all of his family, friends, and fellow firefighters.



# Remembering



## Bradley P. Holmes

### Pine Township Engine Company — Pennsylvania

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: March 5, 2008

Age: 21

*M*ay 14, 1986 ~ March 5, 2008

Bradley was born on May 14, 1986, in Grove City, Pennsylvania, to Joseph N. and Deborah K. Holmes. Bradley was born into a volunteer firefighting family. His father, Joseph N. Holmes, was the assistant chief of the department at the time of his death, and his brother, Christopher J. Holmes, is the chief of the department.

Bradley, age 21, was a dedicated volunteer firefighter. He died a hero after trying to rescue a woman from her burning home. He was a very caring person. He lived for fighting fire, and he died doing something he was excited to do. He joined the department as a 17-year-old junior member and became a full-time member in May 2004 when he turned 18. He received many certificates for his training through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Butler County Community College and the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy. He also served as the department's president.

Bradley was a graduate of the Grove City High School, Class of 2004, Grove City, Pennsylvania. Bradley was a

full-time student at the Slippery Rock University, majoring in computer science. He also was employed at Wal-Mart as a clerk at the Grove City store. He designed and built the Pine Township Engine Company's web site: <http://fire.pinetownship.org>



On February 29, 2008, Firefighter Holmes, along with his colleagues, responded to a structure fire with possible entrapment for mutual aid, along with Grove City Volunteer Fire Department. The firefighters were attempting to locate and rescue a 44-year old female resident from a burning duplex. Bradley and Lieutenant Scott King, of the Pine Township Engine Company, became trapped on the second floor when the fire conditions deteriorated. Bradley was transported to a local hospital and immediately airlifted to Mercy Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He remained in critical condition for five days in the burn unit before succumbing to his injuries on March 5, 2008, surrounded by many friends, firefighters and family members.

Bradley will always be greatly missed!

*Remembering*

# Harvey Jordan

**Penn Hills #1 Volunteer Fire Department — Pennsylvania**

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: January 7, 2008

Age: 71

Firefighter Harvey Jordan suffered a fatal heart attack after responding to the fire station for a call. A widower and retiree, Jordan joined the fire department in 2002 in response to a flyer asking residents to volunteer. He completed an 88-hour fire training program and liked to tell people that he performed much better than the younger guys in the program.

Jordan helped with fundraising and organizing department events. In addition to his official duties at the department, he helped clear fire hydrants of snow and ice in the winter and visited local

homes to make sure the fire company had current information on residents.

Jordan retired from Duquesne Light Company. He was survived by his father, David Jordan; and sister, Edith Walton, both of North Carolina; and his cousin, Jannie Evans, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He was predeceased by his wife, Jacqueline Poindexter; and his sister, Arnetha Melvin.

He was an all-around good person, very dedicated. He made nearly every fire call and was just a very nice and caring man. He will be missed.



# Remembering

## Larry J. Lockhart

### Dayton District Volunteer Fire Department — Pennsylvania

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: February 17, 2008

Age: 69

Firefighter Larry “Jack” Lockhart died February 17, 2008, when he suffered a fatal heart attack while responding to a call. A 49-year veteran, he was a past chief and president of the department. His sons, Barry and Mike, also serve with the fire department, and Barry was the department’s chief at the time of Jack’s death.

Jack was born April 14, 1938, in Templeton, Pennsylvania, to Kelly Glenwood and Charlotte Marie (Atherton) Lockhart.

He was a self-employed mechanic and the owner/operator of Good’s Auto Repair. He was a driver for McMeans Bus Company for 35 years and retired from Freeport Brick.

An active member of the Dayton United Methodist Church, Jack was a past president of the church board. He was a member of the Dayton Valley Campers and the Forest Fire Warden District 8. He enjoyed camping, hunting, and spending time with his family.

Jack was survived by his sons, Michael and Barry Lockhart; his daughters, Jackie Bussard, Carol Blose, and Cathy Ondriezek; his brother, John Lockhart; his sister, Ada Belle Bowser; 14 grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Betty Ann (Good) Lockhart, in 2006; his parents; three brothers; and one sister.

He showed up for every fire and fundraiser. He was a special person, always a go-getter.





# Remembering



## Nicholas V. Picozzi II

### Lower Chichester Volunteer Fire Company — Pennsylvania

Volunteer Lieutenant  
Date of Death: March 5, 2008  
Age: 35

Nick Picozzi was born in Chester, Pennsylvania, on September 17, 1972, the only son of Nick and Nancy. He was raised in Lower Chichester with his younger sister, Helena, whom he was very protective of. Nick played Little League baseball as a child. His other interests growing up were karate, ice hockey, hunting, and fishing. He passed all those interests along to his children.

He graduated in 1991 from Chichester High School and attended Folcroft Technical School for masonry. At age 22, Nick married Stephanie. They had two beautiful, healthy sons, Anthony and Daniel.

When he was in his late 20s, Nick joined the Lower Chichester Volunteer Fire Company, a passion he had always wanted to fulfill. He served as a trainer for the junior firefighters and was a trustee, an engineer and, most recently, a lieutenant. He also joined the Boothwyn Fire Company as a volunteer because he loved to serve and protect his township and surrounding communities.

In his downtime, he loved to sing karaoke to his favorite country music. He enjoyed watching hockey and rooting for his favorite team, the Philadelphia Flyers. He loved to spend time outdoors, hunting and fishing and taking his boys and nieces and nephews to teach them and just hang out. He recently became a NASCAR fan.



Nick was very headstrong and aggressive at accomplishing any goal he set out to do. Anyone who met Nick would have never forgotten him with his carefree, get along with anybody attitude. He could be seen getting his daily coffee at Wawa, where he went behind the counter and got his own "Fresh Hot Coffee" like he owned the store! He loved to cook on the grill in the summer and hosted many barbecues with family and friends. He enjoyed mentoring the kids in the family and in the neighborhood. He was always there to lend a helping hand to anyone who needed it. Day or night, you knew you could always count on Nick.

On March 5, 2008, Nick became trapped in the basement while battling a house fire in Aston, Pennsylvania. He succumbed to the fire. He left behind his wife of almost 14 years, Stephanie, and two young sons, Anthony (12) and Danny (10). His heart belonged to his boys. Although fighting fires was a passion, his true passion was his family. He shared a special bond with his sister-in-law, Jennifer, whose children looked up to him as a role model.

Nick was greatly loved and cared for by all who knew him, and he will be forever missed and never forgotten. Anyone who knew him was blessed to have gotten the opportunity to meet a true hero.



# Remembering



## James Lee Robeson

### Scranton Fire Department — Pennsylvania

Career Captain

Date of Death: January 6, 2008

Age: 50

Born August 19, 1957, Jimmy was a happy and mischievous child. On March 10, 1968, there was an accident that would forever change his life. While playing in an abandoned coal breaker, a thousand-pound boulder rolled on top of him, tearing off half of his face and leaving him barely clinging to life. Doctors performed many surgeries over many years to repair and rebuild his eye, nose, and jaw. It was at this time that Jimmy decided he would dedicate his life to helping others.

On May 3, 1983, Jimmy joined the fire department. He worked his way through the ranks, eventually achieving the ranks of captain and acting chief. Jimmy was a well respected member of the department and a natural leader. When training the new recruits, he told them to treat every fire as though it was their own home. Known in the fire department as the go-to guy for his willingness to get involved no matter what the need, Jimmy spent years raising money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the Relay for Life. He also volunteered in the soup kitchen and dinners for the homeless. He was part of the committee established to purchase fire equipment, a shift steward, a member of the honor guard, and a



frequent delegate to the state convention. One of his proudest achievements was successfully chairing the 2006 Pennsylvania State Convention held in Scranton.

Jimmy's many hobbies included hunting, fishing, golfing, and bowling, to name a few.

His greatest love and proudest moments came, however, from his family. He was often awed and inspired by his son, Ryan. When Ryan was younger, Jimmy helped coach his baseball and soccer teams. Jimmy was overwhelmed with pride with Ryan's achievements in academics, track, and soccer. Jimmy was a devoted and wonderful husband to his wife, Linda. They shared a passion for life, love, and laughter that made every day special.

On January 6, 2008, Captain Robeson responded to a structure fire that had already claimed the lives of two people. As he was ascending in the ladder bucket to ventilate the roof, power arced from the overhead lines, and he was electrocuted and died instantly. While losing Jimmy has been heartbreaking and difficult, his family finds solace in the fact that he died a hero, doing a job that he was born to do.

# Remembering

## Richard P. Steele

### Distant Area Volunteer Fire Department — Pennsylvania

Volunteer Safety Officer

Date of Death: December 8, 2008

Age: 66

Richard was raised in Distant, just two houses away from the community school house, the building that now is the home of the Distant Fire Department. After the school moved, the fire department was established in 1968, and Richard joined on March 21, 1969. Richard and his wife, Rachel, purchased a home in Distant and raised their three children there. Richard held various offices and ranks over the years and was voted as a life member in March 1994. He was active in fundraising and loved calling bingo each week.

In small communities like Distant, everyone knows

everyone, and the fire department becomes an extended family. The whole family becomes involved with the fire department, the children grow up together, and many become members themselves.

Two of Richard's children became members, and his only granddaughter was anxiously waiting to become a junior member in January 2009. Richard did not get to be at that meeting to cast his vote for her. Following a call on December 8, 2008, he passed away from a heart attack. His granddaughter became a member one month later to proudly follow in his footsteps.





# Remembering



## Sean T. Whiten

### Roscoe Volunteer Fire Company — Pennsylvania

Volunteer Captain

Date of Death: August 9, 2008

Age: 47

Sean was born on March 7, 1961, in Pennsylvania. He came from a family filled with generations of firefighters. As a child, Sean lived in Charleroi, where he grew as a loving person and a great firefighter. He played football throughout his school years, which led him to achieving a scholarship to Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in automotive engineering. Sean worked for Lee Supply and later became a regional sales manager for Simonds International.

He married the love of his life, Linda, on August 3, 1985. He and Linda decided to reside in the small town of Stockdale, Pennsylvania, where Sean became a member of the local fire company in the early 1990s. With a passion for firefighting, Sean attended the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy, where he was educated on instructing others to do what he loved doing.

After attending the academy, Sean chose to become a member of the Roscoe Volunteer Fire Company, where he was a member for an additional 17 years. Throughout those years, Sean was appointed chief, assistant chief, captain, and lieutenant. Sean and Linda's pride and joy



was born on March 14, 1991, and named Sean-Robert. To this day, he follows in his father's footsteps as a seven-year member of the Roscoe Volunteer Fire Company. Along with instructing others, Sean taught his son everything he could, both in life and in firefighting.

Being such a wonderful, loving, and caring person, Sean became an EMT. He also instructed EMT classes. He always wanted to be a teacher; however, as far as his family, friends, and those who he has taught are concerned, he has been a teacher his whole life.

The annual flea market in the community was just starting, as well as the preparation for a wedding for one of Sean's close friends on August 9, 2008. Sean left that morning around 8:00 to instruct a structural burn class in Smithton, Pennsylvania. After going in and out of the burn building, Sean felt tired and got his vital signs checked. He went to his car for a break, then collapsed and died.

To his family, friends, and brother firefighters, Sean will be missed. He won't only be remembered as a mentor, friend, or role model, but as a hero.





# Remembering



## Wayne D. Brown

### Bristol Fire & Rescue Department — Rhode Island

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: November 3, 2008

Age: 63

Wayne was born on September 2, 1945, in Central Falls, Rhode Island. As a kid growing up in the 1960s, while his friends were rocking to the tunes of Elvis and the Beatles, he developed a lifelong passion for classical music and history. Wayne graduated from Rhode Island College in 1972 with a degree in history with a special interest in World War II.

In 1967, desiring to serve his country, he enlisted in the United States Navy. Not knowing in what direction he wanted to go, he listed five areas of interest on his Navy application. The last one he listed was medical corpsman, thinking this would never happen as most volunteers were granted their first or second choice. Little did he realize, this choice would affect the rest of his life. From 1967-1970 he served as a medic, caring for wounded Vietnam soldiers and doing other special missions for the Navy.

Upon leaving the Navy and graduating from college, he moved to Bristol, Rhode Island, and joined the Bristol Volunteer Fire Department in 1976. He was a member of the Hydraulion Engine and Hose No.1, rising to the rank of captain of the Bristol Rescue Squad. In the latter

part of his 32-year career, he served as a member of the Bristol Fire Police.



Wayne was a member and past president of the Bristol, Rhode Island, Cup Defenders Association and a 31-year member of St. Alban's Lodge #6, Order of the Masons. Wayne was also a tax assessor for Bristol, Warren, and, at the time of his passing, for the City of Central Falls, Rhode Island.

No matter what Wayne was doing, his true calling in life was to be a firefighter. It was his passion. Although a quiet person by nature, he loved helping people wherever and however he could. His family and friends never saw him without his radio by his side, waiting to run out the door at the first call of a fire.

Wayne's final call came on November 3, 2008, at 3:00 a.m. As he rushed out the door and was on his way to a fire, he experienced chest pain and radioed the rescue department that was also on the way to the fire. The department diverted a rescue wagon to his location, but by the time they arrived he had passed away. His final ride was in the rescue wagon with the people he had so proudly worked with and served with for 32 years of his life.



# Remembering



## Gerald R. Leduc

### Tiverton Fire Department — Rhode Island

Career Lieutenant

Date of Death: August 3, 2008

Age: 50

Lieutenant Gerald “Gerry” Leduc died August 3, 2008, when he suffered a heart attack while preparing for a rescue dive to search for a missing fisherman. A career firefighter for more than 25 years, he had also been a certified scuba diver for many years and was a certified EMT. He was treasurer of the Tiverton Firefighters Local 1703. He was posthumously promoted to lieutenant.

Gerry started as a volunteer firefighter in his teens and was a past chief of the South Tiverton Volunteer Fire Department.

He was the former owner of a fire protection company. He was known for his sense of humor and for his love of hot

tubs, especially his own eight-person tub installed on a pavilion at his house.

Gerry was survived by his sons, Michael and Jonathan Leduc; his mother, Shirley B. (Luxo) Grota; his father, Romeo Leduc; his ex-wife, Diane (Chaunt) Leduc; his stepsister, Linda Adams; and his companion, Denise DeMedeiros.

At the time of Gerry’s death, his son Michael was studying to be a paramedic.

Gerry had more friends than he could count. He was the kind of father who would do anything for his kids. He would bend over backward to do anything for anybody.





# Remembering



## Stephen Hagan Sr.

### Blenheim Fire Department — South Carolina

Volunteer Lieutenant

Date of Death: December 23, 2008

Age: 48

Steve was born January 12, 1960, in Bennettsville, South Carolina. He was very devoted to his family. Even from an early age, he worked to help support his mom and three brothers. His dad would take them fishing and hunting, which we continued with our children. Steve and I met when his family moved in down the road from where I lived with my family. He would spend as much time as my parents allowed at my house. He loved my mom's cooking. They grew to love him. He became part of the family long before we married in 1979. After my dad got sick, he was there to help take care of him and just be there if he wanted to talk.

Steve worked at a gas station, where he learned how to fix and race cars. Not long after our daughter was born he stopped racing, but we continued to take our children to the drag races so they could experience them.

Steve was a very devoted firefighter and officer, but was most prized as department chef. He joined the Blenheim Fire Department in 2004 and quickly became a pivotal presence in the department. As training officer, he earned "Fireman of the Year" twice. He enjoyed the closeness he shared with his son, Stephen, his brother,



Mike, and the many friends he had on the department. He is well loved by all.

Steve was a former baseball and football coach, as well as an inspiration with local fire prevention efforts and education, giving his own money as a reward to children who excelled in school.

Steve was a humble and loving husband and father. Family outings and closeness were his driving points of happiness. He would never have given up the chance to spend time with either of our children at any moment, day or night. He had a special bond with both of them that matched none I have ever seen. He made them feel like they were the most important people in the world, and they were.

Steve was my whole world. I lost the world's greatest husband. I know people hear all the time, "You never truly know what you have until it is gone." That is so very true. If you are reading this, please don't take for granted what you have. At a moment, it can be taken away from you.

Steve is truly loved and missed by all who got a chance to know him. He is survived by his wife, Rhonda, and children, Carole and Stephen.



# Remembering



## Roger Dennis Jr.

San Antonio Fire Department — Texas

Career Fire Engineer

Date of Death: February 29, 2008

Age: 55

Roger Dennis Jr. was born March 13, 1952, to the late Roger Dennis Sr. and Sammie Lee Henderson Dennis. He attended Brackenridge High School and San Antonio College, where he studied music and learned to play the piano and trombone. His latest projects were learning to play the guitar and the harmonica. In 1972 at the age of 20, he joined the San Antonio Fire Department and trained in one of the first paramedic classes in the history of the fire department. At the time of his death, he was serving at Fire Station #14 as a paramedic.

His favorite hobby was finding deals at pawnshops, flea markets, and thrift stores. He loved bargain shopping for himself, his family, and everyone else. Every pawnshop in San Antonio knew him by name. If you needed anything, you could just call him and he would find it for you. (But he would collect!!!)

As a child, he played with angels that he called his friends who wrestled with him, played with him, and led him to accept Jesus Christ at an early age. He really enjoyed



studying biblical prophecies and would talk for hours about books he read and wanted others to read. He was very strong in his love for Jesus Christ and would always look for opportunities to share his faith. His favorite saying was, "Get right with God."

He was a hard worker and a good provider, a man who loved his family. Every one of us has fond memories of all the things he did for us and taught us, especially about finance (specifically, savings!).

He was preceded in death by his father, Roger Dennis Sr.; his mother, Sammie Lee Henderson Dennis; and his sister, Kay Oveda Green.

He leaves to cherish his memory his wife of 32 years, Mary; his only daughter, Christina; son-in-law, Antonio; grandchildren Chase Roger, Cierra, and Christiane; brothers Wilmire Jones (Lucinda), Harrold Dennis, Larry Dennis (Guffie); sisters Rebecca Tinkshell (Wilbert), Michelle Thomas (Michael), and YeVonne Wiltz (Michael); and a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends.

*Remembering*

## Dale W. Grider

**DeKalb Volunteer Fire Department — Texas**

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: September 29, 2008

Age: 36

Dale Grider died September 29, 2008, after suffering a medical emergency while en route to a fire department training exercise. He had served with the department for about a year.

Grider was employed by the City of DeKalb. He was a member of Temple Baptist Church and the praise and worship team.

He was survived by his wife, Polly Grider; his son, Corey Grider; his daughter, Julia Grider; his stepdaughters, Misty Smithson, Krystal McLane, and Nikki Elkins; his parents, Boyce and Melba Grider; his brothers, Brad and Ronald Grider; nine grandchildren; and extended family.



# Remembering

## Joe P. Jordan

### Pickton Pine Forest Fire Department — Texas

Volunteer Firefighter  
Date of Death: July 4, 2008  
Age: 71

Firefighter Joe Jordan suffered a heart attack on July 2, 2008, while responding to the scene of a motor vehicle accident. His fellow firefighters were able to revive him and transport him to the hospital, where he died on July 4, 2008.

A founding member and 32-year veteran of the fire department, Joe Jordan served in numerous positions over the years and was serving as the department's secretary/treasurer at the time of his death. He helped construct several of the department's trucks from the ground up and

helped finish out the newest truck, which was put into service in 2007.

Joe was survived by his wife of 52 years, Nell Jordan; his son, Jeff Jordan; his daughters, Carolyn Woolverton and Sharon Car; 10 grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. His son, Jeff, and his grandson, Blake Jordan, have both served with the Pickton Pine Forest Fire Department. Blake is now a career firefighter in Bonham, Texas.

Joe Jordan loved the fire department. His absence will definitely be felt.





# Remembering



## Robert Leland Knight

### Teague Volunteer Fire Department — Texas

Volunteer Chief

Date of Death: July 5, 2008

Age: 42

Chief Robert L. Knight began volunteering as a firefighter soon after graduating from Texas A&M University in 1988 and moved back to his hometown of Teague, where he worked as a railroad engineer and later a safety coordinator for Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. He was a 19-year veteran of the Teague Volunteer Fire Department and had served as fire chief since 1999.

Chief Knight worked diligently to raise money for new trucks and fire equipment. He strived to train and protect the firemen so they could better serve and protect the community that he grew up in and cared so much about. He became a licensed paramedic after witnessing the aftermath of a wreck where three people were killed. He was the driving force behind the construction of the new fire station built in 2006, which has since been named in his honor and is now called "Robert's House." Teague VFD retired his call number, 900. He was named Teague "Citizen of the Year" in 2007 for his hard work and dedication to the fire department and to the community.

Robert was a loving husband to Teri, and a caring and devoted daddy to Trent, Layla, and Laura. He loved spending time with his family. He enjoyed going to their land outside of town where the kids could run with their



dog, Scout, and take tractor and four-wheeler rides with their Daddy. He also enjoyed hunting and fishing with his son. He took his two daughters to "The Grille" for breakfast every Saturday morning. He loved to just turn music on and watch his daughters laugh and dance around. He lived life to the fullest and loved to joke around and make people laugh.

On July 5, 2008, Robert responded to two grass fires earlier in the day, but it was the third call that was his final call. He responded to a structure fire at a local business downtown, and minutes later the front brick wall of the building suddenly collapsed on top of him. He sustained mortal injuries and was flown by medical helicopter to an area hospital, where he died just a few short hours later.

Robert is survived by his wife, Teri; son, Trent; daughters, Layla and Laura; and a brother, Lloyd. He was preceded in death by his parents, Pete and Ruth Knight.

Robert died a hero, doing what he loved best—helping others. He lived with a purpose, playfulness, and a smile that will never be forgotten. His family, friends, and fellow firefighters miss him greatly. We will carry him in our hearts forever.



# Remembering



## Calvin Gene Wahlstrom

### Neptune Aviation Services, Inc. — Utah

Career Chief Pilot

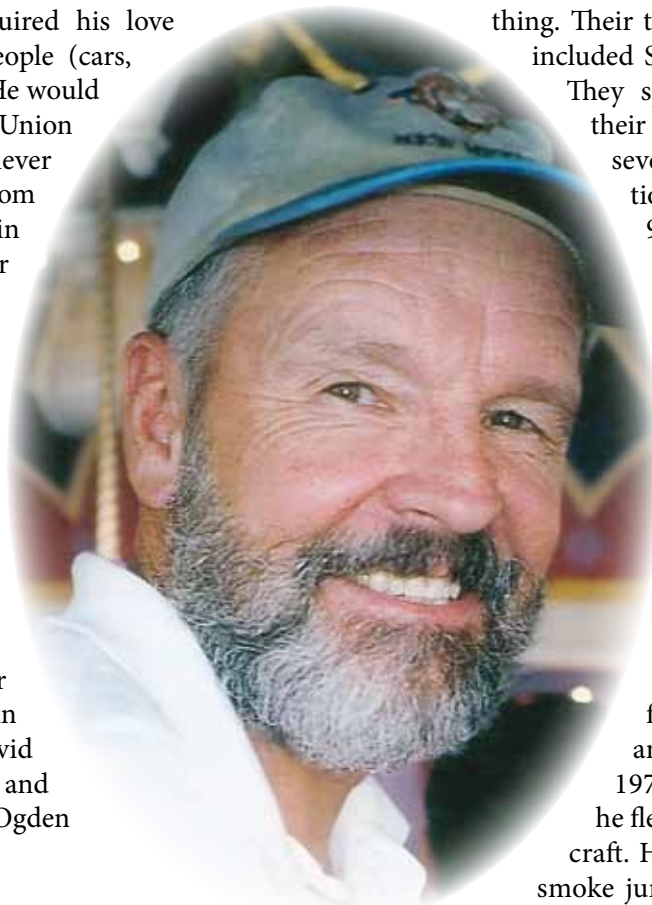
Date of Death: September 1, 2008

Age: 61

Gene was born on October 14, 1946, in Ogden, Utah. He acquired his love for anything that moves people (cars, trains, and airplanes) early. He would travel as a child with his Union Pacific engineer father whenever permitted. He graduated from Ben Lomond High School in 1965 and attended Weber State. After high school, he enlisted in the Navy and served on river patrol boats in Vietnam.

Gene met his wife, Joyce, after returning from Vietnam and married her on September 3, 1976. They shared numerous passions, including professional drag racing, skiing, riding their Harleys, and tooling around in their Model A. Gene was an avid sports fan, including Saints and Weber State football, and Ogden Raptors baseball.

Gene and Joyce loved traveling. They had been to every state and were working on going to every county, making it to about 1/3 of those counties. They had also traveled to Mexico, Canada, the Caribbean and Australia. Among their most memorable trips were Australia, the Gulf Coast, Cabo with friends for the friends' wedding, a Caribbean cruise with neighbors and friends, a weekend trip to NYC, and a month-long Harley ride. The Australia trip lasted for five weeks. They rented a car and started driving, putting 10,000 kilometers on the rental. They saw Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Canberra, Alice Springs (including Uluru),



Cairnes, and the Gold Coast, and loved everything. Their trips to the Gulf Coast always included Saints games in New Orleans. They spent the winter of 2007 in their RV in Biloxi. They rode with several friends to the celebration for the Harley-Davidson 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The trip went through Yellowstone, Mount Rushmore, Milwaukee, north of the Great Lakes, Niagara Falls, Nashville, Oklahoma City, and Durango.

Gene spent 11 years as a lineman for Utah Power and Light, where he received an award for saving a fellow lineman who had been electrocuted while atop a pole. Gene soon found his passion for flying and was licensed as a pilot in 1979. During his flying career, he flew many different types of aircraft. He flew fire retardant tankers, smoke jumpers, infrared fire mapping missions, and lead plane during his wildland fire fighting career. Most recently, he was employed as chief pilot for Neptune Aviation Services of Missoula, Montana.

On September 1, 2008, Calvin Gene Wahlstrom, was responding to a dispatch to go to the Smitty Fire when the aircraft, Tanker 09, crashed on take-off from the tanker base at Stead, Nevada, just north of Reno.

Gene is loved and missed by his wife, family, and numerous friends.





# Remembering



## Cecilia R. Turnbough

### Dale City Volunteer Fire Department — Virginia

Volunteer Firefighter Trainee/EMT

Date of Death: November 9, 2008

Age: 42

On November 9, 2008, EMT Cecilia Turnbough of the Dale City Volunteer Fire Department died during a routine training exercise as part of an entry level firefighter certification class. The training, held at the Prince William County Public Safety Training Center in Nokesville, Virginia, involved maneuvering through a maze and was conducted with no smoke or fire. EMT Turnbough was transported by the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue to Prince William Hospital, where she was treated and later pronounced dead.

Cecilia was a certified EMT and had served as a volunteer for the past eight years with the Dale City Volunteer Fire Department. She had recently begun training to expand her capabilities to include firefighting.

Cecilia is survived by her husband, Captain Chris Turnbough, of the Dale City Volunteer Fire Department; and by her three children, Richard, age 20, who is serving in the U.S. Navy; Rebecca, age 13; and Jack, age 11.

I think this memorial should be a joyful one, and not a mournful one.

My mom was one of the most amazing people I have ever met and will probably ever meet. She spent her



life caring for others. She never put herself before others. She would often go out of her way to reach those who were in need. She was also often a counselor when the times called for it. I knew I could come to her no matter what the reason or circumstance. I loved her with all my heart and will truly miss her.

She has touched and helped so many, not only in the fire department, but also at Mount Vernon where she worked and was a first responder. She would help young, old or the lost. It didn't matter; she was there.

She is our guardian angel, and now also lives on with our brother's baby, named after our mom, Cecilia.

While my Mom is not here in the flesh, she is definitely here in spirit. She will always be in our hearts. So much of the person I will become will be traced directly to her. So in a way I am the walking embodiment of CECILIA ROBLES TURNBOUGH, as we all are. While we live, she still lives on.

I cannot grieve too much today, because she is not just all around me, she is a part of me. She is not gone. She is in the air. She is in each breath I take. She is in every step I take. She is integrated inside me. Knowing this, we can make it through her passing.

# Remembering

## Daniel B. Packer

### East Pierce Fire & Rescue — Washington

Career Chief

Date of Death: July 26, 2008

Age: 49

Dan Packer was born August 12, 1958, in Havre, Montana. As an only child, he shared responsibility for the family ranch and developed an ambitious discipline that served him well throughout his life. As a young man he rode bulls, roped cattle, and was well liked for his sense of humor.

At age seventeen, he moved to the Seattle area for his senior year of high school, where he met his future wife, Marylee. While they did not date at the time, they were very good friends. Those early years laid the foundation for their 28-year marriage.

Dan and Marylee married in 1980 and had four daughters, Nicole, Katrina, Rachael, and Janelle. Dan's wife and children greatly admired and respected him. He was a softhearted man who doted on his family. Dan began working for the fire service in 1981. He served the first fourteen years of his career in Burien, Washington. In 1994, he accepted a position as battalion chief of the Bonney Lake Fire Department. He was named chief in 1995. As the chief, he facilitated the creation of East Pierce Fire & Rescue, a successful merger of several smaller depart-

ments. His vision for the department and its service to the community was very large, and it showed in how he approached his work.

In 2004, he assumed the presidency of the Washington State Fire Chiefs, a position he retained until July of 2008.

In 2006, Dan's first grandchild was born. Together with Marylee, he spent a great deal of time with his grandson, often having sleepovers and recruiting his "little shadow" to help with projects such as washing the car and mowing the lawn. His devotion to his children and grandchildren was surpassed only by his love for his wife.

On July 26, in a wildfire in northern California, the 49-year-old chief died. He had just begun a two-week assignment as a division supervisor overseeing wildland firefighters in the Klamath National Forest, when the blaze suddenly blew up during a routine survey of the area. His loss has left a great hole in the hearts of his family, coworkers, and community. His vision inspires all who knew him and loved him to move forward and live life voraciously.





# Remembering



## Andrew Jackson Palmer

### Olympic National Park, National Park Service — Washington

Career Firefighter/Class A Sawyer

Date of Death: July 25, 2008

Age: 18

Andy shared almost nineteen years with us on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington. He was born in Port Angeles and had just graduated from Port Townsend High School. He completed his orientation and training for his first summer as a wildland firefighter.

At 6'5" and 250 pounds, Andy was easily the largest student on the high school campus and a natural for the football team. He was a valued varsity player for four years and loved using his size and strength on the field.

Off the field, he was a gentle giant whose presence made others feel safe and secure. His many friends since childhood treasured his calm, even temperament and his unerring sense of justice, which could defuse a situation with grace and humor. He will always be remembered as one who held himself to the highest principles of integrity, truth, fairness, and kindness. He was loyal, honest and trustworthy—loved by all that knew him.

Andy enjoyed bonfires on the beach, sporting clays, video games, weightlifting, reading, and spending time

with friends. He was a devoted Big Brother to a special younger brother. His jobs included working at an automotive repair shop, tire store, and during the summer he could be found bucking hay for local farmers. He was very proud of his big, red Dodge 2500 turbo diesel pickup truck and thrilled many who jumped in for a ride.



Though Andy was headed to Montana State last fall, nobody—Andy included—had a clear, focused vision of his career path. He was interested in applying mechanical engineering toward improving diesel performance, construction management with an emphasis in renewable energy sources, playing football, ancient Roman architecture, international business, Foreign Service, and jurisprudence. He was intelligent, with the world at his fingertips. We can be confident he lived his life with no regrets and served the highest and most positive purpose.

Andy died honorably as a firefighter for the National Park Service on the Iron Complex Fire in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest near Weaverville, California, on Friday July 25, 2008.



# Remembering



## Robert Lee McAtee Sr.

### Huttonsville-Mill Creek Volunteer Fire Department — West Virginia

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: January 20, 2008

Age: 55

Robert Lee McAtee Sr. was born September 10, 1952, the son of Loy and Katheryn Liggett McAtee. He attended Webster County schools. He served with the 201<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery of the West Virginia National Guard for 19 years, where he obtained the rank of sergeant 1<sup>st</sup> class.

On October 3, 1970, Robert married Caffey Taylor, who survives him.

Robert was a 38-year veteran of the Huttonsville-Mill Creek Volunteer Fire Department. At the time of his death, his son Rodney was the chief of the department.

Robert served as mayor of the Town of Huttonsville from July 1991 until his death. Before that, he had served several terms on the Town of Huttonsville council.

He was the former owner of Huttonsville Exxon. For the last eight years of his life, he worked as a full-time school bus driver for Randolph County. He had been a trustee for the Brick Church

Cemetery since 1994 and attended the Calvary Assembly of God Church in Valley Head.

Friends and fellow firefighters remembered Robert as an honest man, someone who could be counted on both personally and on the scene of emergencies.

In addition to his wife and parents, he is survived by his three sons, Robert McAtee Jr., Rodney McAtee (Marsha), and Shaun McAtee; his daughter, Jennifer McAtee; his two brothers, Eugene and Paul McAtee; his sister, Mary Marcum; and his grandchildren, Alexis, Sommer, Landon, Noah, and Braeden. He was a great husband, father, and grandfather. He was very proud of his grandchildren and loved them unconditionally.

Robert always had a smile on his face, and he would always wave when he passed you on the road. He passed away on January 20, 2008, after returning home from a chimney fire.





# Remembering



## Rick H. Borkin

### Thiensville Volunteer Fire Department — Wisconsin

Volunteer Lieutenant

Date of Death: December 8, 2008

Age: 42

Rick Borkin and the fire service were never far apart. One of Rick's first childhood joys, as a young boy growing up in a quiet, serene north shore suburb of Milwaukee, was fire trucks of any size. Of particular interest: full-scale trucks that glistened and raced through the neighborhood when someone was in need of their help. Inevitably, young "Ricky" was following behind as quickly as his feet could pedal. Whether it was the blaring sirens, shiny chrome, flashing lights, or ability to help others in need that drew him in wouldn't be realized until 1992, when Rick became a volunteer firefighter with the Thiensville Fire Department and remained a little boy of wonder in a man's body.

The fire department was an adventure that allowed him to give back to the community and people he loved, made him part of something bigger, and allowed him to utilize his technical skills. Rick loved to tinker with gadgets and did it well. That, too, was an innate talent that Rick applied in his adult life by working as an installation technician for Infinity Telecomm for 19 years.

The Village of Thiensville is a small village nestled in Ozaukee County, with an average population of 3,000. Rick and his soon-to-be bride, Stephanie, found Thiensville to be the perfect place to begin their lives together and raise a family. Rick was most excited about the fact that approximately 50 of Thiensville's residents

were members of the local fire department. With Stephanie's blessing, Rick began serving the citizens of Thiensville as a volunteer firefighter in August of 1992.



Their son, Sam, born twelve weeks premature in 1995, was one of Rick's greatest joys. After Sam's arrival, Rick continued to pour his heart and soul into the Thiensville Fire Department, another great passion. While caring for his family, he also became an EMT, an MPO and, in May 2008, a lieutenant and training officer. Being a vibrant member of the Thiensville Fire Department family was one of Rick's proudest accomplishments.

Sam Borkin is a handsome young man with his father's eyes, unforgettable smile, cutting humor, and a desire to serve his community. To Rick's credit and influence, his son has joined the Thiensville Fire Department as an Explorer. And so it begins...

Rick Borkin was blessed with many passions in his life and never lost the wonder and joy of a young boy chasing fire trucks down the street. He turned that wonderment into community service and kindness to others. Rick became the man he dreamed of becoming.

His legacy? Kindness. Compassion. Pride. Honor. Service.

Well done, Rick. Thank you, brother. RHB38.



# Remembering



## Frank L. Wichlacz

### Pulaski Tri-County Fire Department, Inc. — Wisconsin

Volunteer Chief

Date of Death: July 23, 2008

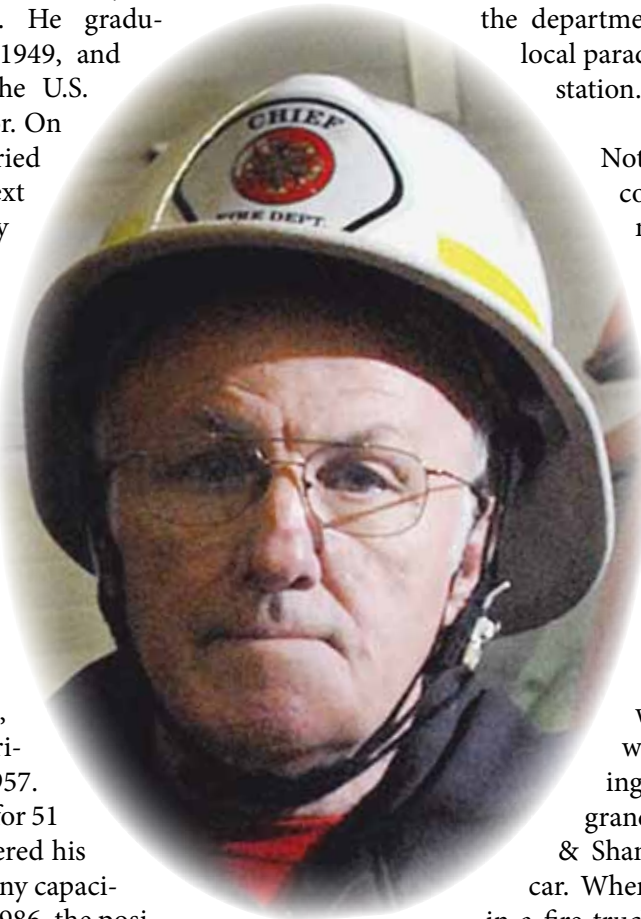
Age: 76

Frank Wichlacz was born February 5, 1932, in Pulaski, Wisconsin. He graduated from Pulaski High in 1949, and then served two years in the U.S. Army as an artillery instructor. On October 13, 1956, he married the love of his life for the next 51 years, Diane. Together they raised their three children (Randy, Alan & Jean) in the same small community they had grown up in.

Frank worked at Northern Shoe Company for 25 years as a supervisor. When the company closed, he worked for KI Furniture Company, overseeing furniture installations throughout the United States. Not being the type of person to sit idle, Frank joined the Pulaski Tri-County Fire Department in 1957. A member of the department for 51 years, Frank had truly discovered his life's passion! He served in many capacities until he became chief in 1986, the position he would proudly hold for the next 21 years.

Frank was up for the challenge of making this small town volunteer department the best it could be. He was instrumental in securing funds, planning the design and overseeing the construction of a new fire station named in his honor. He was also very active in the various fire chiefs' associations, serving as secretary of the Brown County Fire Chiefs' Association. Frank painstakingly

restored a 1933 antique REO fire truck, which the department proudly displays at many local parades and open houses at the fire station.



Not only did Frank serve his community by being a loyal member of the fire department, he was involved in many other ways as well. He served on the Pulaski Polka Days Committee, a major fundraiser for the department and many other local non-profit groups. He owned and operated Pulaski Sewing Center for 43 years. During the summer months he and Diane would attend many antique car shows throughout the area with their 1951 Studebaker, which he spent six years restoring. Frank loved to give his four grandchildren (Kim, Justin, Kristin & Shannon) rides in his "old-time" car. When he wasn't busy heading out in a fire truck or Studebaker, Frank could also be seen buzzing around town in his little red Scooter, complete with red light and siren!

On July 23, 2008, after an early morning structure fire, Chief Wichlacz was killed in the line of duty at the fire station while doing cleanup and maintenance. He will be forever missed, not only by his family and his department, but also an entire community that he dedicated a lifetime to making a better place.



# Remembering



## Leon J. Lehmen

### Johnson Siding Volunteer Fire Department — South Dakota

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: February 26, 1981

Age: 27

Leon was born May 30, 1953, in Huron, South Dakota, to parents Ervan and Violet Lehmen. He was a typical boy who enjoyed playing sports and teasing his six younger sisters. He was a mischievous teenager who had a passion for motorcycles and cars, especially his much loved '57 Chevys.

Leon graduated from high school in Madison, South Dakota, and later attended South Dakota State University in Brookings. While at SDSU, Leon was involved in the ROTC.

After leaving SDSU, Leon moved to Sioux Falls, where he was hired as a photographer's assistant. In Sioux Falls, Leon met the love of his life, Patty Gaspar. Leon and Patty were married on October 8, 1977. Father John Murray, who had been a mentor, friend, and major influence in Leon's life, officiated at the ceremony.

Leon and Patty made their home in Dark Canyon, just outside Rapid City, South Dakota. It was a beautiful setting that allowed Leon to pursue his love of the outdoors. He enjoyed hiking, fishing, and swimming in the swimming hole in Rapid Creek, which ran behind their house.

Leon's days as a photographer's assistant opened a new world to him. He became an avid photographer and

started his own business, Lehmen Photography. Patty sat for hundreds of pictures as Leon tried different camera settings, documenting the results of them all. While Leon enjoyed photographing people, he was particularly gifted at photographing the outdoors. He traveled all around the Black Hills of South Dakota looking for interesting subjects. An old abandoned house, a waterfall, or a wagon wheel, all were breathtaking when captured in his lens. These photos are a treasured family heirloom today.

Church, family, and friends were most important to Leon. He gave his life to Christ while still in his teens and was a member of Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. He was a devoted husband, son, brother, nephew, and friend.

Leon also wanted to serve his community. He joined the local volunteer fire department in 1978.

While responding to a mobile home fire later that year, Leon suffered irreparable lung damage. He battled his illness with courage and dignity for 2½ years before passing away on February 26, 1981. Though Leon has been gone many years now, he lives on in our wonderful memories of him and the beautiful pictures he left us.



*Remembering*

## **Diana S. Rosene**

**Cortland Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department — Nebraska**

Volunteer Firefighter/EMT  
Date of Death: February 27, 2002  
Age: unknown

*F*irefighter/EMT Diana Rosene died February 27, 2002, in a motor vehicle accident while returning from a training class.

She was survived by her husband, Dennis; her son, Jonathan; and her daughter, Pamela.







# Remembering



## Bruce F. Spaulding

### Bourbonnais Fire Protection District — Illinois

Volunteer Engineer

Date of Death: April 26, 2003

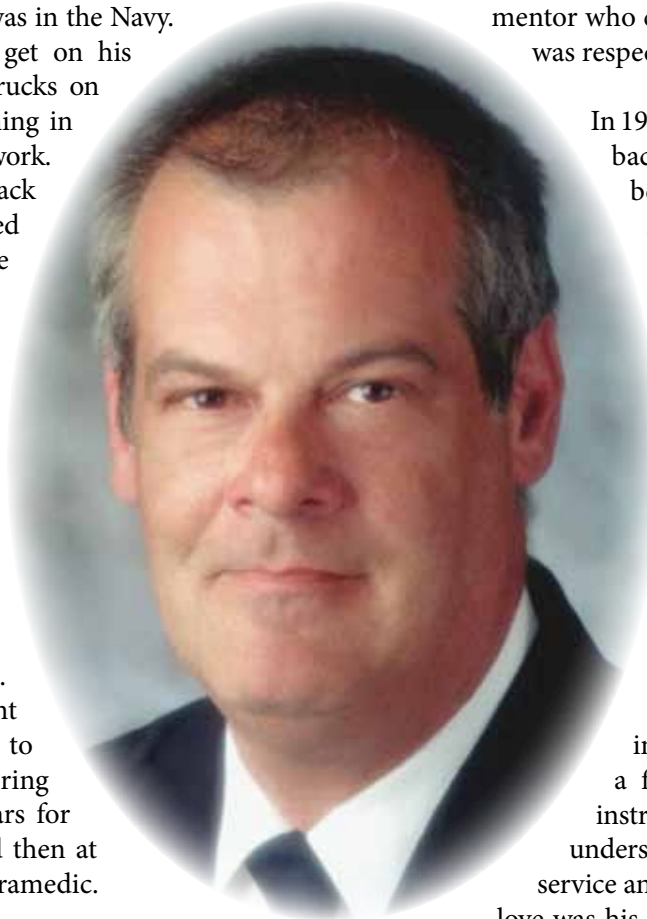
Age: 49

Early on, Bruce wanted to be a fireman. When he was born, his father was in the Navy. At age three, Bruce would get on his tricycle and chase the fire trucks on the airbase to the fire, watching in awe as the firemen went to work. When his family moved back to Bourbonnais, they lived across the street from the Bourbonnais Fire Station. When a call came in, Bruce would run to the curb and watch the fire trucks go out.

Bruce was living in Bradley when he turned 18. A special meeting was held to vote him onto the Bradley Fire Department, mostly for his own safety, to keep him from following the fire trucks. A member of the department for 20 years, he moved up to the rank of lieutenant. During that time, he worked 13 years for Armour Pharmaceutical and then at Riverside Ambulance as a paramedic.

In 1994, Bruce was hired to create a curriculum and teach fire science/EMS at Kankakee Area Career Center. His curriculum was implemented by several other vocational schools in the state, and he was always looking for ways to improve it. Every year his students participated in the state competition with Skills USA, a vocational club that allows students to showcase hands-on skills in their area of study. His students placed in the top ten in the state every year, often in first, second and

third place. Bruce was an excellent teacher and mentor who changed many young lives and was respected and loved by his students.



In 1997, Bruce and his family moved back to Bourbonnais. In 2000, he became the cadet advisor for the Bourbonnais Fire Protection District, a volunteer position. He put in many hours at the station, because that is what he truly enjoyed doing. In 2002, he was put on the department as a firefighter/EMT. Bruce loved the fire service and loved teaching it to the many bright young people he saw at the career center and as cadet advisor.

Bruce devoted his life to the fire service. He held certifications in about everything he could as a fireman, EMT-paramedic, and instructor. He appreciated his family understanding his devotion to the fire service and being gone a lot. His greatest love was his family, but the fire service was second. An inspiration to his fellow firefighters and students, his dedication and devotion were obvious in the many lives that he touched.

On April 26, 2003, Bruce was injured in a freak mowing accident at the station and died from his injuries the same day. Bruce truly was a fireman's fireman. He is greatly missed by family, friends, coworkers and students.



# Remembering



## Robert L. Blankenship

### Knoxville Fire Department — Tennessee

Career Captain

Date of Death: October 23, 2003

Age: 55

Buddy was born on November 30, 1947, in Knoxville, Tennessee. He graduated from Central High School in 1966. He was drafted into the Army in 1968 and served in the Vietnam War. While serving with the Army, Buddy was awarded the Bronze Star for heroic and meritorious achievement.

In December 1970, Buddy was hired by the City Of Knoxville Fire Department. The fire department was his career. He was very dedicated to his job and fellow employees of the fire department. He gave his all to it and loved every minute of it. He was stationed at Paper Mill Road, Station 18. Buddy was promoted to captain in the early 1990s. He was on Ladder 18 and an EMT. He was very well known and liked by everyone he came in contact with. He always put everyone else's needs ahead of his own.

Buddy was a devoted family man. He married Cynthia, and they had one daughter, Stephanie Renee. She was the apple of his eye. He always tried to love and encourage her by being there and setting a wonderful example



for her. He was a very proud father. Stephanie married Brandon Grubb, and we now have a four-year-old grandson, Robert Ethan, and a two-year-old granddaughter, Alexys Mackenzie.

Buddy was a Christian and very involved in his church. He was the driver of our church bus for the senior adults and the youth group. Buddy took our prime timers on numerous trips across the country and on several cruises. Our church bought a new bus and dedicated it to his memory after his death.

Buddy loved spending time at home, camping, going to the beach, and driving his hot rod. He owned a 1937 Chevrolet.

On October 19, 2003, Buddy had a heart attack after returning from a call. He lived four days and passed away on October 23, 2003, at the age of 55.

He will be greatly missed by all who knew him, the department, church family, friends, but most of all by his family. We love you so much and will never forget you. You will live forever in our hearts.

# Remembering

## John A. Brenckle

### Berkeley Hills Fire Company — Pennsylvania

Volunteer Fire Police Captain

Date of Death: September 23, 2004

Age: 57

John was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on January 3, 1947, to Anthony and Mary Brenckle. At 6'10" tall, John's appearance gave the impression of a man who would demand attention, but he was a soft spoken and quiet individual.

Upon graduation from high school in 1964, John secured a job with Equitable Gas Company in Pittsburgh. John worked his way up from a laborer to becoming a large volume meter specialist. Throughout his career with Equitable Gas, John utilized very few sick days, and upon his death had an impressive 40-year employment with the gas company. John was married in 1970 and became a proud father to his daughter, Amy, in 1971. Amy grew up in a home oriented to firefighters and the fire police. She saw the dedication and commitment her father displayed to the fire service from her childhood.

On the morning of Friday, September 17, 2004, John went to work at the gas company. After work, he went directly to help the Ross Township Fire Police at a severe flood scene caused by the remnants of hurricane Ivan. He did not arrive home until 2:00 a.m. on Saturday. (There were 126 calls recorded on September 17.)



John returned to the flood scene again on Saturday, September 18, to help with cleanup. On Sunday, September 19, he began to show signs of illness, and on Wednesday, September 22, he was taken to the emergency room and placed in critical care. On Thursday, September 23, at 8:23 p.m., John passed away with his daughter at his side. His death was caused by a flesh-eating bacteria contacted in the floodwaters.

John was captain and president of the Ross Township Fire Police for 24 years and a founding member. Additionally, he was founder and president of the Greater North Hills Fire Police Association, a separate entity from the Ross Township Police, and a lifetime member of Berkeley Hills Volunteer Fire Company.

In May 2005, the Ross Township Fire Police dedicated their station to John, naming it John A. Brenckle Memorial Hall. The ceremony included state and local leaders and executives from Equitable Gas Company.

In addition to his distinguished fire service, John was the recipient of the "Fireman of the Year" Award in 1987, 1995, 2000, and 2005.

# Remembering

## Jean L. Nuckols Jr.

**Navy Regional Fire Rescue, Hampton Roads — Virginia**

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: January 31, 2004

Age: 47

Firefighter Jean “Jay” Nuckols died January 31, 2004, after suffering a stroke while on duty three days earlier. He was a firefighter for 18 years, and previously was a welder in Shop No. 40 at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard. He worked as a driver operator and was mechanically gifted, always fixing equipment at the firehouse. He was respected by fellow firefighters and was a role model for younger members of the department.

Jay was a native of Richmond, Virginia, and a graduate of Ferrum College. He was a member of the Whaleyville United Methodist Church, a former deputy fire chief of the

Whaleyville Volunteer Fire Department, and a U.S. Army veteran. Jay was a giving and caring member of the Whaleyville community, serving anyone in need. He was a faithful husband, father and friend to all. He is greatly missed.

Jay was survived by his wife, Kathy F. Nuckols; daughters, Autumn Nikole Nuckols and Savannah Leigh Nuckols; parents, Jean Louis Nuckols Sr. and Joyce Hobbs Nuckols; father-in-law and mother-in-law, Richard and Anne Forehand; and many extended family members. He was also survived by countless brothers who served with him during his firefighting career.





# Remembering



## Kirk Owen Bowdridge

### Big Bear City Fire Department — California

Career Engineer

Date of Death: January 2, 2005

Age: 59

Kirk was born August 7, 1945, in Honolulu and moved to Newberry Springs, California, when he was five. There he grew up raising “chicks” for Zacky Farms and attending school in Barstow. He played clarinet, baseball and wrestled in high school.

After graduation from Barstow High in 1965, Kirk went to work for the phone company. He started out as a collector and worked his way up to special service tech. He enjoyed going to classes and training to further his knowledge.

In 1979, he was transferred to their office in Big Bear Lake, where his life would change forever! He met and married his wife, “Di,” and, in 1981, he answered an ad for “Volunteer Firefighters Wanted.” After he interviewed, we had to be interviewed together. His being a volunteer firefighter would affect both our lives. They wanted to make sure I supported him and would be OK with him responding to calls all hours of the day or night. After passing the written and agility tests, there was one thing left: carrying hose running up the street to the top of the hill and back in an allotted time. All the applicants and volunteers lined the street cheering him on—he MADE IT!

Kirk took every class the fire department offered—First Responder, CPR, EMT I&II, Apparatus Operator

A&B. He quickly became an engineer and took the fire officer and instructor certification courses. He passed the captain’s exam and attended fire science and paramedic classes at Crafton College. He took vacation time and paid for HAZMAT classes, becoming the only HAZMAT special tech in the area. In 1989, BBC Fire Department was going full-time. At age 44, with 22 years with the phone company, Kirk made a life-changing decision to apply for engineer. On June 12, 1989, Engineer Bowdridge with “C” shift joined the full-time department.



Kirk was an incredible husband, family man, friend, and mentor. He had an infectious laugh and a smile that would light up a room. He loved to cook, ride his Fat Boy, work out, walk, work fire safety at Cal Speedway, organize and chair fundraisers, participate in musters and community campaigns, house foreign exchange students for Rotary, play Santa for the tree lighting ceremony and the firemen’s Christmas dinner, umpire Little League and slo-pitch tournaments, and give his brother-in-law Dave a run for his money in pranks.

Kirk died from complications from a job-related heart attack. He gave in death, as he did in life, by being an organ donor. We miss him enormously but are so blessed to have had him in our lives.



# Remembering



## Thomas James Santner

North Bay Fire District — Florida

Career Chief

Date of Death: February 6, 2005

Age: 46

When asked about what he was most proud of in his career, he wrote:

*Survival, despite storms and set backs, I have reached a place in my career many people said I would not, nor could not achieve.*

*I'm respected by my employees as a leader and have protected my community for more than 25 years, as my family has for more than a century. My pride is greatest each time I see my son climb on one of my apparatus to do the same as the past five generations before him. Pride is tradition. Remembered as the chief everyone wanted to work for because of encouragement and opportunities I gave to my people, and for them to look to the examples I set and strive to set those same examples for the people who will work for them one day. For always looking to the future in the fire service and always working toward the future. I never settled for anything less than the best for or from my people.*



Chief Thomas J. Ryan once described Tom as, “a good friend, fellow firefighter, teacher, and an exceptional chief officer.” Tom made sure whoever asked would receive help while he was chief. From lending his own son’s car seat to a family after theirs burned in a fire, to making sure his firefighters received food and drinks during a long-lasting fire. Tom was a believer in continuing education. He was enrolled in USFA’s Executive Fire Officer program and active with the International Association of Fire Chiefs; Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs; Florida Fire Chiefs’ Association; Florida Fire Marshals; Inspectors’ Association, Florida Executive Fire Officer Association and chairman for the Okaloosa Fire-Rescue Organization. The best way to describe Tom is through this poem his daughter wrote.

### **Firefighter Dad**

By Tiffany Renée Santner

*Helping others is what you do  
Risking your life to save another’s,  
Protecting those in danger,  
Of meeting a fiery fate.  
When your work called you to duty,  
You went without a second thought,  
You were one of the ones to give,*

*A young child,  
A future.  
A mother,  
Her happy smiles and tears.  
A senior,  
A little more time.  
A teen who has wronged,  
A second chance.  
Above all else,  
You make your children proud,*

*Because we know that no matter what,  
You will live in our hearts,  
teaching us what is right.  
No matter what happens,  
For this day forth,  
We want to thank you,  
For all you have done and given us.  
So we thank you,  
And wish from the bottom of our hearts,  
That we always make you proud.  
We will forever miss you.*

*Remembering*

## **Carl F. Lambert**

**Cabo Lucero Volunteer Fire Department — New Mexico**

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: November 20, 2005

Age: 66

Carl F. "Fred" Lambert collapsed November 20, 2005, while participating in a 3-day New Mexico State Forestry chain-saw training class. He suffered a heart attack and died after emergency

surgery several hours later. He served with the Cabo Lucero Volunteer Fire Department for three years. He was survived by his wife, Ida Mae Lambert, and three stepchildren.





# Remembering



## Walter R. "Squire" Minich

### Shermans Dale Community Fire Company — Pennsylvania

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: January 31, 2005

Age: 63

Walter Minich died January 31, 2005, when he suffered a heart attack while preparing to respond to an emergency medical call.

A 48-year veteran, he served in many roles with the company over the years, including assistant chief, vice president, and director. He was a devoted driver who missed few calls up to the time of his death. Walter was the chairman of the department's bingo committee and ran the French fry stand for all the fundraising events.

During his lifetime of service, he received many awards, both from the fire company and for other community service. He was also a member of the New Bloomfield Fire Company, the Union of Carlisle Fire Company, and the Perry County,

Cumberland County, and Cumberland Valley Firemen's Associations.

Walter was a professional truck driver who retired from A.B.F. Trucking in Carlisle after 30 years of service. He served in the U.S. Army from 1964 to 1966 as a Houtzer gunner.

He was a member of Shermans Dale United Methodist Church, Teamsters Local 776, and the White Circle Club in Carlisle. He loved hunting, NASCAR, the fire station, and especially his family.

He was survived by his wife of 37 years, Barbara J. Minich; a son, Gregory, and his wife, Tina; a daughter, Angie Minich, and her companion, Matthew Boyce; and a granddaughter, Andee Marie Boyce.







# Remembering



## Christopher Ryan Brown

### La Harpe Fire Department — Kansas

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: July 27, 2006

Age: 20

Chris was born on August 15, 1985, in Kansas City, Kansas. He went to public school from kindergarten through fifth grades. Then he homeschooled and later acquired his GED. Although he wasn't very tall, only standing 5' 7", you would think he would not be noticed, but with one of his famous winks or that Chris Brown smile, he could light up the room. He was very polite and kindhearted. Everyone who knew him spoke well of him. He gave everyone a chance.

Chris enjoyed many outdoor activities such as snowboarding, rock climbing in his Jeep, camping, fishing, four wheeling, dirt biking, mechanical work, and listening to country music. He enjoyed his time with his family and friends.

Chris married his wife, Tamara, on October 2004, at the age of 19. They moved to the small town of La Harpe, Kansas. Chris worked with his father-in-law as a pool contractor, with the intention of taking over the business. He joined a very large family and loved them like his own. They added a new family member, Chris' beloved dachshund, Cami.



After their move, Chris decided to become a volunteer fireman. He always had a fear of dying in a fire, and he wanted to overcome this fear. In January 2005, he joined their squad; he knew he had made the right choice. He was the happiest when he was behind the wheel of a fire truck. He was, in fact, living the fireman's dream. Once he received a pager, he awaited the next call to help someone.

Chris was on top of the world the morning of July 27, 2006. He had talked to the Manhattan, Kansas, fire crew and was heading to pick up equipment for his crew. On the way, he collided with a semi and was pronounced dead on the scene. Being one of Jehovah's Witnesses, Chris had confidence in the resurrection hope. All his family and friends long to see him right here on the earth very soon.

After Chris' death, he was honored in a parade along with all his fellow brothers who died on 9/11. As you drive by the La Harpe Fire Department, you will see the memorial banner.



# Remembering



## Gary Wayne Kistler Sr.

### Saucier Fire Department — Mississippi

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: February 5, 2006

Age: 65

Firefighters, community, and family said, “See you later.” to Gary Kistler, who died of injuries suffered in the line of duty. Any time Gary left the station, he said, “See you later—keep those trucks moving—safely.”

A native of Spokane, Washington, Gary came to Mississippi in 1966. He became an adopted southerner in 1969, when he married Doris Blackwell. They became the proud parents of four and later the proud grandparents of eight. Gary retired from active duty after 26 years, as a chief petty officer in the Navy Seabees.

A 30-year veteran firefighter, Gary served both as volunteer fire chief and paid employee of the Harrison County Fire Services. He was an elected officer in multiple organizations and associations throughout Mississippi. Gary received many awards, including “Fireman of the Year,” “Recognition of Service – Hurricane Katrina,” and “Fire Chief of the Year.”

Gary was honored with the dedication of the new Saucier Volunteer Fire Department and the Life Safety Educator Award, which is given to an individual who promotes fire safety. Gary dedicated much of his life to providing public fire safety education to children, in hopes of preventing harm to any child. He made major strides to bring fire and life safety education services to all communities in Mississippi. His motto was, “Teach them, save some.”



Gary worked very hard to establish new fire department locations in his community and to insure that volunteer firefighters were trained in providing fire protection services. He stressed to the volunteers the importance of arriving alive, both to and from emergency incidents. He was involved with the PTA, Boy Scouts of America, and Saucier Methodist Church.

Gary was dedicated to his family. After he died, his grandchildren wrote: “Papa Kistler is Our Hero! Papa has a helping hand to all he meets. We want to be like him—caring, helpful, and strong.” Gary’s daughter Mareanda Weems served as the Saucier fire chief at the time of her father’s death. She attributes being a firefighter to her father, whose early influence and encouragement gave her the foundation and training she needed to eventually serve as chief.

Gary’s son, Wayne Jr., remembered his father as having that big smile, a big hug, and a firm handshake that always made you feel good. “Dad always told us kids that God is first and to keep yourself healthy so you can help others.”

I was very proud to have been called his wife. I will always remember returning from late night fire calls, just the two of us alone in the fire truck. It was like we were always on our first date. Gary, see ya later! The trucks are still moving—safely.



# Remembering



## Stephen L. Jones

### Barnstead Fire-Rescue, Inc. — New Hampshire

Volunteer Firefighter

Date of Death: December 29, 2006

Age: 56

Steve was born September 23, 1950, in Manchester, New Hampshire. He was raised in Roslindale, Massachusetts, before returning to New Hampshire with his family. In 1966, at the age of 16, Steve joined the Center Barnstead Fire Department, later to become Barnstead Fire and Rescue. After serving a tour of duty in the U.S. Marines, Steve rejoined the department, where he continued to serve as a volunteer until his death in 2006.

As a U.S. Marine jet mechanic and welder by trade, Steve was skilled at working with large, complex machinery and took great pride in working with the department's fire apparatus. At one point, the department was looking to add a ladder truck to its fleet. Steve took on the challenge of finding a suitable used truck to rebuild to the department's specifications.

Anyone tagging along on one of these infamous "truck hunts" knew that they had to suspend any normal concept of time. You were now operating on Steve's time. If your town had a fire department, you were on Steve's radar. And if Steve didn't have a friend on that team, he would before he left. But the trips were always an adventure and are folklore within the department.

But it was the time with young people that Steve enjoyed the most. Steve delighted in taking new fire recruits

under his wing. One of Steve's greatest thrills was traveling with the Smoke House, a fire prevention and safety mobile laboratory. Steve's engaging smile, mischievous eyes and gregarious personality made him a favorite with kids of all ages!

Steve died in the act that is only appropriate to his passion. He succumbed to a major cardiac failure while transporting a piece of fire apparatus for an out-of-state retrofit. Steve did not get to see the finishing touches on the ladder truck. The unit was put into service only months after his death and will always be known as Steve's truck.

Even in death, Steve continued his service to his fellow fire fighters. The Granite State Fire Service Support Team (GSFSST) of New Hampshire is a volunteer team of fire-fighters that provides memorial planning and technical support to volunteer fire departments and families of fallen firefighters. Steve's memorial service was a culmination of the many years of hard work put in by the GSFSST in preparation for just such an event. In September 2007, the GSFSST put into service a custom mobile response unit and dedicated the unit to Steve's memory.

In 2007, Steve was posthumously awarded the Paul Sypek Medal of Valor for dedicated service above and beyond the call of duty.





*Remembering*



# Joshua L. Crisp

**USDA Forest Service, Cheoah Ranger District — North Carolina**

Career Firefighter

Date of Death: March 15, 2006

Age: 26

Firefighter Joshua Crisp died March 15, 2006, in a vehicle accident while responding to a work area to assist with timber

marking. At the time, the fire danger was high, and he was on standby for rapid deployment to any sign of wildfire.





# Remembering



## Charles Eugene Kessel

### Maysville Volunteer Fire Company — West Virginia

Volunteer Firefighter/Trustee  
Date of Death: October 16, 2006  
Age: 56

Charles was born in West Virginia and spent most of his life enjoying the pleasures of a rural, mountainous area. He especially enjoyed hunting. In his 20s, he began to volunteer as a firefighter. His day job was that of a school bus driver. Being a genuinely friendly man, Charles would greet each student with a cheerful, "Good morning" and a smile. For many years, he held a second job at the senior citizens center. He enjoyed transporting the elderly to their appointments and loved talking to the shut-ins as he delivered their meals.

While a member of the Maysville Volunteer Fire Department, Charles held several offices including vice-president, president, and trustee. He worked tirelessly on the numerous and endless fundraisers needed for equipment replacement and building additions. This dedication enabled the company to grow and improve. Charles was instrumental in increasing membership. Along with his friends, his father joined, and much later his son started as a junior firefighter. Charles' son is still a member. Today, Charles' grandson shouts, "Fire call!" as he pedals his tricycle. If he follows in their footsteps, he will be a fourth generation firefighter.

Even though Charles was a volunteer, he never treated it as a choice. He was very generous with his time and

energy. He responded to calls for search parties, house fires, brush fires, farming incidents, medical emergencies, flood assistance and vehicle accidents. Being a volunteer in a rural area makes everything too real and too personal. The injured, missing, homeless, and dead are known to you by their name and their face. One may ask, "Why?" He enjoyed it. On the lighter side, he loved helping Santa, showing off the fire truck to the kindergarten students, and participating at the fire company fair booth.

Charles was involved in the community in other ways. Everyone seemed to know that they could call on him for help. He was an active church member and a regular visitor to the area hospitals and nursing homes. Charles was a repeat donor to the Red Cross blood drives.

Charles grew up in a loving family. He cared deeply for his wife and was always very proud of his son and daughter. Little grandsons brought him joy during their visits. He passed along his faith, his love for the outdoors, his willingness to help, and his respect for others.

While transporting fire company equipment in 2002, he was severely injured in an accident. It left him with a life-threatening condition that soon took his life.





# Remembering



## George R. Davidson III

### Youngsville Fire Department — New York

Volunteer Training Officer  
Date of Death: April 25, 2007  
Age: 58

George was born June 20, 1948, in Cornwall, New York. His family relocated to Sullivan County, New York, where he graduated from high school in 1967. George spent four years in the U.S. Navy – most of those four years aboard the USS Fulton as a fireman.

George and his wife, Claudia, lived in Youngsville, New York, where George joined the Youngsville Fire Department. He was a skilled craftsman; custom cabinetry was his specialty. George was an avid fisherman and a proud father of Bryan and Colleen. While raising his family and running his carpentry business, George worked his way up to serve as chief of the Youngsville Fire Department and as a fire commissioner. For a short time, he was a member of Jeffersonville Protection Hose Company. He remained an active member, in addition to accepting a job as a coordinator in the Sullivan County Bureau of Fire Services. Part of his duties was to schedule training for all fire departments in the county. He served in that capacity for several years. He became training officer for Youngsville Fire Department, taking a special interest in the young firemen joining their department. Training and safety were primary goals.

After George's death, his family received a letter from one of those young firemen who had just become a

career fireman in Poughkeepsie, New York. His letter said, in part, "As a member of the Youngsville Fire Department, when George showed up, he provided a sense of relief; things were going to be OK because George was there. His experience and professionalism provided a safe environment for everyone. Safety was always a number one concern for George. When an alarm came in for the Youngsville Fire Department and George was there, I knew I'd be safe. George wouldn't let anything happen to us; he'd make sure of it himself. Even at fires, George would be able to show a new firefighter something and teach them something new. One lesson I learned from George that I'll take with me for the rest of my life is that there is always something to learn at every alarm."

Those remarks would have pleased George. That was his goal—to teach the younger guys to stay safe and keep learning.

George passed away on April 25, 2007, after conducting a live burn training drill. He leaves behind his wife of 36 years and his two children. Although sadly missed, George's family and friends take solace in the fact that he died while doing something he loved and that every time everyone goes home safely, George is smiling.



# Remembering

## George H. Crotts Jr.

### Willow Grove Volunteer Fire Company — Pennsylvania

Volunteer Engineer

Date of Death: September 9, 2007

Age: 70

George was born June 20, 1937, into a Christian family and raised in Philadelphia. He was the firstborn and only son of six children. George graduated from Germantown High School. In 1954, his family moved to Willow Grove, a suburb of Philadelphia.

During his youth, George worked a variety of jobs, from delivering newspapers to serving as a soda jerk at an ice cream parlor, with the sole purpose of buying a car. Later in life, he expressed regret at missing out on after-school activities. He remained passionate about his cars and kept them in immaculate condition. He treated the equipment at the firehouse in like manner.

George's interest to become a firefighter was sparked when he attended Willow Grove's Memorial Day parade. Following the parade to its end at Willow Grove Park's lake, George watched as the participating fire companies demonstrated drafting with their pumper trucks. Years later, George could easily recall that this was the day that he was "hooked." That same day, he went to the firehouse to inquire about membership. This "city boy's" decisiveness about this matter so soon after his arrival to the "country" was just one of his gifts. He became a member of Willow Grove Fire Company on September 15, 1955. He had a servant's heart and a will to never give up (more gifts). Fifty-two years later and still an active firefighter,

George told a reporter, *"I believe in loyalty. I'm loyal to my family, my company, my firehouse, and my God."* As a member of WGFC, he assumed a variety of responsibilities, dedicating himself to driving and pumping operations. Over the years, he served as trustee, chief engineer, secretary of the active crew, driver/trainer and treasurer of the active crew.

George was a faithful employee at Bell Telephone/Verizon from 1955 to 2000. He embraced retirement quickly, allowing him to spend more time with his family and at the firehouse.

George and Ruth met the summer of 1962 after his tour of duty in Korea. They married the following October, had four children (Cynthia, George III, Gary, and Lynn), and were blessed with nine grandchildren (Kyle, Timothy, Haley, Kaela, Andrew, Nathan, Zachary, Naomi, and Arwen.) George loved his family well, and they loved him. He was their rock!

On September 8, 2007, George was preparing to depart for a parade celebrating his beloved "Bertha." He placed the antique 1924 American LaFrance pumper onto a trailer. Coming down, he fell and struck his head. He succumbed to this injury the following day. George is missed much by his family and friends, and by his fellow firefighters at WGFC, where George must have seemed to be like one of the fixtures.





# Remembering



## Robert H. Hegney

### Se-Wy-Co Fire Company — Pennsylvania

Volunteer Lieutenant

Date of Death: February 3, 2007

Age: 53

*B*ob became a member of Se-Wy-Co Fire Company in Lower Saucon Township, Pennsylvania, in May 2001. He served as its lieutenant, secretary, and treasurer of the relief association. He was an exempt member of Protection Engine Company No. 1 in Hastings-on Hudson, New York, which he joined in May 1973. He served there as secretary and was also captain of the Hastings-on-Hudson Ambulance Corps. He had over 33 years of combined service as an active and exempt member. He died from a heart attack on February 3, 2007, hours after active service at the Se-Wy-Co Fire Station.

Bob loved being a firefighter. The members of Se-Wy-Co posted a memorial of Bob on their website. The following is a quote from their memorial:

*Bob will be greatly missed! No words can be said to show the sorrow the members feel. As we gathered these past few days, we are all looking at the door waiting for you to come through with yet another joke or story. Your wit will never be forgotten, for you are one*



*to have a comeback for every comment and always having one-up on everybody. Thursday night dinners and training will certainly be different; no one can replace you.*

*Your strength as a firefighter was unmatched; few of us could keep up with you. Your dedication to this organization was beyond what anyone could expect, the "go to" guy, as the chief put it. Always there to help with your, "I'll take care of it, Chief." attitude was unparalleled. You were the one that could always be counted on for any job in the station and beyond.*

*A husband, a father, a friend, a firefighter and, most of all, our brother!*

*Watch over us - God's Speed!*

Bob is especially greatly missed by his wife, Peggy, of almost 30 years; his son, Bob Jr., who also was a member of Se-Wy-Co; his daughter, Ali, and her husband, Tim. Bob was a wonderful husband and father to his family. We have so many happy memories, including our vacations to Maine each summer. We love you always.



# Remembering

## Michael J. Penovich

### Saratoga Springs Fire Department — Utah

Career Chief

Date of death: July 5, 2007

Age: 38

Mike was born on March 5, 1969. He spent a lot of his young life driving his mom crazy, taking many small appliances apart and putting them back together to figure out how they worked. When he was a teenager, he always had a hot rod project in the driveway. Later in life, this allowed him to fix just about anything from a \$200,000 tractor to a \$100 lawnmower.

Mike spent his early life on or around horses and the roping pen and rodeo arena. As a senior in high school, Mike moved to Utah to do high school rodeo in the calf roping, team roping and steer wrestling events. The first year, he placed at nearly every rodeo, landing him at the Utah state high school rodeo finals and then the national high school rodeo finals. He kept the passion for rodeo and went on to compete at the amateur and professional levels.

Mike married Shelly on February 21, 1992, and they had two beautiful kids, Colton and Chyann. His #1 motivator was his family.

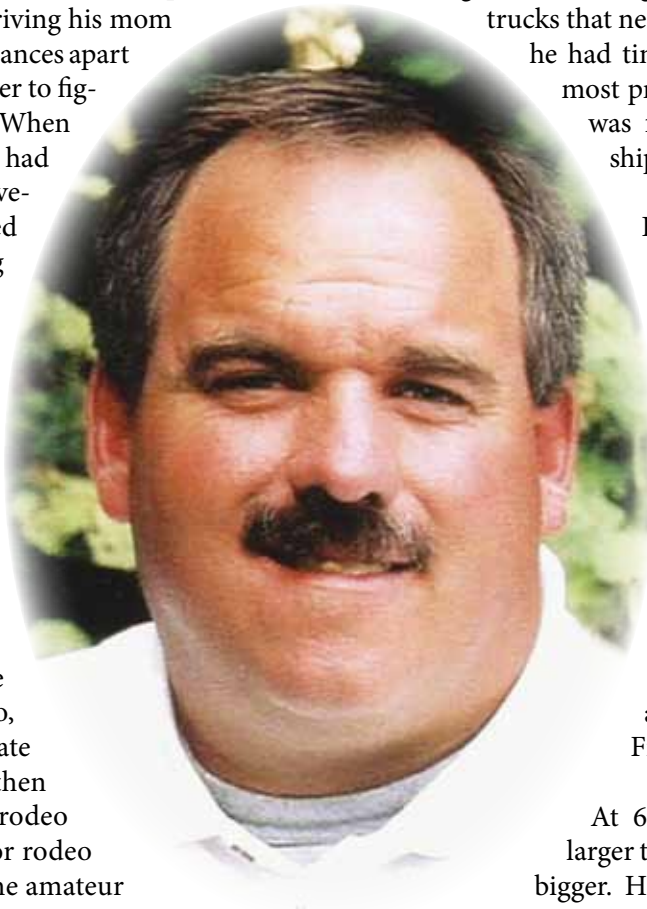
In 1997, Mike found his niche in life helping people as a volunteer on the Cedar Fort Fire Department. A few years later, he was voted in as chief. Mike always worked to better the department and his personnel, by applying

for grants and using his gift for gab to obtain used trucks that needed more work on them than he had time. One of the things he was most proud of while with Cedar Fort was forming mutual aid relationships with surrounding agencies.

In 2006, he accepted the job of full-time fire chief for Saratoga Springs. During his short time before his death, he moved the department into a new fire station and also bought and brought on line the city's first ambulance. During his time as a firefighter, he completed many certifications, including: Firefighter I and II, EMT Basic and Intermediate, IPO, and Wildland Red Card. He also taught classes for the Utah Fire and Rescue Academy.

At 6'4" and 300 pounds, he was larger than life, but his heart was even bigger. He cared about most anything that ever drew a breath. He was always stopping to help someone on the side of the road or just lending an ear or shoulder.

On July 5, 2007, Mike was returning to Saratoga Springs after looking at a truck the city was considering buying. The truck he was driving suddenly veered off the road and down a 75-foot cliff, landing in Deer Creek Reservoir. He never made it out alive. Mike was an example for all and will be dearly missed.





# National Fallen Firefighters Foundation

Congress created the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to lead a nationwide effort to honor America's fallen firefighters. Since 1992, the non-profit Foundation has developed and expanded programs that fulfill that mandate. Our mission is to honor and remember America's fallen fire heroes and to provide resources to assist their survivors in rebuilding their lives.

## **SPONSOR THE ANNUAL NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL WEEKEND**

Each October, the Foundation sponsors the official National tribute to all firefighters who died in the line of duty during the previous year. Thousands attend the weekend activities that include special programs for survivors and coworkers, along with moving public ceremonies.

## **HELP SURVIVORS ATTEND THE WEEKEND**

The Foundation provides travel, lodging and meals for immediate survivors of fallen firefighters being honored. This allows survivors to participate in Family Day sessions conducted by trained grief counselors and in the public tributes.

## **OFFER SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR SURVIVORS**

When a firefighter dies in the line of duty, the Foundation provides survivors with a place to turn. Families receive emotional assistance through a Fire Service Survivors Network. This Network matches survivors with similar experiences and circumstances. This contact can be an important part of their healing. Families receive a quarterly newsletter and specialized grief resources. Our Web site provides information on Federal, State and local survivor benefits and other resources.

## **AWARD SCHOLARSHIPS TO FIRE SERVICE SURVIVORS**

Spouses, children and stepchildren of fallen firefighters are eligible for scholarship assistance for education and job training costs. Since 1997, the Foundation has awarded scholarships totaling over one million dollars to survivors of America's fallen firefighters.

## **HELP DEPARTMENTS DEAL WITH LINE-OF-DUTY DEATHS**

Under a Department of Justice grant, the Foundation offers training to help fire departments handle a line-of-duty death. Departments receive extensive pre-incident planning support. With support from the Department of Justice, Local Assistance State Teams (LAST) provide assistance to departments and families when a line-of-duty death occurs.

## **WORK TO PREVENT LINE-OF-DUTY DEATHS**

With the support of fire and life safety organizations, the Foundation has launched the "Everyone Goes Home" campaign to reduce firefighter deaths. Its goal is to reduce line-of-duty firefighter deaths by 25 percent in 5 years and by 50 percent in 10 years.

## **CREATE A NATIONAL MEMORIAL PARK**

The Foundation is expanding the National memorial site in Emmitsburg, Maryland, to create the first permanent National park honoring all firefighters. The park includes a brick Walk of Honor that connects the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Chapel and the official National monument.



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Fire and Emergency Manufacturers and Service Association	National Construction Specialties
Fire Chiefs Association of Plymouth County, Massachusetts	New England Association of Fire Chiefs
Fire Fighters Special Fund, Pennsylvania	New York State Fire Chiefs Conference
Gary Foster	Norfolk Fire Department
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Glenside Fire Protection District	Occoquan-Woodbridge-Lorton Volunteer Fire Department, Virginia
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*Special thanks to all of the members of the fire service  
and survivor families who gave of their time and talents  
to organize golf tournaments to benefit the  
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...and hundreds of others who have helped in so many ways.

*Special thanks to the members of the fire service who assisted and served as family escorts and the honor guard units that participated in the Memorial Weekend programs. Special thanks to our survivors who return each year and assist with Memorial Weekend activities.*

*On the wings of a snow white dove  
He sends His pure sweet love  
A sign from above  
On the wings of a dove*

*When troubles surround us  
When evils come  
The body grows weak  
The spirit grows numb*

*When these things beset us  
He doesn't forget us  
He sends down His love  
On the wings of a dove*

*-- Bob Ferguson*



*The true legacy of the individuals whom we honor for making the ultimate sacrifice lives in the minds and hearts of each of us. It is there to be shared, to be nurtured, and to be protected, so that it may one day be passed on to another. Protect their memories well. Share in a good-hearted laugh as we remember the personality, vitality and spirit of these individuals. And, as we gather here in Emmitsburg each year, go forth with those memories. Make them a part of your day-to-day life and share them until the day comes, a year from now, when we will all meet here again.*

*— Chief Ronald J. Siarnicki, Executive Director  
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation*



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