

2025

44TH ANNUAL

NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL WEEKEND

May 3-4, 2025



Emmitsburg, Maryland

MEMORY OF THE FALLEN

The Fire Hero Family Flag

The iconic **Fire Hero Family Flag** was established at the request of the National Honor Guard Commanders Association through the United States Congress to honor the families of fallen firefighters who gave their lives in the line of duty. Before it was installed at its permanent home in Emmitsburg, Maryland, the flag traveled across the United States to be raised over important national landmarks.

First flown over the U.S. Capitol on Flag Day in 2014, the flag then traveled to:

- ★ Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia
- ★ The Department of Defense Firefighter Memorial in San Angelo, Texas
- ★ The IAFF Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial in Colorado Springs, Colorado
- ★ The Wildland Firefighters Monument in Boise, Idaho.

It returned to Emmitsburg after this four-month journey, where the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Chapel is now its perpetual home.

The Fire Hero Family Flag serves as a never-ending symbol of our nation's gratitude to all firefighters who are honored at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial.

Once the weekend has concluded, the flag returns to the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Chapel, honoring the families of all firefighters who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their communities.



Flag Presentations at Memorial Weekend

During today's National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service, the family of each firefighter on the 2025 Roll of Honor receives an American flag.

The flag presented to you has been flown above the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., and was then transported by Fire Service Honor Guard to Emmitsburg, where it was raised over the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial in honor of your firefighter.

Your family's flag serves as a lasting symbol of the

United States of America's gratitude to your family and your fallen hero. Your firefighter will never be forgotten.



We are here for you.

May 4, 2025

I am honored and humbled to welcome you to the **National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service**. Today we memorialize **140 heroic firefighters**—70 who died in 2024 and 70 who died in previous years. We honor and remember the sacrifice of these fallen heroes by paying tribute to their bravery. But **we also honor you**: the families and loved ones who supported them in their selfless commitment to keeping their communities safe.

On the following pages, you'll find a special tribute to your own firefighter. You'll also learn about others who are being honored today. Each page tells the unique story of a hero who dedicated their life to protecting others. These profiles illustrate to all of us the incredible individuals each of these firefighters were—and provide a glimpse at the **lasting impact** each one had on their family, friends, colleagues, and community they served.

You are now part of our revered **Fire Hero Family community**. This community consists of individuals who have been where you are today. They have experienced similar loss—and they understand not only the weight of grief, but the unpredictable journey toward healing. This network stands ready to offer support and understanding to Fire Hero Family members of all ages—giving you and your family the opportunity to share stories, memories, laughter, and tears. I urge you to connect with this incredible community whenever you feel ready to do so.

Please remember that the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation is here for you and your family—not just this weekend, but all year long. I hope you'll take advantage of our extensive programming, including offerings like weekly virtual support calls, in-person events, and a wide range of special activities and peer-to-peer connections. I also invite you to consider traveling back for the Winter Retreat and Tree Lighting in December. This annual gathering focuses on fellowship with other Fire Hero Family members as well as the opportunity for some quiet moments at the Memorial.



On behalf of everyone at the Foundation, you have my promise that **your firefighter will never be forgotten**. Their legacy and your sacrifice will forever be etched in our hearts—and **we will be here for you for as long as you need us**.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Troy Markel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Troy A. Markel, CIC, CRM
Chair, Board of Directors
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation

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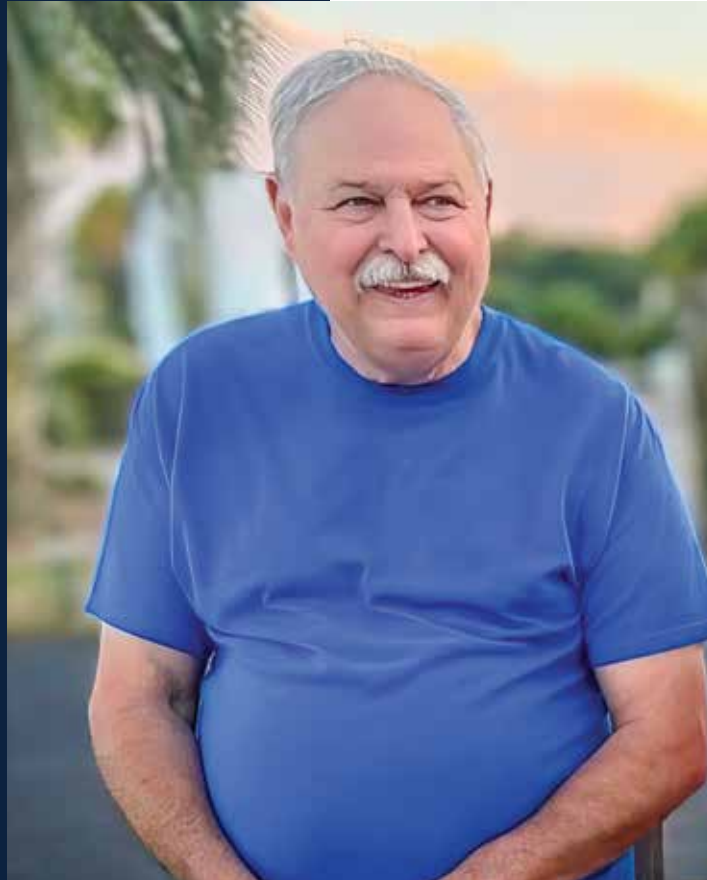
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William Anthony “Tony” Baumgartner

Volunteer Captain ★ February 5, 2024 ★ Age 70

ALABAMA



Lawrence Mill
Volunteer Fire
Department

William Anthony “Tony” Baumgartner was born in Michigan on September 14, 1953. Moving to Alabama in his early years, he would become the oldest of six children. Times were tough for families, but he grew into the roles of a protector, provider, and teacher.

After graduating from Hubbertville High, Tony joined the Alabama National Guard, where he spent over 20 years taking care of comrades and communities, driving heavy equipment, and learning how to make something out of nothing as machinists do. In 1974, he began a 29-year career as a journeyman in maintenance with Arvin Industries in Fayette, Alabama. He helped establish a credit union and served on the board for his duration.

During his mid-20s, he started volunteering at local fire stations, until he saw the need in his own community. He traveled to estate sales, thrift stores, and going-out-of-business sales to find walkie-talkies, fire suits, hoses, and any other equipment that might be of use. He learned to apply for grants for funding that could help get what they couldn’t afford or raise. Slowly, they were able to buy a truck and fix it up, later a building, and little by little, he wrangled neighbors to join the cause. Eventually, dedicated men and women built it into what it is now, Lawrence Mill Volunteer Fire Department. Captain Baumgartner was devoted to the fire department for 39 years, and he found joy in teaching the next generations how to thrive.

As his daughter, I have memories that no one else shares—lessons, sacrifices, and the reward of doing what’s right even when no one is watching. After picking us up for the weekend, he would take the long way to his house, dirt roads with Merle

Haggard and Willie Nelson blaring on the radio, turning a 25-minute drive into two hours. Teaching me to drive, he would take a different route each time, quizzing me along the way. “What did that road sign say? What direction are we going? Do you know where we are?” He was a genuine co-parent; every decision, punishment, celebration, or play, he was there. We rode four-wheelers, took so many camping trips I lost count, and family reunions and barbecues were a must. He loved football, especially high school. He worked second shift mostly, but if we were playing at home that Friday night, you could bet Dad would be out “sick.”

Tony’s last ten years were spent blissfully content with his soulmate, his partner in crime, and the bearer of all his pranks. He was a husband, father, big brother, teacher, volunteer, captain, and much more. He is greatly missed every day.

Brice Jordan

Volunteer Firefighter ★ **September 6, 2021** ★ **Age 74**

Brice Jordan died on September 6, 2021, due to complications of COVID-19.

His daughter, Shannon McDonald, served as a firefighter with the same department and sadly also died from COVID-19 a few weeks after her father.

Brice was remembered as a dedicated community servant and a loving husband.

ALABAMA



**Georgia Mountain
Volunteer Fire
Department**

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Remembrance 2025



Jerry L. Leverett

Career Fire Inspector ★ October 9, 2023 ★ Age 66

ALABAMA



**U.S. Army Garrison
Redstone Arsenal
Fire and Emergency
Services**

Jerry Lewis Leverett was born on October 16, 1956, in Plant City, Florida, to the late Lewis and Betty Leverett.

Growing up in Plant City, he was passionate about baseball and had an ear for music. He excelled in the high school marching band, starting a lifelong love for playing music. He had a talent and passion for the drums, which he proudly played for Kwajalein Pipes and Drums. He loved team sports and made a point to include and coach those who lacked athletic abilities. He was quiet and loving, with a servant's heart. These characteristics stayed with him throughout his life. They would serve to shape the man who was an important part in the lives of those around him.

Jerry married his high school sweetheart, Martha Ann, and joined the Army in 1975. He always had his intentions set on becoming a firefighter. In 1978, he fulfilled his dream, accepting his new role as an Army firefighter. He proudly served his country, community, and family until he passed away on October 9, 2023.

More than anything, he loved people. In his own words, "We are the public's advocate. If they ever want us, they can call." A man of his caliber is difficult to match. His friends, family, and colleagues knew exactly what to expect of him, no matter which hat he was wearing when you met him. He was a loving father, a dedicated leader, a passionate teacher, and a loyal friend. He was a mentor to anyone who was in need. He was generous with his time, patience, and understanding. He led by example and never asked something of others that he had not already tried and proven himself. "Never be afraid to fail" was something Jerry was often heard saying in response to doubts expressed by those around him.

He was never afraid to pursue any endeavor that he was interested in, even if he felt he might not succeed.

Jerry was always a man of service and did not work for accolades or promotions, but he received them anyway. Over the course of his life, he earned numerous awards for his career achievements and service to his community. He was especially proud of his Army Commendation Medal. He was always professional, loyal, and dedicated. If he saw a need, he'd pitch in to help. It did not matter if it meant mowing the lawn, teaching CPR classes, or just being there to give thoughtful advice.

As well-known and regarded as he was for his service, Jerry was a family man first and foremost. His loss is deeply felt by his wife, Martha Ann; his daughters, Kellie and Michelle; and his three grandchildren.

Shannon M. McDonald

Volunteer Firefighter ★ **September 26, 2021** ★ **Age 43**

Shannon M. McDonald died on September 26, 2021, due to complications of COVID-19.

Her father, Brice Jordan, served as a firefighter with the same department and sadly also died from COVID-19 a few weeks prior to Shannon.

Shannon was remembered as a dedicated first responder who was always there to help when she was needed.

ALABAMA



**Georgia Mountain
Volunteer Fire
Department**

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Remembrance 2025



Eric James Flannery

Career Engineer ★ April 20, 2023 ★ Age 50

ARIZONA



Daisy Mountain
Fire and Medical

Eric James Flannery was born October 2, 1972, in Glendale, Arizona. After an extended stay at Glendale Hospital, the first place Eric went was Glendale Fire Station 1, where his father worked, for Fire Prevention Day.

Eric attended Desert Palm Elementary School, where he liked and excelled in all sports. He attended Ironwood High School, where he played varsity soccer for all four years. He was named to 1st Team All-State his last two years as goalie.

After graduating from high school, he attended Glendale Community College on a soccer scholarship, where he played goalie and midfielder. This is when Eric changed his major to EMT and fire science, after deciding to follow his father's career.

After graduating, he applied to Rural Fire Department and was hired in 1998. After five years, Eric tested with Daisy Mountain Fire Department and was hired on 01-02-2003. He was promoted to engineer in October 2005. Eric started on an engine company, then moved to a ladder company, which was his favorite assignment. While on the ladder, he and his 1st captain became the extrication officers for the department. He also sat on multiple apparatus and station committees.

Eric loved to teach people, which started with coaching soccer. He enjoyed teaching people how to fish on guide trips, teaching EMT courses at Forte College, and anything pertaining to fire science or the fire department.

Per Eric's coworkers, he had a passion for life and loved fishing and the fire service. They also said he was a kind, genuine person who could strike up a conversation with pretty much anybody.

Eric was also known as a great cook, and his fellow firefighters appreciated the wide variety of meals he cooked. Sadly, Eric's career ended prematurely due to a job-related cancer that he battled for years before dying on April 20, 2023.

He will be greatly missed by family, friends, and coworkers. But we know he is at peace and in a better place.

Mark Fowl

Career Firefighter ★ **December 19, 2022** ★ **Age 59**

Mark Fowl passed away on December 19, 2022, at the age of 59 after a courageous battle with brain cancer. He was surrounded by loved ones who continue to honor his legacy by living their lives to the fullest.

Mark was born in Glendale, Arizona, the same city he would later serve. Mark's childhood was spent moving frequently, from England to Florida, making new friends along the way. Mark graduated from Arizona State University in 1986 and shortly thereafter started a fulfilling career with a local Arizona environmental entity.

In 2002, Mark answered his calling by becoming a firefighter with the Glendale Fire Department. Though he would have denied it himself, Mark was described as the "perfect fireman," finding a career that married his compassion and call to service.

Mark's humor, kindness, and generosity leave an incredible legacy in both his community and the lives of those who loved him. He had an uncanny ability to bring light to the darkest of situations and make good times better. Mark's personality was contagious to everyone he met, and he will be remembered as a loving husband, incredible father, talented firefighter, and a one-of-a-kind individual.



ARIZONA

Glendale Fire
Department

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Remembrance 2025



Nolberto Gem

Career Captain ★ January 22, 2022 ★ Age 65

ARIZONA



Phoenix Fire
Department

Nolberto. Norby. Norb. Gambingo. These were his nicknames, and he loved all of them, but he was proudest to be called Fire Captain/Paramedic Gem. He served with dedication for 35 years in the Phoenix Fire Department. He loved what he did and was proud to tell his stories over the years. He had “Captain Gem” labeled everywhere, including on his license plate.

He was almost hired by Glendale Fire, but he said he only wanted to be a Phoenix firefighter. He never regretted making that decision. He studied and worked passionately towards becoming a paramedic, hazmat certified, and a captain. He dragged tires down the streets, climbed ropes, and ran stadiums.

He proposed to his wife in front of a fire station. They were married and brought two beautiful children into the world. Nolberto was a proud and dedicated father, husband, son, brother, friend, and firefighter. We all looked up to him and always felt safe in his care when he was around.

He served from his heart. He loved to make people laugh, and he shared all his corny jokes with anyone willing to listen. He dressed up as a clown for parties and events. He proudly volunteered with the Valley Hispanic Bomberos.

He spent many hours and days at his childhood home taking care of his elderly father, Trinidad Gem. “Trini” passed in March of 2021, and Nolberto continued to drive from Mesa to Phoenix to take care of his mother, Jesus Gem.

Shortly after retirement, he was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin lymphoma and went through chemotherapy for his occupational cancer. He was able to enjoy two wonderful years with his friends and family. We all wish that we could get

more time with him. He is dearly missed by everyone. The memories we have with him last forever here on earth, and we can’t wait to be with him again in heaven.

We love you and miss you.

Steven K. Keffer

Contract Wildland Firefighter/Paramedic ★ August 8, 2023 ★ Age 62

ARIZONA

Steve Keffer dedicated his life to service, faith, and family. Born in Southern California, his childhood was filled with outdoor adventures, beach trips, and the values of hard work and resilience instilled by his parents. A natural athlete, he competed in football and track, but his greatest passion was exploring the outdoors, especially backpacking in California.

Inspired by his grandfather's firefighting legacy, Steve found his true calling in 1992 when he joined the Albuquerque Fire Department. He served as a paramedic lieutenant on the rescue before retiring as a captain on the engine. He was known for his composure under pressure, leadership, and dedication to mentoring younger firefighters. His expertise saved countless lives, and his presence made every crew stronger. Though highly skilled, Steve was just as known for his firehouse pranks, infectious laughter, and ability to keep morale high. Always going for a run or workout between calls, he inspired others to push their limits and stay strong in both body and mind.

After retiring from AFD, Steve continued serving as a wildland firefighter and paramedic with Adventure Medics. His vast experience made him a valued leader in emergency medical response in remote conditions. He was always eager to train rookies, taking great pride in passing on his knowledge.

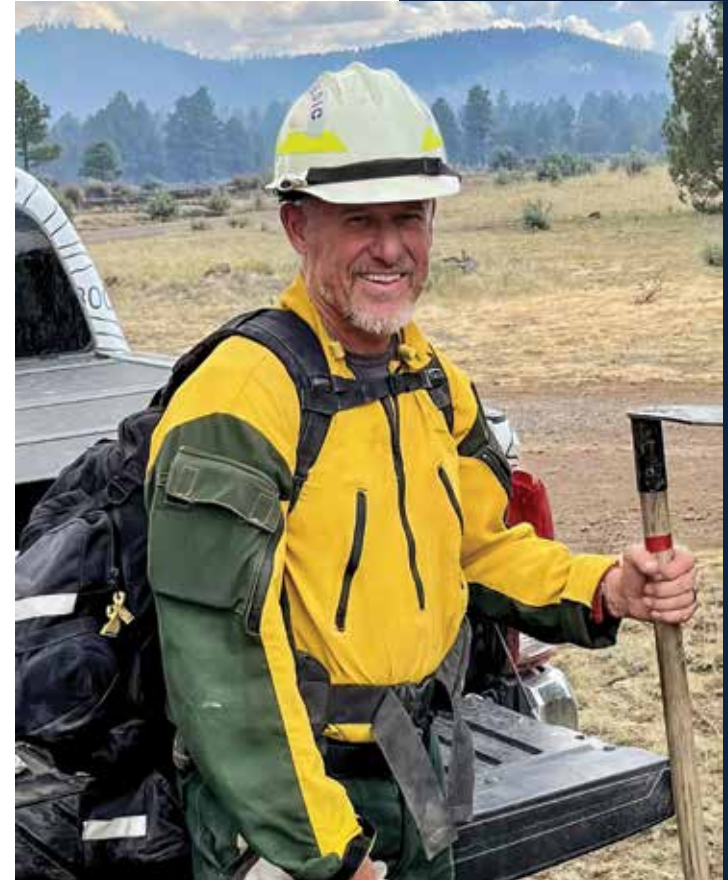
In August 2023, after 21 continuous days on the Gila Fire, Steve left to retrieve supplies for cold weather. Before he could return, he suffered a medical emergency in the line of duty. His passing was a devastating loss to his family, friends, and the firefighting community.

Steve met the love of his life, Lisa, while on duty with AFD, and their instant connection led to a life filled with adventure, love, and unwavering faith. Above all, his greatest purpose was being a good husband and father. He took immense pride in providing for and caring for his family. Together, they raised their four children—Maclaren, Finlay, Liam, and Kayde—instilling in them the same resilience and love of the outdoors, music, and travel that defined their family.

Steve lived for faith, family, and the fire service. His legacy lives on in his wife, children, and the countless lives he touched.

The Keffer family remains resilient, bound by love, faith, and strength as they navigate life without him. Though Steve is no longer physically present, his impact endures—forever remembered as a devoted husband, father, firefighter, paramedic, and servant leader.

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. John 15:1



Adventure Medics

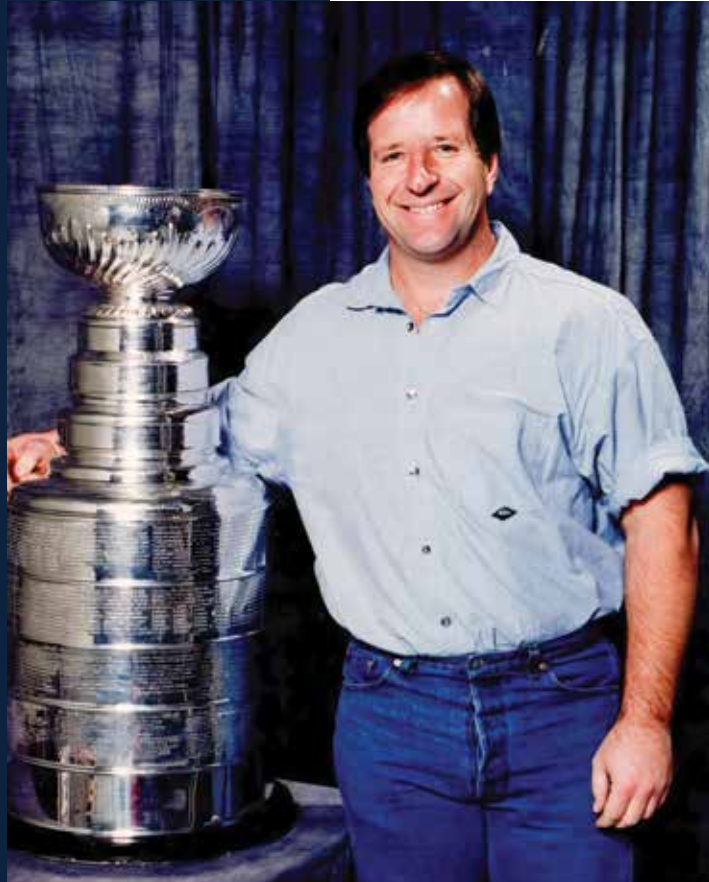
Remembrance 2025



Michael C. Martin

Career Captain ★ June 16, 2023 ★ Age 67

ARIZONA



Phoenix Fire
Department

Michael C. Martin was born on January 16, 1956, five minutes after his identical twin brother, Dave, weighing only two pounds. His parents, Dorothy and David Martin, alternated their time between home and the hospital to care for the twins until Mike came home.

He and his brother were mirror twins. While Dave excelled in school Mike was an athlete. His parents were part of a consortium that brought the Phoenix Roadrunners to Arizona. Mike attended practices and met professional players, which inspired him to learn to skate. Hockey became a passion, and he played recreational hockey for 35 years.

Mike pursued his career with the fire department with the same fervor. He took fire science at the local community college, spent time at local stations before being hired, and took his training seriously. To him, it was a calling more than a career. At 27, he became a born-again Christian, which lent new meaning to his work for the department. He wanted to be Jesus with skin to all those he encountered. He was shy, yet his faith emboldened him to comfort those he attended in their worst hour.

At 32, Mike met the woman he would marry when he responded to an ad in a personal column. They dated for four months, parted ways, then found one another 15 years later through the internet. This time he could not escape the determined Latina who would become his wife, best friend, prayer partner, fellow hockey fanatic, and caregiver. They had a perfect Christ-centered marriage for 17 years before God took him home.

Mike was passionate about his faith, hockey, and golden retrievers. His wife was also an animal lover, and at one time the menagerie included six dogs, guinea pigs, hamsters, an iguana, and a gerbil. While living on lake-adjacent property they fed wild waterfowl that would follow their car in flight as they returned home.

Mike often said, "We are blessed among blessed." He freely gave to the church, charities, and disaster relief. He provided "Angel Loans" to those who found themselves in urgent need, saying, "You can repay us when you can." At his passing he forgave all outstanding loans. He made friends with homeless men he encountered, sharing a meal and providing his cell number for future contact.

He was diagnosed with occupational bladder cancer in 2019 and given six months to live. His faith carried him through chemo, removal of his bladder, and hospitalization. He accepted it with a smile, comfort, and a kind word for all he encountered. He was beloved by many. He made the most of the five years post diagnosis and is surely with Jesus today. He had an unremarkable life, yet well lived and well loved.

Thomas M. McNamara

Career Captain ★ **June 21, 2022** ★ **Age 66**

Thomas Michael McNamara was born in Ashtabula, Ohio, on January 18, 1956, one of five children. Tom's passion for the fire service came naturally, as his father was a firefighter in their hometown. The family relocated to Tucson, Arizona, where Tom graduated from high school, earned a degree in fire science, and began his career in the fire service. He started at Drexel Heights while testing for his dream job with the Tucson Fire Department (TFD).

Tom was thrilled when he learned he was #1 on the new hire list, and his duty with TFD began on December 3, 1979. His career spanned over 30 years, including roles as a firefighter, captain, training captain, technical rescue, and EC. Tom also enjoyed teaching fire science classes at Pima Community College and was a certified driver training instructor. He was passionate about the fire service and loved sharing his knowledge with others.

Tom retired from TFD in January 2010 and became a senior advisor for Rio Rico Fire. His fire service career ended with his cancer diagnosis in March 2017. It was treated but reappeared in December 2019. Tom fought valiantly, but the cancer prevailed. Tom's cause of death was lung cancer related to on-the-job exposures.

Tom's greatest loves were family and friends. He was a dedicated, loving family man, leaving behind his wife of nearly 40 years, Kathi McNamara; two sons, Michael and Trevor (Amelia); five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

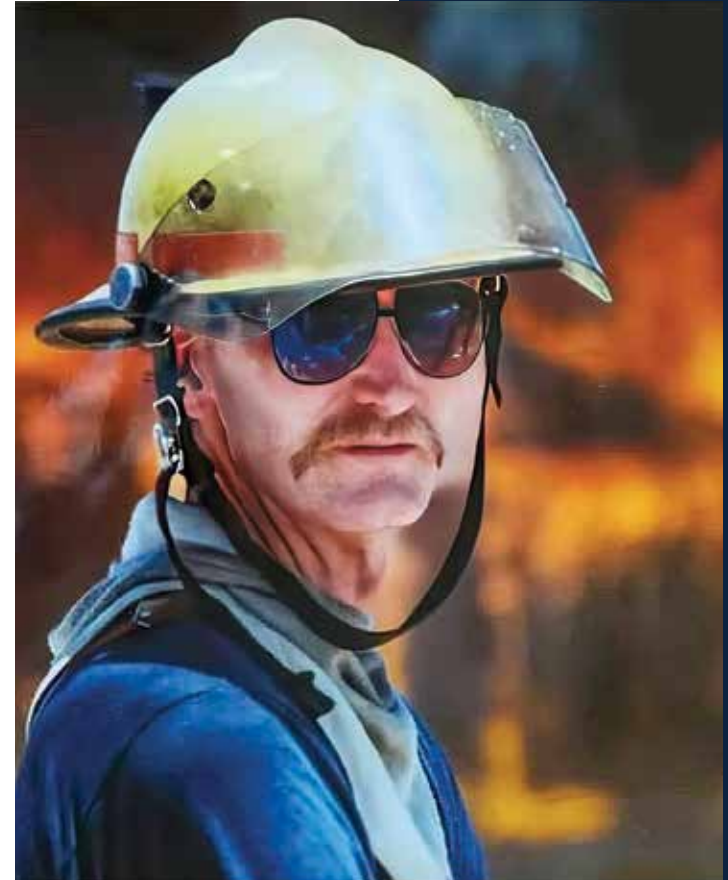
Tom loved to travel. He and Kathi logged thousands of RV miles in the US and many more in the air and on the water. Tom loved the water and enjoyed teaching the kids and grandchildren to swim, ski, and fish.

Tom was a fabulous country dance partner, which was no small feat (size 13). At 6' 5" with those two big left feet, it was a true labor of love. Dancing became a special connection for Tom and Kathi, helping them navigate life's challenges. His much-loved last fur baby was a dachshund named Garth (yes, as in Brooks). Tom always had a way with babies, kids, dogs, and Kathi.

Tom was involved in many volunteer activities. His last love was The Last Alarm Foundation, a group of retirees who refurbished an old firetruck for the purpose of taking fallen firefighters on their last ride. Tom embraced the mission and drove countless southern Arizona firefighters to their final resting place. He was honored to be a part of The Last Alarm Foundation, and knowing that he too would have his last ride on the much-loved truck brought him comfort.

Until we meet again, my love, some beach somewhere. You are sorely missed and fondly remembered by so many.

ARIZONA



**Tucson Fire
Department**

Remembrance 2025



Brian W. Miiller

Career Engineer ★ February 7, 2022 ★ Age 61

ARIZONA



Buckeye Valley
Fire District

Brian Wallace Miiller died on February 7, 2022, in the line of duty with the Buckeye Valley Fire Department, where he faithfully served for 14 years.

Brian was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on November 23, 1960. The family relocated to Arizona in 1963. He attended Most Holy Trinity Catholic School and Bourgade Catholic High School, graduating in 1979. He received his BS-BA degree from the Arizona State University in 1985.

He was a member of Ss. Simon and Jude, Knights of Columbus-Council 12708 and served as the IAFF Local #4371 Firefighters Charities treasurer for ten years.

Brian was a longtime Phoenix Suns fan and participated in many fantasy football leagues. He loved riding his Harley and camping and hunting while tearing it up on his ATV. He loved traveling with his wife, Debra, and going on special outings with his children.

Brian is survived by his wife, Debra; his children, Lauren and Jared; his parents, Alderd and Anna Mae (Allen) Miiller; his brothers and sister, Kevin (Lisa), Michele (Jim) Dunham, and Darin (Veronica Thraen); his uncle, Ivan Miiller, and aunt, Janie (Darwin) Peterson; nieces and nephews, Matthew, Markus (Samantha), Kevin II (Megan), Kyle (Katie), Zachary, Sarah, Russ, Hannah, and Lance; and many treasured cousins.

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Kory Michael Yule

Career Captain ★ **January 7, 2024** ★ **Age 42**

Kory's life can best be described as "life to the full." Everything he did, from family to work to friendships to activities, he accomplished with contagious enthusiasm. He deeply loved his two children, Hudson and Grace, and was so proud to be their dad. When he married Ashley, he added twin "bonus" daughters, Brinley and Paisley, who provided so much joy and support for him over the last few years.

With the Scottsdale Fire Department, Kory's work ethic was a model for others as he was quickly promoted to the rank of captain. His diligence and tenacity, his standards of excellence, and his humorous wit were a few of the characteristics that distinguished his twenty years of service.

Another of Kory's treasured attributes was his loyalty to his family and friends. The legacy of a man's life can be measured by the people who are drawn together by the life he lived. His love for sports, hunting and fishing, camping, golf, and music was always shared with family and friends.

The Scottsdale Fire Department's motto is "We care for you," and Kory was a living example of just that kind of selfless service. With over 12,000 calls under his belt, Kory's care for others was never a source of boasting but was a source of settled purpose and fulfillment.

Kory will be long remembered for his life to the full—never a doubt!

ARIZONA



**Scottsdale Fire
Department**

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Philip P. Christensen

Career Chief ★ February 11, 2023 ★ Age 54

ARKANSAS



Fort Smith Fire
Department

Philip Patrick “Phil” Christensen, born September 16, 1968, in Corona, California, was a man whose life was marked by love, adventure, and exceptional service. Growing up, Phil developed a deep appreciation for the outdoors and a passion for adventure. He enjoyed camping, boating, and photography and found joy in capturing the beauty of life’s moments. His love for off-roading in his Jeep added a thrill to his life and created lasting memories with his loved ones.

Phil’s greatest pride was his family. In 1988, he married Kim, with whom he shared 34 years of love and partnership. Together, they raised their children, Josh (Emily) Christensen and Jordan (Zachary) Hall, in Hackett, Arkansas, where they built a life full of cherished moments. Phil was a devoted father and a beloved “Papa” to his grandchildren, Rhett, Harper, and Beau.

Phil was often spotted down at his dock, rocking in his chair and watching the water. He also enjoyed spending time in his workshop crafting beautiful woodwork pieces. But his favorite pastime was playing on the floor with his grandchildren, watching them grow and develop.

Professionally, Phil left an indelible mark as a firefighter. His career was distinguished by bravery and leadership, earning him numerous accolades including Firefighter of the Year in 2000, Company Officer of the Year in 2012, and the IAFF President’s Plaque in 2013. As the most decorated firefighter in the history of the Fort Smith Fire Department, his achievements spoke to his unwavering commitment to his profession and the community he served. Phil also served as the IAFF President from 2007 to 2014 and was a proud member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the Arkansas Association of Fire Chiefs. His role as the Citizen’s Fire Academy coordinator allowed him to share his extensive knowledge and inspire countless citizens.

Phil passed away on February 11, 2023, at the age of 54, after a courageous nine-month battle with brain cancer. His passing leaves a void in the lives of those who knew him, but his legacy of love, service, and leadership will endure in the hearts of his family, friends, and the many lives he touched.

Jim McCammon

Career Captain ★ **May 12, 2019** ★ **Age 64**

Jim McCammon was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. His father was a Methodist minister, and he spent his school days in small towns across Arkansas, attending six different schools in thirteen years. He graduated from Harrison High School and attended the University of Central Arkansas until the passing of his father. He returned home to Harrison to care for his mother and sister and shortly thereafter started his fire service career.

The fire service was not a job for Jim but a lifestyle. He served at the Harrison Fire Department off and on for almost 30 years. He worked to create the code enforcement division and became Harrison's first fire inspector. He was the founding president of Local 2995 and active in the state fire marshal's association. He retired as captain on January 31, 2007.

Among the awards he received were the Fire Safety Commendation Medal and the Arkansas Fire Marshal's Association Lifetime Member for Outstanding Service. Most recently, the Harrison Fire Department Training Tower was named in his honor in 2019.

Over the years, he was an advocate for firefighters and a great encourager to the young guys coming into the fire service. He had a big heart, always wanting to help as indicated by his high school nickname "Big Daddy." A friend once said, "If you needed a man covering your back, this was the man."

When he wasn't working at the fire department, he enjoyed canoeing and kayaking the Buffalo National River, bicycling (he once rode 100 miles in one day), chasing hot air balloons, and traveling (between health events) with his wife, Mollie. He spent many summers working at Buffalo Outdoor Center and then Buffalo River Outfitters as a boat ape and bus driver. One title that Jim cherished was crew chief for the Miss Arkansas hot air balloon, providing "bird dog chase" and the great adventures and relationships he experienced through ballooning.

Jim developed kidney cancer five years after retirement and then liver cancer four years later. These cancers were not related. We fought it, but Jim passed away twelve years after retirement.

Jim loved God and his family. He leaves behind his wife, Mollie; a son, Zach; grandchildren, Zane, Jace, Aiden, and Ellie; and many friends that miss him still.

He has been described as one of the good guys, a faithful servant, humble, kind, wise, and a dear friend. Jim, you were a gift to all of us, and we love you the most. *Numbers 6:24-26*

ARKANSAS



Harrison Fire
Department

Remembrance 2025



17

Miguel Cervantes

Career Engineer ★ February 8, 2023 ★ Age 45

CALIFORNIA



Rancho Cucamonga
Fire Protection
District

Miguel Cervantes was a loving husband to Cyline for almost 17 years. He was also the most amazing father to Isaac, Jacob, and Madilyn.

Miguel was born on September 17, 1977, in Fontana, California, the first of six children born to Marco and Yolanda Cervantes. Miguel grew up in Fontana and moved to Rancho Cucamonga when he was 15. After graduating from high school in 1995, he began attending college to pursue his dream of becoming a firefighter. He graduated from the Santa Ana Fire Academy and volunteered with the Riverside County Fire Department before getting hired as an apprentice with the Norco Fire Department.

In 2006, the day before their wedding, Miguel joined the Rancho Cucamonga Fire Protection District. He became a respected figure within the firefighting community. He served as Rescue Systems 1 Assistant Instructor for the RC Fire Academy, a certified Rescue Specialist, a LARRO State Instructor, and a Rescue Systems 1 State Instructor. Miguel also held prominent leadership positions within the Rancho Cucamonga Fire District, serving as the engineer rank representative, the secretary, and eventually the vice president of the Rancho Cucamonga Firefighters Association, Local 2274.

As much as Miguel loved his career as a firefighter, his most beloved role was being a husband and a father. Cyline and their children, Isaac, Jacob, and Madilyn, were Miguel's greatest love and his most exciting adventure. After their first date, Miguel went back to the fire house and told his crew he was going to marry Cyline. Together as a family, Miguel loved making memories—camping, mountain biking, going to Dodgers games, and just enjoying time with one another.

In Miguel's last days, he continued to put others before himself. He wanted to share words of encouragement and the memories he had with all those who filled the hospital in those final days. Everyone who came to say goodbye was graced with his sincere smile and positive attitude. Whether he knew you for years or just met you, Miguel possessed the gift of making you feel valued and loved.

Miguel will be remembered as a loving husband, father, friend, and respected firefighting professional. His life touched so many people, and he will be deeply missed. We thank God for the privilege of having him in our lives. We are all better for knowing and loving him, and we were blessed to have seen his smile.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 2 Timothy 2:7

Ulysses Duran

Career Engineer ★ **January 4, 2024** ★ **Age 56**

Ulysses was born on March 17, 1967, in East LA City Terrace. He took pride in overcoming challenges in his community, finding an outlet in sports with his brothers. A three-sport varsity athlete at Salesian High School, he played football, soccer, and baseball. He loved cheering for the Dallas Cowboys and Los Angeles Dodgers. He approached everything with care and precision, which shaped him as a father and firefighter.

After graduating in 1985, Ulysses became inseparable from his younger brother, Victor. When Victor enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1987, Ulysses joined the same day. He served three years of active duty, earning his Airborne Wings and Ranger Tab. He fought wildfires during the Longwood Fire and was deployed for Operation Golden Pheasant in Honduras and Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama. He later served five years in the Army National Guard, responding to the 1992 riots and 1994 Northridge earthquake.

In 1992, Ulysses proposed to the love of his life, Monica, on Christmas Eve. They married in 1993, building a life full of love and resilience. Together, they raised three children—Rebecca, Ulysses, and Lisa—who embody their devotion.

Ulysses pursued his dream of firefighting, completing the Rio Hondo Fire Academy in 1991. In 1998, he landed his first firefighting job at Vandenberg Air Force Base while also working as a probation officer and IBM technician. In 2000, he joined the LACFD before transitioning to LA County in 2001, fulfilling his lifelong goal. He thrived as a firefighter and was promoted to engineer in 2006. To be closer to family, he spent ten years in fire prevention before returning to the field, retiring from Fire Station 49 in 2022 after 23 years of service.

A devoted father, Ulysses encouraged his children's passions. Rebecca shares his love for home videos, capturing cherished family moments. His son, Ulysses, pursued baseball, and he proudly supported his journey from tee ball to college. His youngest, Lisa, played golf at Cal State LA, and they bonded over the sport and cooking.

Ulysses loved entertaining, hosting legendary New Year's Eve and Super Bowl parties. A master griller, he cooked for his fire station and smoked tri-tip for loved ones. His humor shined through his expert photobombing, always ensuring laughter.

Born on St. Patrick's Day, he often said he was lucky, but in truth, everyone who knew him was the lucky one. His unwavering love and infectious smile left an indelible mark. Ulysses lived purposefully, filling 56 years with love, laughter, and service. He was a beautiful soul taken too soon.



CALIFORNIA

**Los Angeles County
Fire Department**

W. Chris Mertz

Career Captain ★ January 20, 2021 ★ Age 54

CALIFORNIA



Rancho Santa Fe
Fire Protection
District

W. Chris Mertz was born January 11, 1967, in San Diego, California. He attended Catholic school and graduated from University High in 1985. Soon after, he pursued a career in firefighting. He started with the Laguna Hot Shots and traveled the country extinguishing fires with his fellow fire brothers. He also worked for the Federal Fire Department in San Diego. In 1990, he was hired by Rancho Santa Fe Fire, where he stayed for the remainder of his career. While he was employed by RSF, he sought to be a member of Urban Search & Rescue. He was part of California USAR TF-8 San Diego for over 20 years. He was deployed to New York for 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana. He joined a pipes and drums band in San Diego, which turned into playing with the CSFA band as well. He loved every aspect of his career, which he enhanced by getting his bachelor's degree in emergency and disaster management, graduating magna cum laude from American Military University in 2018.

In 1995, Chris married the love of his life, and together they had an undeniable love that created three amazing people. Chris was a kind, loving father and husband. He had a passion for knowledge and learned everything he could, which he passed down to his kids. For almost 26 years, they built their lives together. The only thing that separated them was his second home at the fire station and his beloved strike teams. He loved being in the wilderness with his fire brothers as much as he loved being with the family he created, but he knew how to find the balance between the two. The family traveled the United States together via truck and fifth wheel, always on adventures to visit friends and family or off exploring the unknown, and they created memories that would last decades. As the kids grew, he helped shape them into the people they are today. He was proud of his children and who they chose to become in life. His son is a firefighter, and his girls joined the Air Force.

Chris was a vibrant soul that everyone loved to be around. He was funny, silly, and goofy. He loved to make people laugh with the most ridiculous stories that seemed very believable. He was smart and knew obscure random facts that made him a great trivia player. He was kind and generous. He filled every space with his light and love. He is missed dearly every day by those that knew him, but especially by those that loved him, including his fire brothers, his extended family, his in-laws, his parents, Bill and Pat; his sister, Theresa; his wife, Canli; and his children, Garrett (Amy), Natalie, and Roxanne (Wyatt).

He is irreplaceable. May he rest in Paradise.

Andrew L. Pontious

Career Firefighter ★ **June 14, 2024** ★ **Age 52**

CALIFORNIA

On Friday, June 14, 2024, the County of Los Angeles Fire Department (LACoFD) tragically lost a valuable team member during an emergency incident. Fire Fighter Andrew Pontious died in the line of duty while battling a large vehicle fire in the city of Palmdale, where he sustained fatal injuries.

Andrew dedicated over 19 years to the LACoFD, protecting the lives and property of residents and communities, including El Monte, Rosemead, the Kagel Canyon community, with his last assignment at Fire Station 93 in Palmdale.

As a veteran firefighter who was skilled and approachable, novice firefighters could always count on Andrew for guidance and mentorship. Fellow firefighters recounted that when a new battalion chief arrived, Andrew immediately gave them a tour on their first day. He was also an amazing cook and often volunteered to be in the kitchen even when he was not working.

Andrew was a dedicated firefighter. He poured every ounce of caring into his work every day, without hesitation or regard for his own safety. He touched countless lives, and his passing is felt deeply by all who knew him, including his county and LACoFD family.

This fallen hero served with bravery, distinction and, most importantly, care. His legacy and memory will be forever remembered.

Born to Gary and Ellie Pontious, Andrew grew up in Claremont with his brother, retired LACoFD Fire Captain David Pontious. He was married to his loving wife, Kim, and embraced his stepdaughter, Sara, as his own. Andrew loved his family, for whom he would go to the ends of the earth.

Known affectionately as “Uncle,” Andrew enjoyed spending time with his family, hunting, studying wildlife, and more. His passion for wildlife conservation was well known amongst his colleagues and friends.

Andrew is survived by his wife, Kim; his stepdaughter, Sara; parents, Gary and Ellie; brother, David; extended family, friends, and colleagues.



**Los Angeles County
Fire Department**

Robert E. Sharkevich Sr.

Volunteer Engineer ★ October 22, 2024 ★ Age 66

CONNECTICUT



Wethersfield
Volunteer Fire
Department

Robert E. Sharkevich Sr., affectionately known as “Sharkey,” was born on March 8, 1958, in Hartford, Connecticut, the son of Sophia and the late Edward Sharkevich. He graduated from A.I. Prince Tech in 1976 as a carpenter.

He began his 25-year career with Hartford Fire Department in 1982 with an older brother, and later his oldest brother joined. Several of those years included being a driver of the tactical unit, one of the busiest in the country. In 2001, Rob responded to Ground Zero, assisting in recovery efforts alongside his fellow first responders. His bravery and selflessness during this tragic time exemplified his unwavering commitment to serving others.

Just before retiring from HFD, he continued his duty to the community as a member of the Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department, Company 3, where he served for 22 years. Rob was an engineer/driver of Engine 31, which he was on a committee to help build and design with Sutphen-Ohio.

Rob also worked as a carpenter and maintainer for the Wethersfield Public School District for the last four years, leaving a lasting impact on the town and students he cared for so deeply.

Robert was a devoted son and son-in-law, brother and brother-in-law, husband, father, uncle, Papa, Godfather, friend, and community volunteer.

He was known for his caring nature, love for his family, and his unforgettable sense of humor. Rob will forever be remembered as a true hero who always put others before himself.

Rob was a dedicated family man, leaving behind his loving wife of 20 years, Joanne, and their twin sons, Camden and Kayden, whom he enjoyed watching play hockey and soccer. He is also survived by Robert Sharkevich Jr., who served alongside him

in the WFD; Robert Jr.'s wife, Kristi; and their daughters, Jourdan and Adriana; his daughter, Kristy Sharkevich; his mother, Sophia; his siblings, Steven, Gary, Cathi, and Karen; and many extended family and friends.

Sharkey had a passion for the Red Sox, Bruins, NY Giants, and former Hartford Whalers. He enjoyed playing golf, especially with his sons. He was often referred to as “The Grill Master” at home, family events, and the firehouse. His “10-3” meatloaf was loved by many.

He left this world doing what he loved. We will forever hold him in our hearts as a hero. No one will fill the void he left. Although he is missed more than words can ever describe, his strength and bravery live on through his wife, kids, entire family, fellow brothers and sisters of the fire departments, and everyone else who had the pleasure of meeting him.

Thomas Wilson Berry III

Volunteer Firefighter ★ **August 13, 2024** ★ **Age 23**

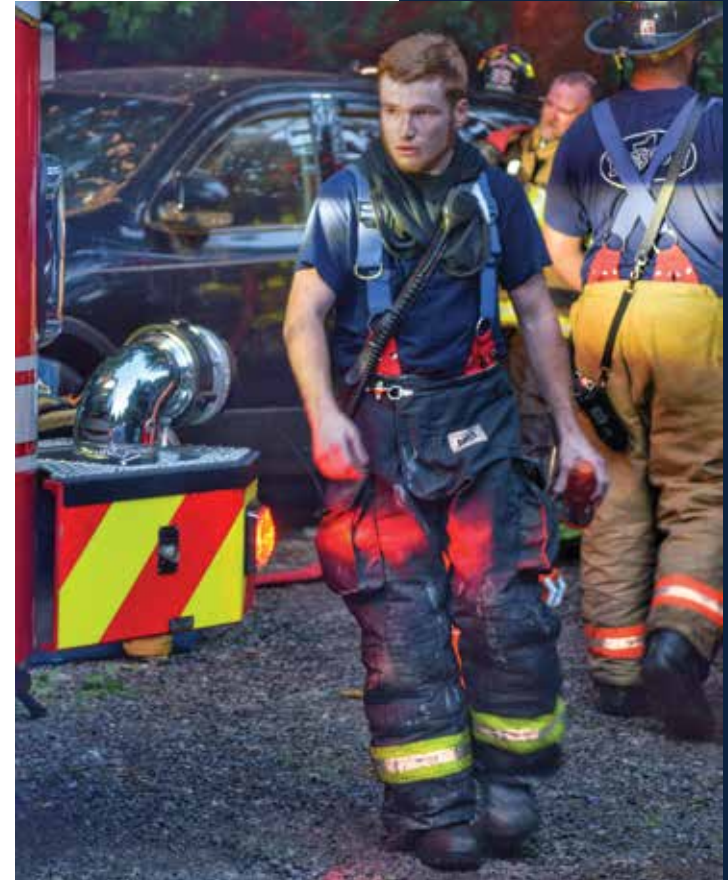
DELAWARE

Thomas Wilson Berry III was born on March 13, 2001, into a family full of first responders, so naturally he dreamed of being a firefighter since he was in diapers. Whenever the fire siren blew, he would put on his costume—coat, boots, and helmet—and pretend to go on the call. Thomas loved spending time at the fire house growing up and counted down the days until he could join. At age 15, he was finally able to as a junior member at the Ellendale Volunteer Fire Department, making him a fourth-generation firefighter. As time progressed, Thomas took it upon himself to mentor new junior members and pass down knowledge that he attained during his experience.

Thomas attended Milford Senior High School. He was a member of the FFA and graduated in 2019. During his free time, he enjoyed spending time with family and friends, modifying his truck, going for joyrides throughout Sussex County, and hanging out at any firehouse waiting for a call. Thomas was hired by Sussex County Department of Public Safety in July of 2022 as a logistics technician. Thomas had hopes of one day becoming an EMT and maybe even a dispatcher. While balancing a career and home life with family and friends, Thomas was consistently a top responder with the Ellendale Fire Department. For his commitment to the fire company and serving others, he received Ellendale's Firefighter of the Year award in 2022. In 2023, Thomas was one of many members of the Ellendale Fire Department to receive a Phoenix Award for his contribution to life saving measures for a patient who suffered and survived cardiac arrest.

In December of 2023, Thomas was voted in as a probationary member at the Georgetown Volunteer Fire Department, although he had been running calls with them for quite some time. Thomas had been working on completing classes through the Delaware State Fire School, with the plan of running for a captain position once his probationary year was over.

On August 13, 2024, Thomas was on his way back from a field assignment and stopped to render aid to a motorist involved in a motor vehicle crash. Thomas tragically lost his life at the young age of 23 while operating on scene of the motor vehicle crash, giving the utmost sacrifice for his community. He saved and touched more lives in his eight years of fire service than many will in a lifetime. He was known for his love and dedication to the fire service and took his last breath on this earth while doing what he loved. Thomas was more than just a son, brother, grandson, nephew, cousin, and friend. He was and will always be a hero.



**Georgetown
Fire Company**

Andy Eyster

Career Lieutenant ★ May 10, 2024 ★ Age 51

FLORIDA



Melbourne Fire Department

Andy Eyster was born on June 21, 1972. Inspired by his favorite childhood television show, *Emergency!*, Andy dedicated his life to protecting his community and helping others. He began his career at Harbor City Volunteer Ambulance Squad and then Satellite Beach Fire Department before joining the Melbourne Fire Department, where he retired as a lieutenant. During his career, he also served as a flight paramedic for First Flight. In addition to his work with the fire department and First Flight, Andy was an educator and devoted a significant amount of time to training and mentoring paramedics.

Outside of the fire department, Andy had many passions. He had a deep love for music, especially classic rock, and attending concerts or watching local bands was one of his favorite pastimes. He was a self-taught and self-proclaimed “mediocre guitarist” and often shared “Name That Tune” videos of himself playing guitar to his social media. He was an avid Miami Marlins fan who enjoyed relaxing and watching a baseball game. He also enjoyed flight simulation, playing vintage video and pinball games, and shooting at the gun range. He was a great cook and was always eager to try out a new recipe.

During his courageous 3½-year battle with cancer, Andy remained dedicated to helping others by participating in clinical research trials, hoping to contribute to advancements in cancer treatment that could benefit future patients. When he was receiving treatment at Moffitt Cancer Center, he was asked if he was sure he wanted to proceed with an experimental treatment. His response was, “If it does not help me, it will help someone else.” This was the essence of who Andy was—always willing to help in any situation.

Andy is survived by his wife, Amy; his children, Eyan and Brett; his stepchildren, Jordan, Trent, and Averi; his parents, William “Hank” and Betty Eyster; and his sister, Alexa Eyster. His legacy lives on through the people he mentored and the countless lives he touched. Andy was deeply loved and will be profoundly missed by all who had the honor of knowing him.

Joseph “Jay” Geld

Career Lieutenant ★ **December 23, 2023** ★ **Age 65**

FLORIDA

Jay was born on December 14, 1958, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to the union of Frank and Anastasia Geld. When he was a young boy, Jay’s family moved to Key Largo, Florida. During Jay’s youth in Key Largo, he discovered he loved boating and fishing. As he grew older, he learned many trades and volunteered as a firefighter in Key Largo, thus discovering his passion for the fire service.

Jay later moved to Brevard County, Florida, where he started his formal firefighting career with Brevard County Fire Rescue. In 1988, he began his lifelong career with the City of Melbourne Fire Department. During his time there, he was heavily involved in the training division of new hires, as well as the continuous training for himself and his colleagues. Jay worked hard building various props used for firefighter safety at the Melbourne Fire Department Training Center and ran the driver development program. Jay made many lifelong friends during his time as a firefighter. He retired honorably as a lieutenant after 30 years of dedication and service to his community.

Jay’s passion and commitment in the education of firefighters and fire safety was not solely served at the fire department. During his career and after retirement, he provided 15+ years of education both on and off the firegrounds to the hardworking men and women at Florida Fire Training Institute and Eastern Florida State College.

Jay was an incredible example of strength, character, and compassion—a hero in every sense of the word, especially to his family. He took a genuine interest in the lives of everyone he met, bringing joy to those around him with his eternal optimism and charisma. Put simply, to know him was to love him. Jay loved golfing, fishing, endlessly tinkering with projects, helping others, and enjoying simple pleasures alongside his friends and family. He was the most loving and devoted husband and an amazing father and grandfather. He loved his family fiercely and, above all, his greatest joy in life came from watching his grandchildren grow. He will forever be deeply missed and always remembered in our hearts.

Left to cherish Jay’s memory are his wife, Jackie; children, JR (Nikki), Jason (Courtney), John, and Andy; and grandchildren, Rory, Brinn, Charlee, and Connor.

Jay’s legacy as a husband, father, grandfather, and firefighter will live on in the hearts of all who came to know him.



**Melbourne Fire
Department**

James Nathan Leonard

Career Firefighter/Paramedic ★ January 12, 2022 ★ Age 43

FLORIDA



Coral Springs-Parkland Fire Department

James Nathan "Nate" Leonard was born in Leavenworth, Kansas, to Jim and Marilyn Leonard on September 2, 1978. Nate pursued his dream of becoming a firefighter/paramedic after graduating from the Coral Springs Regional Institute for Public Safety, Class 04-03, and completing his EMT certification from the Florida Medical Training Institute.

Nate became a member of the Coral Springs-Parkland Fire Department family on April 9, 2007. Throughout his career, Nate earned numerous accolades including a Unit Citation, three Lifesaving Commendations, and a Meritorious Duty Commendation. Nate served many years on Coral Springs-Parkland Fire Department Dive Rescue Team and was always coming up with improvements to make the team safer and more effective.

Nate was an outdoorsman. His passions included skateboarding, deer hunting, and fishing.

For almost 15 years, Nate served with professionalism, respect, and honor. Unfortunately, on May 12, 2020, Nate was diagnosed with cancer, and he fought a courageous two-year battle with cancer. Nate was a true public servant. He was brave in his duties as a firefighter and paramedic but equally brave as he faced and fought cancer. Nate paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty, losing a courageous battle to cancer on January 12, 2022.

Nate was a loving husband, caring son and brother, outstanding firefighter and paramedic, rescue diver, and true friend to so many. Nate is survived by his wife, Nina Leonard; his parents, Jim and Marilyn; and his sister, Valerie.

Nate's life was eternally in service to others, and for that we will forever honor him and forever be in his debt. We plan to remember Nate for the hero that he was, for the choices he made to serve others, and for the sacrifices made for the profession he loved. We honor a life well lived and a battle hard fought.

Heath Joseph O'Shea

Career Engineer ★ **April 13, 2024** ★ **Age 44**

FLORIDA

Heath Joseph O'Shea was born on September 6, 1979, in Pensacola, Florida, to Christopher O'Shea and the late Nancy O'Shea. Raised in a blended family with the love and support of Christopher and Cathy O'Shea, Heath's upbringing played a significant role in shaping his strong values and exceptional character.

Heath began his career with the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department in 2003, often calling it "the best job ever." Over his 20-year career, he rose to the rank of engineer and eventually achieved his dream assignment on Tanker 54. Known for his dedication and selflessness, Heath saved countless lives, helped deliver at least eight babies, and even rescued several kittens along the way.

Heath's legacy is defined by his love, humor, and unwavering compassion. He is remembered by his beloved wife, Melanie, with whom he shared nearly 17 years of companionship and 15 years of marriage, and their children, Simon (18) and Lily (11). Melanie was the love of his life, and Heath took great pride in making certain his family's needs were always met.

A lifelong learner with a deep curiosity, Heath was passionate about exploring new interests. Whether he was reading countless books, watching documentaries, or listening to podcasts, his thirst for knowledge was endless. His eclectic tastes ranged from fine bourbons and unique beers to aromatic candles and exotic teas, reflecting his vibrant personality. Music, travel, and time spent outdoors brought him great joy—whether he was relaxing by the pool, grilling for family and friends, biking with Lily, or enjoying a peaceful moment on the porch or around a bonfire.

Heath was unapologetically himself and was loved and admired by all who knew him. A true pillar of strength, he embraced many roles—husband, father, brother, son, uncle, cousin, firefighter, engineer, and professional dad joke teller. His love for his family and friends was boundless, and he was always ready to lend a hand, no matter the circumstances. His selfless service to the Jacksonville community was a testament to his genuine love for others, and his impact on those around him will never be forgotten.

Heath's favorite getaways included Anna Maria Island, the Blue Ridge Mountains, and Las Vegas, where he created cherished memories with those he loved.

Heath's memory will live on in the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing him—whether as a friend, family member, or colleague.



**Jacksonville Fire and
Rescue Department**

Jason C. Tucker

Career Firefighter/EMT ★ April 23, 2023 ★ Age 53

FLORIDA



Pasco County
Fire Rescue

Firefighter/EMT Jason C. Tucker, 53, of Pasco County Fire Rescue in Florida, passed away on April 23, 2023, after a 22-month battle with glioblastoma brain cancer.

Jason was introduced to the fire service through his grandfather, Pierce Roden, who worked in the forestry service and started several volunteer fire stations in Cullman County, Alabama, where Jason was raised. As a young child, Jason responded to calls with his grandfather.

Jason is remembered by his fellow coworkers as a “firefighter’s firefighter.” He was the epitome of brotherhood, a damn good cook, compassionate, funny, and genuine. He believed in treating everyone as though they were family, giving your all to this profession and each other, and being the best you can be for your brothers, sisters, and community. He loved this job with a passion. He enjoyed being on the water and the little things in life. He loved his family even more.

Jason dedicated himself to his career for 19+ years. He had two mantras—“Leave things better than the way you found them.” and “Own your attitude.” When Pasco County moved forward in cancer prevention, Jason got the specialty certificates needed to work on their decontamination truck that rolled out in April 2020. Later, he moved to their special operations truck.

In July 2021, after his cancer diagnosis, surgery, and treatment, he was placed on light duty. That didn’t slow him down either. He made improvements around the training center and spoke to the new hire classes about the importance of decontamination and clean gear.

When visiting Pasco County Fire Rescue, you may see several honors and tributes to Jason. At the training center, they have dedicated the new burn tower in his name—Tucker Tower. In the lobby, they have a cabinet built by a fellow firefighter,

Vick Brown, that holds his gear on display.

Jason had a deep love for his family and loved adventures. He would often take them camping or boating. He taught the kids to ride jet skis, ATVs, and motorcycles, and how to shoot firearms and play Rummy. This was important when visiting their grandparents, Carolyn and David McKoy.

Jason was a devoted and loving son, father, husband, and friend who is truly missed by those who knew him.

Jason is survived by his wife, Wendy; his son, Austin; his mother and stepfather, Carolyn and David McKoy; and his father and stepmother, Jerry and Theresa Tucker. He joins his daughter, Kendall, and his grandparents in watching over everyone from above.

Robert D. Davis

Career Firefighter/EMT ★ February 10, 2023 ★ Age 48

GEORGIA

Robert D. Davis, affectionately known to many as Bobby D., sought no earthly promotions, yet was promoted to Heaven, at 48 years of age. Husband of wife, Heather Davis, and father of daughter, Lily Davis, Robert was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Go Pack Go), to Richard Davis I and Delorah Grant. A few months before Robert passed on, Richard Davis I (Vicki) preceded him to Heaven, where they are now praising the Lord together. Robert is also tenderly remembered by his mother, Delorah Grant (Steve), as well as deeply missed by his brothers, Richard Davis II and Brian Davis.

After the events of September 11, 2001, Robert dropped everything and, with the heart of a servant, deemed, "It's go time", and joined the United States Air Force. Bobby D. was given the role of firefighter, beginning his more than twenty years of service in the field. He continued his career at Dobbins Air Reserve Base Fire and Emergency Services in Georgia for his last 15 years here on Earth. He received many performance recognitions and accolades in every position in which he served.

Robert's servant heart was not limited to his career but extended to all aspects of his life. He was the type of person who would give the shirt off his back...and shoes...and coat. Robert was the one who would initially and continually make efforts in his friendships by reaching out, and he'd remember everyone's birthdays! He would regularly check on and do odd jobs for older friends with needs. He also loved coaching and mentoring kids through basketball. When help was needed, Bobby D. rushed in, ready to get the job done. Through the years, Robert loved well, took in and cared for many, whether stranger or friend, never crediting himself, but only the God of Heaven and Earth in him.

Robert had a cherishing love for his wife, Heather, whom he often referred to as "Love," as well as his much adored and adoring daughter, Lily, whom he often referred to as, "Little Love." As they miss him greatly, in peace, they rest in the confidence of Christ and look forward to their heavenly reunion, as all who place their faith and hope in Jesus, for Who He is and what He has done, for all. Robert is one of a kind, specifically and wonderfully made by our Creator, his holy Father, whom he has loved and is unconditionally loved by.

Our Bobby D. would often be heard saying, "Here for the team," and he exemplified it in word and deed. May we also imitate that servant love for others as we love God.



**Dobbins Air
Reserve Base Fire
and Emergency
Services**

Vernon Leon Davis

Part-time Paid Assistant Fire Chief ★ September 27, 2024 ★ Age 69

GEORGIA



**Blackshear
Fire Department**

Vernon Leon Davis was born on December 16, 1954, at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. The son of the late Vernon and Irma Lee Barrett Davis, he graduated from Waycross High School in 1972.

Leon worked at Ware State Prison for many years, retiring as their fire chief over their inmate team. Through his work, he touched many lives and was an inspiration, not only to his team, but to his colleagues as well.

One particular inmate admired and respected Leon for the truly good man he was, so much so that this inmate completely turned his life around as he set out to follow in Leon's footsteps. This former inmate became a firefighter, setting out to achieve any and every certification there was. He was soon recognized for his outstanding performance, receiving an achievement plaque. He traveled back home and presented Leon with this plaque, telling Leon it was HIS reward to have. He would not have received it without the guidance, encouragement, and example that Leon led his team with.

Fortunately for the city of Blackshear, Leon accepted the position as assistant fire chief after volunteering for many, many years. Leon went on to become a first responder. He truly loved helping his community and being a part of it. He never let a chance to help someone go by.

His family meant the world to him, and he always did his best to take care of them, especially taking care of his wife of 47 years, Shirley. He often referred to her as his bride, always going above and beyond for her.

His sons and his grandsons were his pride and joy. He took every opportunity to go "mudding" with his grandsons on his side-by-side. His sons, Scott and Kevin, and his grandsons, Ryan and Hunter, admired and looked up to Leon.

Leon was easily respected and loved. Most in our community knew Leon, and to know him was to love him. He never ceased to honk his horn and wave and smile like it made his day to see you. Leon had a natural, God-given gift for making everyone feel special and loved.

Leon left this world bravely doing what he loved, serving his community during Hurricane Helene. His loss was a tragedy for our entire small town of Blackshear. His presence is missed every single day. Our town has been changed forever, as we forever hold Leon in our hearts as OUR very own HERO!

Christopher Robert Eddy

Career Battalion Chief ★ **September 4, 2024** ★ **Age 35**

GEORGIA

Battalion Chief Chris Eddy tragically passed away at the age of 35 from an explosion while performing his duties. His legacy as a dedicated firefighter, leader, mentor, and loving husband and father will remain in the hearts of those who knew him.

Chris's 17-year career spanned several fire rescue departments, including Walton County, Rockdale County, Morgan County, and Putnam County Fire Rescue. However, it was at Greene County Fire and Rescue where Chris truly found his calling. As battalion chief of B Shift, he exemplified courage, dedication, and commitment to the job and his team.

Chris was immersed in the firefighting world from an early age, following in the footsteps of his father, Bob Eddy, a firefighter. His childhood memories were filled with trips to fires and training events, experiences that fueled his passion for the profession. From high school, Chris aspired to become a paid firefighter, and his focus guided him through his career.

Known for his technical expertise and commitment to developing others, Chris was a passionate mentor. He believed in passing on his knowledge, whether through informal training or instructional videos. His dedication to continuous learning made him an invaluable member of every team he served with.

In 2024, Chris was honored with the Greene County Fire Rescue Hero Award for his exceptional service, reflecting his leadership and the respect he earned from colleagues.

Outside of work, Chris was a devoted husband to his wife, Lindsey, and a loving father to their son, Bryson. Family was everything to him, and he treasured time spent with them, whether enjoying outdoor activities or simply being together at home. Chris loved the outdoors, finding peace in fishing, hunting, and golfing. He was also a proud dog owner of two dogs, Goose and Tucker, who brought him endless joy.

Chris was known for his hard work, humility, and approachability. In high-stress emergencies, he remained calm and dedicated to saving lives. His passing leaves a significant void in the firefighting community, and his legacy will continue to inspire future generations. His passion for the job, commitment to training, and love for his family will live on through those he mentored.

Chris's memory will live on in his wife, son, mother, father, and all who knew him. He was a hero in every sense of the word, and his impact on the firefighting profession, his community, and his family is immeasurable. Though he is no longer with us, his spirit will continue to burn bright. Your courage, kindness, and dedication will never be forgotten.



**Greene County
Fire and Rescue**

Remembrance 2025



Kent B. Gilbertson

Career Firefighter/EMT ★ November 9, 2022 ★ Age 57

IDAHO



Boise Fire Department

At age 57, retired firefighter Kent Gilbertson was diagnosed with colorectal cancer, a presumptive illness tied to his 30 years of service as both a career and volunteer firefighter in Idaho and North Dakota. To those who knew him, Kent embodied integrity, always standing for truth and putting others first. He valued doing things the right way, a firm handshake, and a person's word above all else. He never asked for anything he hadn't earned.

Kent was a man of deep love and compassion, guided by simple but powerful principles:

Life is ahead of you; the past is history. Open your mind and learn everything. Don't be stubborn; always stay happy and positive. Panic doesn't do anybody any good.

During his career, Kent served on Boise Fire Department Truck #7 and the technical rescue team, earning the honor of Firefighter of the Year. A true farm boy, he had an incredible mechanical ability and could fix anything. His love for the outdoors shaped a life filled with hunting, hiking, and dual-sport motorcycle adventures. He had an unshakable drive to explore, build, and overcome challenges, never backing down from a problem that needed solving.

After retiring in 2018 to care for his mother, Kent and I set out in fall 2019 to fulfill our dream of traveling across the U.S. and Mexico in an MCI Coach Bus—one he converted in just 11 days. With Tikka, his Shiba Inu puppy, by his side and a cup of coffee in hand, Kent became a familiar face in every campground we visited. Always eager to hear others' stories, he lent a helping hand, whether fixing RVs, repairing cabins, or assisting stranded travelers. The open road was his passion, reflecting his adventurous spirit—a love he passed on to our children, Rena and Sever.

Both Rena and Sever have followed their parents' legacy of service. Rena serves in the U.S. Coast Guard and holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), combining her dedication to service with a passion for healthcare. Sever works in civil service with the Air Force, contributing to the mission of supporting and protecting others. Both are committed to serving their country and community, carrying forward the values Kent instilled in them.

Now, the road ahead will be different without Kent. After 32 years of marriage, I've lost not just my husband but my best friend. Our family has lost the man who built our world from the ground up. But as Kent believed, "It's what you leave behind you when you go." And what he leaves behind is a legacy of love, service, and unwavering strength.

Cristian Sergio Medrano

Career Firefighter ★ **April 12, 2024** ★ **Age 27**

ILLINOIS

Born in the summer month of July in Aurora, Illinois, Cristian S. Medrano was a vibrant and deeply expressive soul who brought joy to everyone fortunate enough to know him. With an innate ability to listen deeply, he made people feel truly seen, heard, and understood. His unique balance of humor, warmth, and care were what made him one of a kind.

A devoted family man, Cristian had a special bond with his mother, Clarissa. His “mama’s boy” status was a testament to the love and respect he held for his family. His siblings, Alexis and Mykol, meant the world to him; he was a “ride or die” protector for them. His love for his nephew/godson, Thiago, was boundless, and he cherished every moment spent with him. Being selected by his older sister to take on this role was one of his biggest accomplishments, a role he took very seriously with the utmost love.

Cristian was fortunate to find a love that knew no limits when he met Savannah. Their relationship brought out a more laid-back version of him—one who was comfortable with life’s unpredictability, as long as love and family were by his side.

Growing up Mexican American, Cristian was proud of his Hispanic roots, honoring his heritage with pride and appreciation, especially through his love for music, food, and fashion. Cristian had a passion for exploring the world around him. He was a curious spirit who dreamed of seeing the world on his own to better understand himself. Though he was a devoted family member, he always longed for the freedom that travel would bring. He loved the beach, all-inclusive resorts, and he held vacation memories close to his heart. His appreciation for the simple joys in life—like good food, great conversations, and laughter—was contagious.

A 2022 graduate of Aurora University, with his bachelor’s degree, Cristian was dedicated to improving himself both mentally and physically. His caring nature always led him to the path of service. His excitement for his new journey as a firefighter was unmatched. He took pride in the challenge the academy brought and went in with full force determination.

He was a confidant and the most valuable player within his circles, always showing up for his loved ones through wins and losses. His curiosity, expressive nature, and warmth will never be forgotten, and his legacy will live on through the countless memories and connections he made throughout his life.

Rest in power, Cristian Sergio Medrano. You will always be remembered, honored, and forever loved.



**Aurora Fire
Department**

Juliana Turchetti

Career Pilot ★ July 10, 2024 ★ Age 45

ILLINOIS



**Dauntless Air,
contracted to Idaho
Department of Lands**

Juliana Turchetti was born on October 5, 1979, in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil. She was a mother and seasoned aviator with a rich background in aeronautics. At 45 years old, she had developed a diverse skill set in aviation, becoming fluent in English while also possessing intermediate proficiency in Italian and Spanish.

Juliana held an FAA Commercial Pilot License, which includes ASEL (Airplane Single Engine Land), ASES (Airplane Single Engine Sea), and IR (Instrument Rating). In Brazil, she earned various licenses from ANAC (Agência Nacional de Aviação Civil), including CPL (Commercial Pilot License), INVA (Instrument Rating), IR (Instrument Rating), and PLA (Pilot License for Agricultural Aviation).

With an impressive total of 6,489 flight hours, Juliana's experience encompassed a wide range of aircraft and flying conditions:

- Complex Aircraft: 1,900 hours as Pilot in Command (PIC)
- High-Performance Aircraft: 4,603 hours PIC
- Tailwheel Aircraft: 4,053 hours PIC
- Seaplane: 91 hours PIC
- Turboprop Aircraft: 1,523 hours PIC, including crop dusting and ferry time
- Fire Boss: 65 hours
- Air Tractor 402 & 502: 881 hours PIC
- Ayres Thrush 510/660: 577 hours PIC
- Turbojet: 1,800 hours as Second-in-Command (SIC)
- Boeing 727 & 737: Significant experience in these aircraft
- Flight Instructor: 18,000 hours, showcasing her dedication to training the next generation of pilots
- Twin Engine Piston Aircraft: 26 hours PIC

Additionally, Juliana had international ferry experience, totaling 250 hours PIC, across territories such as the USA, Canada, the Caribbean, and South America. With a robust portfolio of licenses and extensive flight experience, Juliana was a highly qualified and versatile pilot, committed to excellence in aviation.

Kenneth Dwight Caldwell

Volunteer Firefighter ★ June 6, 2024 ★ Age 63

INDIANA

Kenneth Dwight Caldwell, 63, a dedicated firefighter and Lion, a self-employed cross-country trucker, and beloved friend to many, passed away peacefully in his home in LaCrosse, Indiana, on June 6, 2024. His passing, which occurred hours after responding to a brush fire as a tanker operator, left an indelible void in the hearts of his family, friends, and community. Born on March 20, 1961, in the military town of Fort Ord, California, Ken lived a life marked by kindness, selflessness, and a friendly spirit that endeared him to all who knew him. His life was filled with service to others.

Ken is survived by his mother, Mary Nell (Duncan) Caldwell; his brother and sister-in-law, William (Bill) and Elizabeth Caldwell; his sister and brother-in-law, Glenda Caldwell and Don Mathes; as well as his treasured nephew and nieces, Christopher and Cassidy Caldwell; Breanna and Bret Doorenbos and their two sons, Kasen and Barrett; and Kate and Thomas Duff and their son, Noah.

After attending Des Moines Area Community College, Ken honed his skills as a field mechanic for Western Geophysical and a service manager for Ruan before becoming a self-employed trucker in 2000.

Ken's life was a testament to service and community involvement. As a firefighter for the LaCrosse Volunteer Fire Department, he exemplified courage and an unwavering dedication to the safety and well-being of his community. Ken was sworn in on August 1, 2001, and became known for his exceptional maintenance skills, maintaining equipment at the highest standard. Ken inspected, repaired, and operated all fire engines. When Ken was in town, he responded to every call, whether day or night.

Ken's generous spirit found a home in the LaCrosse Lions Club in 1995. He always helped by grilling pork chops, frying fish, and delivering food baskets. In October 2021, he received the Melvin Jones Fellowship Award. Ken's work behind the scenes really made a difference. He set up the grills the night before and cleaned out coolers after everyone else left. He fried fish and then emptied the old grease from the bus after fish fries. However, where he once again made a key impact is through all the maintenance work provided to the Lions Mobile Kitchen. Not only did he do regular maintenance, but he kept it clean and stocked with supplies. Ken truly embodies the spirit of a Lion, men and women who volunteer their time and their energy by serving. He did this for 29 years, serving his club and community.



**LaCrosse Volunteer
Fire Department**

James M. Hathaway

Career Captain ★ March 8, 2024 ★ Age 52

INDIANA



City of Muncie
Fire Department

Captain James Michael Hathaway, 52, died March 8, 2024, at IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital after a courageous battle with cancer.

He was born on May 26, 1971, in Muncie, Indiana, the son of Jimmy A. and Connie S. (Rice) Hathaway. James graduated from Muncie Southside High School in 1989 and attended Ball State University. On November 11, 2022, he married Christina K. Hayden.

James served his community as a firefighter with the City of Muncie Fire Department for 19 years and was a member of Muncie Firefighters Local #1348. During his career, he responded to more than 5,000 calls. He previously worked for Muncie Reception Diagnostic Center and Indiana State Prison in Pendleton.

He was an avid Raiders fan and enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren, racing, fishing, and playing his electric guitar. He loved his four fur babies, Jordyn, Jazmyn, Sullivan, and Xena.

Surviving are his wife, Christina K. Hathaway; six children, Whitney, Cailey, Jacob (Jasmine), Amber, Ashley, and Mackenzie; his parents, Jimmy and Connie S. Hathaway; his grandmother, Alberta Green; grandchildren, Aden, Jaxon, Sorren, Hudson, Hendrix, Lincoln, Haizly, and Breeah; his brother, Gregory Hathaway (Connie M.); his sister, Jennifer Hathaway; his mother-in-law, Kathy Lynn; many aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins; special friends, Troy Dulaney and Mike Hill (Chrissy); and many special brothers and sisters with the Muncie Fire Department.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Rev. Lewis A. Hathaway and Joan Hathaway, Boss Rice, and Hazel Rice; and his beloved boxer, Josie.

He loved his career as a Muncie firefighter and was remembered as a hometown hero.

Michael E. Kreps Jr.

Volunteer Firefighter ★ **October 16, 2021** ★ **Age 54**

Michael E. "Mike" Kreps Jr. was born January 8, 1967, in Hartford City, Indiana. Mike graduated from Maxville Christian School in 1985 and from Indiana Law Enforcement Academy in 1992. He was hired as a full-time police officer for the City of Dunkirk in 1992 and served as patrolman first class and captain. He retired as the captain of the City of Dunkirk Police Department in 2016 and became the City of Dunkirk street department superintendent. Mike started his 28-year volunteer fire service in 1993.

Mike was a member of Temple Baptist Church and the Dunkirk American Legion Post 227.

Mike received many accolades throughout his police and fire career, and he was a humble man. He was the most helpful, caring, loving, and genuine person. He was always there to lend a hand and to serve his community. His family was the world to him. Mike married his wife of 29 years, Eva, on August 10, 1992, and they had two beautiful children, Sam and Sydney. Anyone that knew Mike also knew that his pride and joy were his grandchildren, Kimber, Liam, and Remy.

Although Mike is not with us physically, he is most definitely with us in spirit and is watching over his family each and every day. His wife, Eva Kreps; his children, Sam (Ashley) Kreps and Sydney Kreps; his parents, Mick and Charlotte Kreps; his brother, Cecil Kreps; and his grandchildren, Kimber, Liam, and Remy; miss him terribly and look forward to the day they will be reunited.



INDIANA

Dunkirk Fire
Department

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Rodrick Shane Lambert

Volunteer Firefighter ★ August 10, 2024 ★ Age 52

INDIANA



Wayne Township
Fire Department

Rodrick Shane Lambert, a hero, was born on January 11, 1972. Better known as “Rod” to those near and dear, he was such a kindhearted, generous, and honest soul.

He is the child of Steve and Sharon Lambert. Budding from Franklin, Indiana, he was the fiercest firefighter you would ever know. Walking home after a full day of learning at Northwood Elementary, with pal Manuel Navarro in tow, he would parade over to the firehouse to see the action inside.

He had given three full years of service to Wayne Township Fire Department before tragedy struck. On May 23, 1995, Rod was involved in a rollover accident on the way to a call. Although the accident left Rod paralyzed from the chest down, he never let it stop him from thriving. He stayed dedicated to Wayne Township Fire Department throughout his life. He inspired so many others with his amazing recovery, never quitting and always showing up.

Thankfully, before the accident Rod was blessed with his only son, Michael Lambert, born October 21, 1994. Rod was a devoted father through and through, never letting his disability get in the way of being a present father. Rod also got to see it through to the arrival of his grandson, Chett Lambert, born March 22, 2024. He was so proud of his parents and his boys and loved his family beyond words. He had many friends who also supported him throughout his life.

Rodrick’s last call was August 10, 2024. To have known Rod was such an honor.

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Jacob Tyler McClanahan

Volunteer Firefighter ★ **May 16, 2022** ★ **Age 24**

INDIANA

Born in Corydon, Indiana, on November 3, 1997, Jacob Tyler McClanahan was the son of Marty and Deborah McClanahan. Jacob was a son, brother, brother-in-law, uncle, nephew, and friend and was loved by us all. From an early age, Jacob loved the outdoors. Jacob loved being with his dad and always wanted to learn from him. As he grew older, Jacob loved conservation, hunting, fishing, bow fishing, and boating with his friends on the Ohio River.

Jacob started his volunteer career at O'Bannon State Park in Harrison County when he was 13. At the age of 16, Jacob joined the Harrison Township Fire Department; he continued from there to volunteer at several other departments but felt at home with Ramsey Volunteer Fire and Harrison Township as his two primary volunteer departments. Jacob was certified in several areas of training and eventually went to EMT training. Jacob loved to help people no matter what the circumstance was.

Jacob ran cross country and track in school, earning several ribbons and medals, and went to Prosser Vocational School his junior and senior years, studying criminal law. Jacob was honored to receive plaques for most runs and for his dedication to Harrison Township Volunteer Fire Department. Jacob was very professional and dedicated. He took this career seriously, and he wore his uniforms with pride. Jacob also drove a dump truck for the Harrison County Highway Department and was the first one to volunteer to go out for any emergency that might arise after work hours. That was Jacob. He never told anyone no. He was the first person to offer help, which is ultimately why he is gone. He would do it again, because he couldn't and wouldn't pass by anyone on the side of the road.

Jacob lost his life May 16, 2022, doing what he loved to do. He stopped to offer aid to a police officer with a stranded motorist. The motorist shot, killing Jacob. Since his death, Jacob was recognized by Governor Holcomb, who named a mile section of State Road 135 where the incident occurred the Jacob T. McClanahan Memorial Mile. Harrison Township named the New Southern Indiana Fire Training Facility the Harrison Township Fire Department Jacob T. McClanahan Training Center.

Jacob would never have believed the awesome tributes given to him, and he wouldn't feel like he deserved it because he only did what he felt everyone should do. Jacob's gift was his ability to make everyone feel that they were the most important person in the room. If he asked you how you were doing, he really wanted to know. He cared. He loved. He will forever live in our hearts.

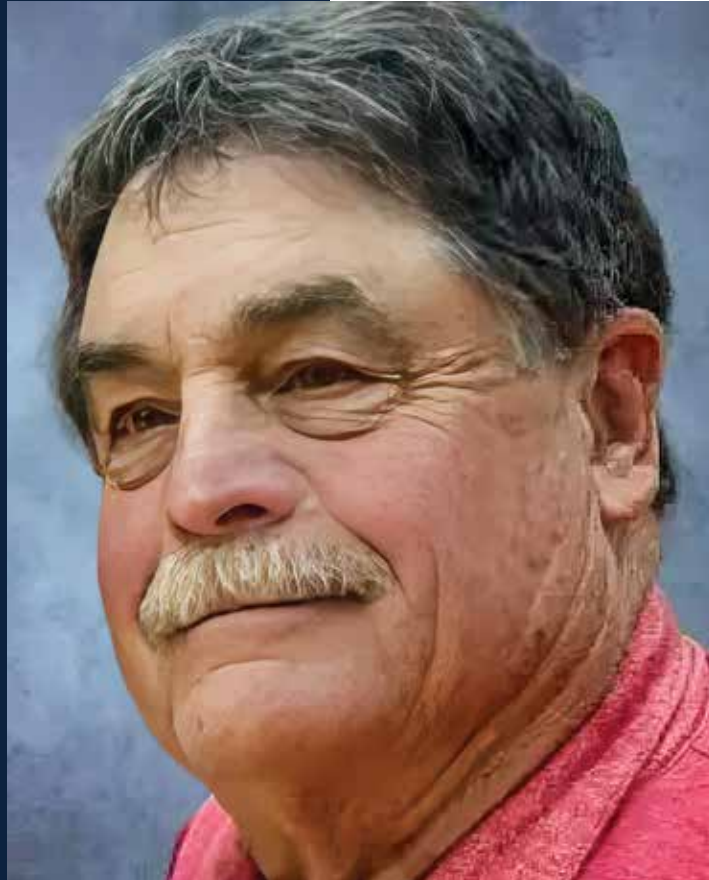


**Ramsey Volunteer
Fire Department**

Ralph F. Meyer

Volunteer Firefighter ★ December 4, 2024 ★ Age 72

INDIANA



**Napoleon Volunteer
Fire Company**

Ralph F. Meyer, 72, of Greensburg/Napoleon, passed away on December 4, 2024. He was born on May 16, 1952, in Batesville, Indiana, the son of Donald and Jo Ann Brownell Meyer. Ralph was a 1970 graduate of Jac-Cen-Del High School. He was a farmer and cattleman all his life, and he co-owned Meyer Family Angus. He was an over-the-road driver for Batesville Casket Company for 28 years.

Ralph was a life member of the Napoleon Volunteer Fire Company, having been active on the roster for 58 years in various capacities, including arson investigator, emergency medical responder, driving instructor, and a past fire chief. Ralph was a member of the Smyrna Lutheran Church and the Southern Indiana Angus Association. Ralph was an electrician for many years for Meyerrose Electric, did excavation for Gene Eaton & Son Excavation, was a seed rep for O's Gold Seed, and most recently worked at Letts Hardware doing equipment sales. He was created with a servant's heart and dedicated his free time to helping the community in many ways.

Ralph was known by many; he didn't know a stranger, and he always had a story to tell. Ralph loved to watch Jac-Cen-Del basketball games. He could frequently be heard in the stands disagreeing with the officials and, after the game, he would high-five and congratulate the athletes. He was always supportive and super proud of his grandchildren; he never missed an opportunity to talk about them and their accomplishments.

He was always a familiar face at the county fair. From being a 10-year 4-H member to becoming a tractor project leader and leader of the Napoleon 4-H Country Club for 28 years, Ralph could always be seen around the

fairgrounds. He shared his love of cattle with any youth who wanted to learn.

Ralph's final act of service was to be an organ donor. Based on his donation, he was able to help an estimated 100-150 people.

His survivors include his daughter, Angela Chambers; sons, Steve (Brandy) Meyer and Ryan (Latisha) Meyer; grandchildren, Austin (Hannah) Chambers, Ashley Chambers, Julia Meyer, Logan Meyer, Kaiden Meyer, and Christopher Meyer; sister, Susie (Bill) Whitworth; and brother, Kim (Judy) Meyer. He was preceded in death by his parents and his sister, Judith Witkemper.

Richard C. Potter

Career Engineer ★ May 10, 2022 ★ Age 52

Richard Christopher "Hank" Potter was appointed as a career engineer with the Wayne Township Fire Department on December 27, 1999. Hank served as a volunteer firefighter with the department from June 1987 until his career appointment.

He was assigned to C Shift after graduating from Recruit Class #1. Hank had his first regular assignment at Station 82, A Shift in January of 2000. He transferred to station 82, C Shift in February 2001 before moving to Ladder 82, B Shift on January 18, 2004. Hank remained the engineer on Ladder 82, B Shift until his death.

Hank was awarded the Medal of Bravery, the Medal of Merit, the Community Service Award, and seven unit commendations.

He always worked an off-duty job, whether at Rolls-Royce as a firefighter or leading the Knox Key control system for the department. Around the station, he was known as the guy who could drive anything.

Hank also took great pride in his military service, especially his combat tour in Afghanistan. Hank served honorably for 25 years in the Indiana National Guard, retiring as a staff sergeant. His military awards include an Army Commendation Medal and Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, NATO Medal, and various unit awards and ribbons.



INDIANA

Wayne Township
Fire Department

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Rick Sanders

Paid-on-Call Firefighter/EMT ★ December 12, 2024 ★ Age 48

INDIANA



Winchester
Fire Department

Richard “Rick” Sanders, 48, was a lifelong resident of Winchester, Indiana, whose passion for service and adventure defined his every moment. On Thursday, December 12, 2024, he passed away doing what he loved, responding to a fire run.

From a young age, Rick had a fearless spirit. He became a firefighter cadet in high school and, eager to chase his dreams, earned his GED ahead of his class. Rick had been a dedicated firefighter since 2008, serving both the Winchester and White River Township Fire Departments and was a proud member of the Winchester Masonic Lodge #56.

In 2002, he built his own business from the ground up with nothing but a tow truck and a phone. Through sheer determination and an unmatched work ethic, he grew Sanders’ Service Auto Repair and Towing into a thriving company. Being WreckMaster Certified, made no challenge too big for Rick to attempt. Whether responding to a fire, assisting stranded drivers, or lending a hand in the community, Rick was always among the first to step up.

Rick was known for his larger-than-life personality. He never met a stranger, could talk to anyone for hours, and had an uncanny ability to fix just about anything. Though often gruff and blunt, his heart was as big as his presence. He was the go-to person in any crisis, the one who ran toward danger when others ran away.

Rick embraced life at full speed. He loved fast trucks, motorcycles, scuba diving, roller coasters, and camping. Rick rescued several dogs that became his best friends. Rick was rarely seen without his dogs, and they would often get served at the local ice cream shop before Rick.

A devoted family man, Rick married his wife, Billie, in 2005. He was a loving father to Amanda, Abbey, Jonathan, and Joseph and a proud grandfather to Kitsey Jo, Aubriella, and Max. Heartbreakingly, his youngest granddaughter, Sadie, was born after his passing and will never get to experience his boundless love firsthand. Even with all that Rick did, he would gladly put down his wrench to love on or spend time with these precious little ones.

Rick’s impact on Winchester was immeasurable. Whether volunteering, supporting local fundraisers, or being one of the first on the scene after the Winchester tornado, he was always ready to help. His loss leaves a void that no one person could ever fill.

Rick may not have lived as many years as we wished, but he lived more in those years than most do in a lifetime. His sarcastic humor, his relentless drive, and his unwavering dedication to others made him unforgettable. He was, and always will be, our favorite grumpy person and our hero.

Brad Allan Sherwood

Career Captain/EMT ★ February 23, 2024 ★ Age 56

IOWA

Captain Brad Allan Sherwood was born January 17, 1968, in Cedar Falls, Iowa, to Peggy and the late Darryl Sherwood. He graduated from Dike High School in 1986 before attending Ellsworth and Hawkeye Community Colleges. After graduation, Brad began working at L&M Transmission. He excelled at rebuilding transmissions and was known near and far for his work. Brad continued working part-time at L&M throughout his fire career.

Brad served for 27 years as a firefighter and EMT. He earned his first responder certification in 1994 and began volunteering for the Cedar Falls Fire Department in 1997. He was hired full-time in 2001, became an EMT in 2005, and was promoted to captain in 2009.

Brad's love for the fire service was evident in everything he did. He received numerous awards throughout his career, including an Award of Honor for selfless actions that saved a life. In 2015, he was honored as Fire Officer of the Year. He was a subject matter expert in fire truck maintenance and firefighter protective gear. Brad's dedication to his fire and EMT teams was unwavering, and he was passionate about keeping them and the community safe. Brad's personal and professional life was devoted to helping others, a testament to his selflessness and dedication.

Brad's love for his family was boundless. They were his number one priority, always coming first. He was most proud of his children. His locker was covered in family photos, overlapping layers of love and memories. Brad chose fatherhood; he had been his children's dad since both were very young and officially adopted them in 2012.

Brad loved spending time at his family farm, purchased from his Grandma Sherwood in 2001. The same place where he and his close friends made childhood memories had become his escape as an adult. When not at one of his two jobs, you'd find him on the farm working on a car, building a skid loader, reclining in his nap chair, drinking a Pepsi, or petting his shop cats (with an occasional cat-selfie sent to the family group chat). He looked forward to retiring in a few years and spending every day sitting on a porch swing overlooking the beautiful farmland—his piece of heaven.

Brad left behind his deeply grieving family, his wife and the love of his life, Carrie; his daughter, Madeline; his son, Carter; his mom, Peggy; and his sister, Julie.

Brad was his family's selfless hero, a shining light who brightened their lives every day. His absence has left a void that can never be filled, and their world is undoubtedly dimmer without him.



Cedar Falls Fire Rescue

Ty Montgomery Voth

Career Firefighter ★ August 1, 2024 ★ Age 27

KANSAS



Wichita
Fire Department

Ty Voth was born August 14, 1996. He was a second-generation firefighter. He knew at a young age that he wanted to follow in the footsteps of his dad and uncle.

Ty was an avid outdoorsman. If he had a weekend off, you could find him in either his duck blind or deer blind. He also loved hunting Kansas pheasants and quail. The first time his sister drove his truck after he passed, she hit a deer. We like to say it was Ty getting the first and only deer of the season. He was very competitive. When hunting season was over, he would be fishing. This kid never stopped.

Ty loved his family and friends and often put others first. From checking on his best buddy's newborn after a violent storm knocked out electricity and downed trees to chasing a frog out of his sister's garage, Ty was the one to call.

Ty was a natural born leader, and we dream of what might have been if he wasn't taken so soon. Ty died doing what he loved and wouldn't have wanted it any other way. While Ty is loved and missed by so many, his legacy lives on through his fire family at Station 5, Squad 5.

RIP 1348

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Charles E. “Bubba” Brumfield

Career Chief ★ **August 1, 2021** ★ **Age 55**

KENTUCKY

Charles E. “Bubba” Brumfield was born in Lexington, Kentucky, to Charles and Brenda Brumfield on December 4, 1965. He was a lifelong resident of Jessamine County and a member of the Lighthouse Baptist Church.

Bubba served the Nicholasville Fire Department for 30 years and served as its chief from 2003 until retiring in 2014. His retirement ended a 66-year run of the Brumfield family being part of the department. His father and grandfather both served as chief, and he was very proud to carry on that tradition. He said that firefighting was in his blood. Bubba would be overjoyed knowing that his oldest son, Jacob, is carrying on that legacy with the Wilmore Fire Department.

During Bubba’s many years with the fire service, he saw many changes. He had a strong influence regarding the structure and growth from a volunteer department to hiring its first full-time firefighters in 1993 to becoming a full-time department in 2000. He made sure they had proper training procedures in place, as well as the equipment needed to ensure the safety of the firefighters.

As the city was rapidly growing, Bubba worked with city officials, to get two additional fire stations staffed full-time. One of his proudest accomplishments was getting the city a new Seagrave pumper. He worked with the Seagrave company on the design and customizing every detail of this beautiful apparatus, which made its debut in 2014.

Although Bubba was a humble man who never liked a lot of recognition, he received many awards and recognitions during his years of service. One of these was an Award of Valor for his heroic attempt in saving a young woman from her burning apartment. This horrific event stayed with him for many years.

In addition to firefighting, he enjoyed aviation, golf, hunting, motorcycles, and of course fishing! Bubba loved life, leaving us to soon on August 1, 2021. He left an undeniable imprint on so many lives, including his family, who will always feel the void of his absence.

Bubba was a dedicated husband of 32 years to Mitzi, and a loving father to Jacob, Kelli, and Ryan, along with his fur baby, Sophie. He also left behind his loving parents and his brother, Tim. Bubba would be elated that he has two beautiful granddaughters, Amelia and Elsie.

Bubba loved firefighting, friends, and family, but most importantly was a man of God and loved Jesus! We take great comfort in knowing he is with Him now.



**Nicholasville
Fire Department**

Mitchell T. Christian

Career Battalion Chief ★ April 10, 2023 ★ Age 60

KENTUCKY



Ashland Fire
Department

Mitchell T. Christian was born on February 6, 1963, to Jack and Gail Christian, who raised him to understand the true meaning of work, loyalty to family, and always being his best. In high school he excelled in football and won many awards, including Best Running Back, Best Defensive Back, and Mr. Football. He was inducted into Raceland’s Football Hall of Fame. This was where he developed his love for working out. Although he was a competitive man, he was embarrassed by awards and attention. He was quiet but very witty and funny. He was liked and respected by all who knew him.

He enjoyed cooking for his brothers and was featured in “Bridges” magazine for his chicken and dumplings. His men loved his strawberry rhubarb pie and still make it in his honor.

Mitch volunteered for most extracurricular training available throughout his career. He became a certified diver on the search and recovery team. He attended training in Emmitsburg and became a fire investigator for the department. He received an award from the city for Bravery in the Line of Duty. Mitch moved up the ranks during his 25 years from firefighter to battalion chief. His men loved working for him.

Mitch worked two jobs for 34 years. He was also a CMT for KDMC, using his training to work in the ER on his days off. He would go on his 12-hour shift as soon as he left the fire station for 15 years. He was always using his training to take care of someone. Later, he worked at Small Space Confinement Rescue with companies his firefighting brothers started. His work ethic and self-discipline were inspiring. No matter what, he always made time to work out. It was not just a hobby; working out and being fit was part of who Mitch was.

His wife and children adored and respected him with all their hearts. He was their world. Their time together was spent with humor and good food. He loved his grandchildren with his whole heart. He loved trivia and always knew the answers at Jeopardy. He was a natural winner and always won at games. He loved history and knew all about the Civil War and World Wars I and II.

Mitch was married to his wife for 38 years. He will always be her hero. He is missed terribly by his wife, children and grandchildren. He left a big hole in this world. His family, friends, and firefighting brothers will never forget him.

Gerald J. Cox

Volunteer Firefighter ★ **June 28, 2019** ★ **Age 47**

Gerald Joseph "Joey" Cox, 47, of Munfordville, Kentucky, died June 28, 2019, from complications of occupational cancer, with his loving family by his side.

Joey was born on January 12, 1972, in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

He was a deputy with the Hart County Sheriff's Department for 12 years and served a total of 27 years in law enforcement.

He was chief of the Priceville Volunteer Fire Department and a part-time EMT with the Hart County Ambulance Service.

Joey was an outdoorsman and worked with his dad on the farm. He was a member of Dorsey's Chapel Methodist Church.

Joey was survived by his wife, Jamie Simpson Cox; his daughter, Gabrielle Cox; his sons, Scott Caffee (Olivia) and Joseph Ezekiel "Zeke" Cox; his parents, Gerald and Teresa Cox; his brother, Chuck Cox (Lydia); his sister, Sarah Beth Cox; several nieces, nephews, and a host of friends.

Joey respected all and was loved and respected by many. He was down to earth, caring, and willing to stand up for what he believed in. He was remembered as a guardian of the public and a peacemaker.



KENTUCKY

**Priceville Volunteer
Fire Department**

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Darrell Keith Helton

Volunteer Firefighter ★ September 5, 2024 ★ Age 49

KENTUCKY



Belfry Volunteer
Fire Department

Darrell Keith Helton, 49, of Huddy, Kentucky, was born on October 12, 1974, to Elaine and Greg Helton. Darrell was a Belfry volunteer firefighter when he lost his life on September 5, 2024, while responding to a structure fire. Darrell had the heart of a servant; he served his community for over a decade as a volunteer fireman and as a coal truck driver, all while providing for his family. Darrell received his Kentucky Basic I Certification on the night the Lord took him home. Darrell was reunited with his mother, Elaine Helton, who passed away on June 19, 2024.

Darrell had one daughter, Whitney Helton-Spartman, 27, of Elkhorn City, Kentucky. He enjoyed watching her grow up and achieve her own family and goals, while standing by her side through it all. He was blessed with two grandchildren, Bentley Ryan Spartman and Paxton Kate Spartman, who he thought the world of. He found peace and happiness by spoiling and playing with his grandchildren. Darrell was a devoted and loving family man, leaving behind his father, Greg Helton; his daughter, Whitney Helton-Spartman; and his grandchildren, Bentley and Paxton Spartman.

Darrell loved spending his time outdoors, whether it was riding his side-by-side, mowing grass, or just sitting outside on the porch with his two favorite buddies, Sammy and Bear. His dogs were also his children; where he went, they were close behind him. He took great pride in taking care of his family, whether it was through support and encouragement or tough love that everyone needed occasionally. You could always go to Darrell when you needed good life advice, because he wouldn't be afraid to tell you his opinion, and he was usually right.

He had his side-by-side and some of his favorite snacks in his building. When we went over, his two grandchildren always wanted to ride or simply just sit and eat Papaw's favorite snack—a Snickers bar and a bottle of Sprite. Papaw always made sure they got to ride and play and eat his favorite snacks together whenever they wanted to. We all wanted to feel his love and comfort when we walked into his building or when we rode his side-by-side. Now, whenever our family needs to reminisce with him, they are always welcome to come and sit around to enjoy a simple ride or a handful of snacks and drinks that will always be there in honor of him.

Darrell departed this earth doing something he loved, serving his community. This has been a great comfort to his family and friends, who miss him dearly but know that he rests in the perfect hands of the Lord.

Arthur “Butch” Henley

Volunteer Firefighter ★ **March 14, 2021** ★ **Age 63**

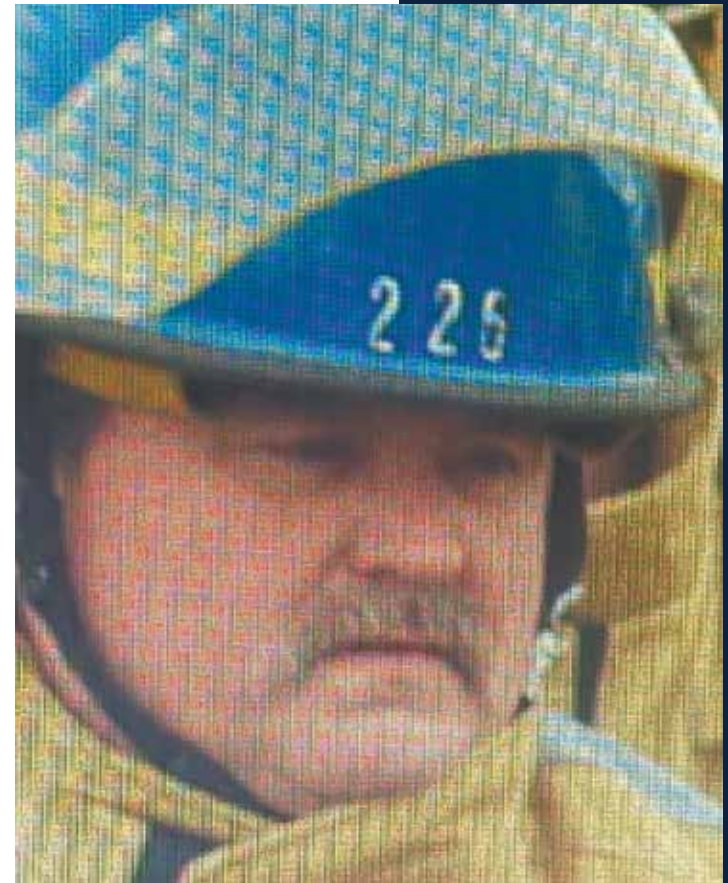
Butch was a kind and caring man.

He joined the Rolling Fork Fire Department on March 10, 1997.

The Rolling Fork Fire Department is a volunteer fire department, and the people it serves live in a small town way out in the country. The department counts on volunteers like Butch. He had been a lieutenant in the department and helped start a water rescue in Nelson County by teaching scuba diving.

Butch was diagnosed with cancer in 2016. He stopped being able to fight fires, but he didn't stop helping his community. He helped by doing traffic control and other things. He loved woodworking and would make items and donate them for benefits. He was always willing to help.

His family meant the world to him. He was a proud Papa of three grandchildren, whom he treasured.



KENTUCKY

**Rolling Fork
Fire Department**

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Remembrance 2025



Mark R. Hernandez

Career Firefighter/EMT ★ September 29, 2023 ★ Age 54

KENTUCKY



Cincinnati/
Northern Kentucky
International Airport
Fire Department

Mark “Mongo” Hernandez was a warrior in every sense of the word, to his family and the brothers he worked alongside. From a very young age, Mark did everything full bore, including playing football, wrestling, and hunting with his buddies. He never stopped moving, working, or helping family and friends. He was who you called. When he was diagnosed with lymphoma, he still acted like there was nothing he couldn’t do, and he made everything fun. He battled lymphoma for two long years with the same warrior mentality that he showed throughout his 54 years.

When he first moved to Northern Kentucky and married his wife, Shelly, he volunteered at the local Highland Heights station right down from their house. Right from the start he had found his passion for fighting fires. On his very first call, while following behind his chief, holding the hose, his chief fell through the floor. With the other hand, Mark pulled him up from the burning floor. From that day, “Mongo” was a legend at every station where he worked. Mark continued on his path by working at Central Campbell, Taylor Mill, Point Pleasant, and the CVG Airport Fire, where he spent most of his 21 years of service. It was at CVG where he started his other passion, H&H Construction, with his brother, Micheal, and his best friend, Jeremy, from CVG. His work at the station, his remodeling, and his family gave Mongo nonstop energy to help anyone that needed a “large” hand.

Mark’s family was hands down the most important part of his life. From his four siblings to his three amazing children, Beth, Mariah, and Ryan, there was nothing he wouldn’t do. As a father, he passed along that same drive and determination to his children, who have grown into successful adults. His love and determination as a warrior can be seen in them and everyone they touch. Just ask the nurses of the 14th floor at Good Samaritan about the “Warrior” and all the stories and laughter that was shared, and you will see how Mark and his children touched everyone.

Mark “Mongo” Hernandez was literally one of a kind and continues to be missed by his family, children, and brothers at every station in Northern Kentucky that he touched. The laughter that filled every room he was in, his larger-than-life personality, the love of helping others, and living in each moment were beautiful to watch. His legacy will never be forgotten, and the stories will continue to be told daily. He will continue to drive all of us to be “Warriors.”

Travis L. Ransom

Career Captain ★ **June 21, 2024** ★ **Age 49**

KENTUCKY

Travis Lee Ransom was a selfless, genuine, and humble man who led by example. He was intelligent, charismatic, and incredibly ambitious. In his short 49 years of life, Travis continually gave of himself to friends, family, and his community.

Travis ("The Kid") was born in Conneautville, Pennsylvania, on December 26, 1974, to parents Linda and Ernest. He grew up in Conneautville and, from an early age, spent most of his time outdoors. He enjoyed hunting and fishing and had a love for all sports.

Travis served his country in the U.S. Air Force from 1994 until he obtained a firefighting job in 1997 at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG). He quickly worked his way up the ranks. While at CVG, he obtained his Paramedic Certification and a degree in fire science. Travis retired in 2017 as a battalion chief with 20 years of service at CVG. After retirement, Travis worked part-time at Union Fire Protection District and went full-time with the department in February 2019.

Travis always prided himself on staying healthy and active. He continually advocated for the health and safety of his fellow firefighters. While at Union Fire, Travis found his passion for mentoring and training new recruits. He was excited to give back to his community. He loved his family, profession, community, and his country. He was truly an American hero.

Travis was always willing to help others and never asked anyone to do anything he wouldn't do himself. He inspired so many, and his professionalism in the firefighting community is something that others strived to emulate. When not at the firehouse, Travis was often found spending time with his wife and kids. He was the definition of a true family man. Although Travis prided himself on eating healthy, he always enjoyed a good steak. He loved music and could rock out to some old-school heavy metal music but enjoyed the classic country songs too. He was a huge Pittsburgh Steelers fan, and the Ransom family were often found sitting together on Sunday afternoons watching football games.

Travis won his two-year battle with occupational cancer and was called to his heavenly home on June 21, 2024. He is survived by his wife of 23 years, Lisa; twins, Hunter and Hannah (21); daughter, Kayleigh (18); and his dog, Finley.

Travis is deeply missed. We are comforted knowing our hero and guardian angel is watching over and protecting us. His light will continue to live on in all of us who knew and loved him. To honor Travis and to continue his legacy, the family established the Travis' Triumph Tour Memorial Scholarship Fund: <https://horizonfunds.org/fund/travis-triumph-tour>.



**Union Fire
Protection District**

Geneva K. Salyer

Volunteer Firefighter ★ August 29, 2023 ★ Age 56

KENTUCKY



Red Bush Volunteer
Fire Department

Geneva Kay Salyer was born on October 13, 1966, in Paintsville, Kentucky, to Buell Webb and the late Frances Webb. She carried a deep love for family and community, always putting others before herself. She was a cherished daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, and friend.

Geneva took great pride in creating a warm and loving home. She shared 37 wonderful years of marriage with her husband, Paul Salyer. They were blessed with a son, Justin Salyer (Lindsey Salyer), and grandchildren, Abby and Chass Ramey. She adored her grand-dogs and carried in her heart the love of grandchildren Rhett and Chesney Salyer, two little souls who were never able to be in her arms but were always in her heart.

Geneva was a devoted sister to Veva Reed (Jeff Reed) and cherished the memory of her late brother, Greg Webb (Belinda Webb). She was also loved by extended family and close friends.

Her passion for service was evident in her 37 years with the fire department. As a founding member of the Red Bush Volunteer Fire Department, she played a key role in establishing the department in 1986. She served as a safety officer for 30 years and was also a certified Emergency Medical Responder (EMR). Geneva always ensured that firefighters had water, Gatorade, or soda at scenes, keeping them hydrated and cared for. In 2023, she was honored as Firefighter of the Year for her dedication.

Geneva was known for her kindness and generosity. A devoted church member, she found joy in lifting others up. Whether lending a helping hand, offering encouragement, or providing comfort, she was a pillar of strength. She always had candy in her pocketbook, ready to share a little joy. She loved traveling to Tennessee, especially visiting Cades Cove and watching the bears.

On August 29, 2023, Geneva Kay Salyer passed away, leaving a profound void in the lives of her family, friends, and fellow firefighters. Though no longer physically present, her spirit lives on in the lessons she taught, the lives she touched, and the countless memories she created.

Geneva's legacy will forever be one of love, service, and dedication. Her impact on the fire department and community will not be forgotten, and her memory will continue to inspire future generations. We will miss her dearly but know she rests in God's hands.

Gregory T. VanHoose

Volunteer Firefighter ★ **April 21, 2023** ★ **Age 60**

Gregory Turner VanHoose was born in Paintsville, Kentucky, to Emma Jean (Daniels) VanHoose and the late James Arville VanHoose on August 18, 1962. Greg was a dedicated firefighter for more than 36 years.

He graduated from Johnson Central High School in Johnson County, Kentucky, and went on to vocational school to complete four years of autobody and welding. Greg was talented when it came to fixing small engines and painting vehicles.

He was a dedicated hard worker for the Johnson County Board of Education as a bus driver and a mechanic at the bus garage. Greg enjoyed his job and was well liked by all the people he encountered, willing to help in any way he could.

Greg loved having a good time with family and friends. He was always a prankster. His had a large garden and would plant enough for family and friends that wanted some fresh garden goods. Green beans and corn were his specialty, and we were always blessed with a lot to share. This was the kind of man he was, giving and kindhearted. He also enjoyed building rail buggies. Once he had built his first one, all the guys around started wanting one, and he would help them build theirs. Then it was weekend rides in the hills, where he loved to be.

His main thing was his family, though. He loved his mother dearly and wanted her to be taken care of. He really enjoyed seeing his grandbabies when they came in from Georgetown, Kentucky, to visit. When they stayed all night, he would get up and fix breakfast for them. To this day, his youngest, Xander, remembers when his Papaw would make his favorite, gravy and biscuits. Xander is now four years old. There is not a day that goes by that he doesn't say something like, "I sure miss Papaw, don't you, Nana?" We go into the living room to sit, and he wants to sit in his Papaw's chair. He'll say, "I think I'll sit here and let my Papaw hold me." I tell him it's fine. His Papaw would love that.

Greg and I have three beautiful grandchildren. Kylee Dawn (12), Addyson Rae (8), and Xander James (4). They were his life, and he would do anything they needed or asked to be done. That was the kind of person and Papaw he was.

I love and miss my sweet husband and my best friend. He will never be forgotten. I could go on and on and talk about this good Christian man, but I had better just stop here. Everyone that knew him knew what kind of person he was. He was willing to help anyone in need, day or night.



KENTUCKY

**Rockhouse Volunteer
Fire Department**

John T. Vickers Jr.

Volunteer Sergeant ★ June 7, 2024 ★ Age 62

KENTUCKY



Zoneton Fire
Protection District

John T. Vickers Jr. proudly dedicated 37 years of his life to the fire service. During a three-decade long career with Okolona Fire Protection District, he worked his way up to assistant fire chief. After his retirement, he volunteered for an additional seven years with Zoneton Fire Protection District. John felt most at ease while working on truck committees, as a safety officer at many working fires, and mentoring new firefighters, especially two of his own children who joined the fire service after him.

His fire chief said, "He was a key figure in all the department's efforts to keep our communities safe. He was known for his courage, dedication, and commitment to his fellow firefighters and the people he served. He would always be there to help you if you have questions."

In August 2005, John traveled to New Orleans to assist in the water rescues after Hurricane Katrina devastated the city. Emergency responders found themselves in peril as looting and crime even raged against them. John demonstrated quick thinking and the ability to work well under the extreme conditions created by the natural disaster. He was often required to make split-second decisions that could have a significant impact on the safety of their teams.

In January of 2009, our community suffered after a devastating ice storm that left Louisville without power for weeks. John stayed at the firehouse for days, assisting with the evacuation of the elderly and responding to countless calls, including stranded motorists and hundreds of downed power lines. While the work of a firefighter can be challenging, John felt the most rewarded by providing an opportunity to serve the community and make a positive impact on people's lives.

John's commitment extended beyond his 37 years in the fire service. He spent 25 years with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, where he was a proud member of their Uniformed Motorcycle Unit as its longest-serving volunteer reserve deputy. His love for law enforcement combined with his passion for riding created a unique blend of skills that was perfect for him. He was also a member of the Blue Knights International Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club.

A devoted family man, John is survived by his wife of 35 years. His three kids were his biggest joy. John and Kayla advanced through the fire department's Explorer's Post and then joined the fire department. He passed down his love of trains to his youngest son, Jake. They devoted countless hours to train chasing.

John's passing leaves a profound void in many hearts, and his presence will be deeply missed.

Roy Franklin “Frank” Whitt

Volunteer Captain ★ **March 12, 2024** ★ **Age 72**

Roy Franklin “Frank” Whitt was born on February 25, 1952, the oldest child of Kenneth and Malinda Whitt. He was always a hardworking but fun person, ready to lend a hand to all who knew him.

The people in his community were very important to him, especially his family and his church family. He was married for 52 years to his wife, Carolyn, and they had two children, Roy (Jennifer) and Rita; six grandchildren, Sarah, Rebekah, Kiley, Carver, Braley, and Kegan; along with many other family members who he loved dearly.

He really came into his own when he retired from his career as a heavy equipment operator. He became a full-time farmer and a volunteer firefighter with the Route 504 Volunteer Fire Department in Elliott County, Kentucky. Through the fire department, he was able to do more to get out and about to help others. He was always available to be called out to assist people in need. Hanging out with his fellow firefighters made him happy, and it made him proud to be part of such a great crew of heroes.

After his death, his family really found out how many lives he touched, not only as a firefighter, but as a Christian and good neighbor. If he knew someone couldn’t get out of the house due to illness or injury, Frank would stop for a visit and bring them in supplies if they needed them. He loved to grow a large garden every year so he could give away the vegetables to his neighbors and family.

Frank made his last call on March 12, 2024, while driving a fire truck in a convoy of fire trucks that was going to escort an EMT who had died unexpectedly from the hospital to the funeral home.

Frank Whitt was a hero who will not be forgotten by his family and his community.

KENTUCKY



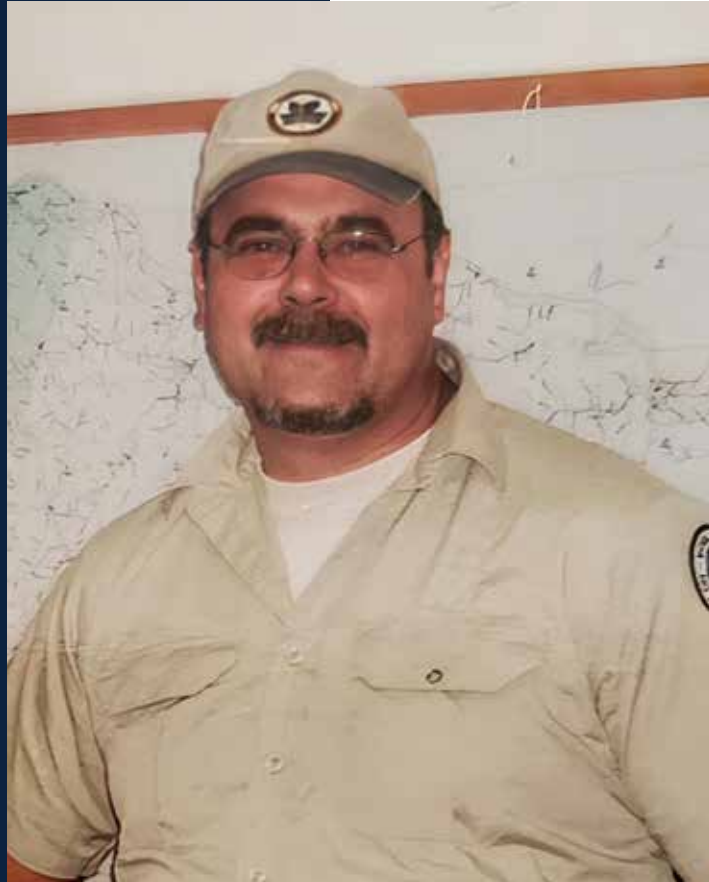
**Route 504 Volunteer
Fire Department**

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Charles Wilburn

Career Forest Ranger Technician ★ June 4, 2020 ★ Age 59

KENTUCKY



Kentucky
Department of
Forestry

Charles Preston “Chuck” Wilburn, age 59, of Morehead, Kentucky, was born on September 6, 1960, in Ashland, Kentucky, to Charles Wilburn and Judy Jarvis.

Chuck dedicated his career to public service, retiring from the Kentucky Division of Forestry as a district forester in 2010. Even after retirement, his love for the outdoors kept him working as a Morgan County ranger, a job he truly enjoyed. He was a proud Kentucky Colonel and an active member of Phelps Masonic Lodge No. 482 and Better Life Church.

Chuck was a family man through and through, deeply devoted to his wife of 17 years, Melissa James Wilburn. He was a loving father to his daughter, Hannah Baker, and his sons, Aaron Wilburn and Bradford Wilburn.

Chuck lived life to the fullest, always the same jovial person whenever you saw him. He was willing to help anyone in need and took great joy in landscaping, cheering for U.K. basketball, and watching his children’s sports. His love for music shined through in his passion for playing the guitar and banjo, and he took pride in his classic 1968 GTO. Whether it was sharing wisdom, laughter, or a good song, Chuck left a lasting impression on all who knew him.

Chuck left this world doing what he loved, surrounded by the things that made him happiest. Though his absence is deeply felt, his family and friends find comfort in knowing he is at peace. His memory lives on in the hearts of those who knew and loved him, and his spirit will always be a part of the lives he touched.

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Richard E. Blankenship Jr.

Career Lieutenant ★ **December 20, 2021** ★ **Age 47**

MARYLAND

Richard E. "Cat" Blankenship Jr., 47, passed away surrounded by his family on December 20, 2021.

Rich was born on November 29, 1974, in Howard County, Maryland. He was the son of Mary and the late Richard Blankenship Sr. Rich grew up in Laurel, Maryland, where he began his career as a firefighter. For twenty years he strived to be one of the best and bravest firefighters Howard County had to offer. He was a "fireman's fireman."

Rich was the owner of Laurel's House of Horror. His creativity and imagination ran the haunted house in Laurel, Maryland, for seven years. His legacy lives on in the firehouse and the haunted house. Three of his boys are now career firefighters for Howard County, following in their father's footsteps. As the years go by, Richard's spirit is kept alive at Laurel's House of Horror, the place where his dreams came true, in so many unique ways. Rich was often referred to as "Cat," and was best known for that title at the fire house. He will not be soon forgotten, as we all keep his memory alive daily in our own special ways.

Rich was best known for his humor. He kept his firehouse family and those who knew and loved him on their toes. It wouldn't take much for his charisma and charm to shine through, even in the toughest of times. He knew how to keep things light and will forever leave a mark on all our hearts.

Richard was survived by his wife, Charlene; his parents, Mary and the late Richard Blankenship Sr.; his sister, Nicole; his six children, Zachary, Tyler, Alex, Allyson, Andrew, and Nicholas; and his granddaughter, Cali Rose. Recently, we have celebrated the births of more grandchildren. Rich was also survived by his aunts, his uncle, cousins, and his fellow brothers and sisters at Howard County Fire and Rescue.



**Howard County
Department of Fire
and Rescue Services**

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

William Francis Goddard III

Career Deputy Fire Chief ★ September 1, 2021 ★ Age 70

MARYLAND



Prince George's
County Fire/EMS
Department

William Francis "Bill" Goddard III served as deputy fire chief for Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department and fire chief of Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue.

He was born on August 13, 1951, and passed away on September 1, 2021, at age 70, from his battle with cancer. Bill was raised in Prince George's County, Maryland, and lived a life marked by unwavering service, leadership, and dedication to his family, community, and country.

At just 16 years old, Bill began his lifelong commitment to public safety by joining the Glenn Dale Volunteer Fire Department, Company 18, as a junior member.

In May 1969, Bill enlisted in the U.S. Navy, where he served as a field medical corpsman, deploying overseas in support of the Vietnam conflict. For over four years, he demonstrated exceptional courage and dedication to his fellow service members before being honorably discharged in September 1972.

Returning to Maryland, Bill continued his firefighting journey with the Glenn Dale Volunteer Fire Department. In December 1972, he embarked on a 23-year career with Prince George's County Fire Department (PGFD). His leadership was instrumental in advancing the department's operations, safety protocols, and specialized response capabilities.

After retiring from PGFD in 1995, Bill's expertise was sought by Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening, who appointed him to senior roles in state government. In these roles, he continued advocating for career and volunteer firefighters and emergency personnel throughout Maryland and the United States.

In 2007, Bill was appointed fire chief of the Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue. Over 6½ years, Bill tirelessly championed the health, safety, and well-being of all department members, both uniformed and civilian. He worked closely with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, contributing to its vital programs and memorial events.

Throughout his career, Bill was known as a "fireman's firefighter," a mentor, leader, and advocate who deeply inspired those he worked with. His service extended beyond his professional achievements as a devoted life member of the Glenn Dale Volunteer Fire Department, where his commitment to the fire service never wavered.

Bill was a loving husband, father, grandfather, and friend, whose warmth, dedication, and integrity touched countless lives. His legacy of service and leadership will endure, and he will be profoundly missed by his family, friends, and the firefighting community he cherished.

Robert A. “Bobby” Jones

Career Firefighter/Paramedic ★ January 20, 2022 ★ Age 59

MARYLAND

In Loving Memory of Robert Anthony “Bobby” Jones
August 22, 1962 – January 20, 2022
The myth. The man. The legend.

Robert Anthony Jones, affectionately known as Bobby, was a man of few words but boundless dedication. He was a devoted firefighter, paramedic, engineer, supervisor, retired fire lieutenant, and HERO. Bobby dedicated over 44 years to the fire service, answering every call with courage and compassion.

From his early days as a junior volunteer with Woodlawn Volunteer Fire Company to serving at Reese and Community Volunteer Fire Department, Lansdowne Volunteer Fire Company, and Cape St. Claire Volunteer Fire Company, his passion for service never wavered. Rising through the ranks, he made history as Baltimore County’s first Black fire captain and later served as a lieutenant with the Anne Arundel County Fire Department.

Bobby’s legacy lives on in the lives he saved, the firefighters he mentored, and the community he loved. His bravery, sacrifice, and unwavering dedication will never be forgotten.

You will always be our hero.



FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

Reese and
Community
Volunteer Fire
Company

Craig E. Ralston

Volunteer Deputy Chief ★ February 3, 2022 ★ Age 63

MARYLAND



Ellicott City Volunteer
Fire Department

Craig Edward Ralston was born in 1958 to Edith and George Ralston and grew up in Baltimore, Maryland. He graduated from Mount Hebron High School and the University of Maryland. Always curious about the world, he later earned a PhD in Naturopathy and a Master of Occupational Safety & Health Environmental Management.

Craig was an avid sailor, car collector, tinkerer, and a savant with machines. He worked as a mechanic, repairing high-performance, antique, and modern vehicles. He held private pilot, glider, CDL, passenger, and motorcycle licenses. Craig and his wife, Kat, opened three businesses, The Bagelry Inc. (bakery/catering), Be Natural (natural foods), and Silver Unicorn (jewelry/antiques). These became the heart of an extended family, and Craig's warmth and kindness provided a safe place for teens to get support and skills. He offered math tutoring, mechanical skills, and jobs to provide much-needed structure.

In their 46 years together, Craig and Kat travelled extensively. They climbed mountains, went SCUBA diving, snorkeled, and walked on ancient streets around the world. Craig was strong, solid, and secure, with a loving heart and an easy laugh. He perfected the art of grunting, and "meh" took on 100 shades of meaning. He built mud/straw houses on rural properties, constructed parade floats and enclosures for animals, and designed scientific sampling equipment. Calm in a storm, Craig worked to find solutions, never asking for anything in return.

After the attacks of 9/11, Kat and Craig provided meals to first responders at the Pentagon, which led Craig to the fire service. He joined the Ellicott City Volunteer Fire Department (ECVFD), earning the nickname "Bagel." A natural leader, he stood shoulder to shoulder with his fellow members, helping others on the worst day of their lives. He called it "the greatest job in the world" and was dedicated to

ensuring that everyone made it home to their families at the end of each shift. Chief Ralston was named Firefighter of the Year 2002/2003, Top Firefighter Responder 2003-2007, and Officer of the Year 2007 & 2012. A rescue technician and Fire Officer 4, he was posthumously promoted to ECVFD deputy chief.

Craig also worked for 16 years for the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority Fire & Rescue Department, where he served on the technical rescue team and held the rank of master firefighter. He was known for his ability to drive the largest apparatus into the smallest spaces.

In addition to Kat, Craig is survived by his children, Michielle, Greg (Heather), Misty-Anne (Drew), and Craig; grandchildren, Craig, Antonia, Arabelle, Miles, Pierce, Brooke, Mackenzie, and Rory; brother, Steven (Miriam), and their children, Stephanie and AJ; and many friends in the fire service.

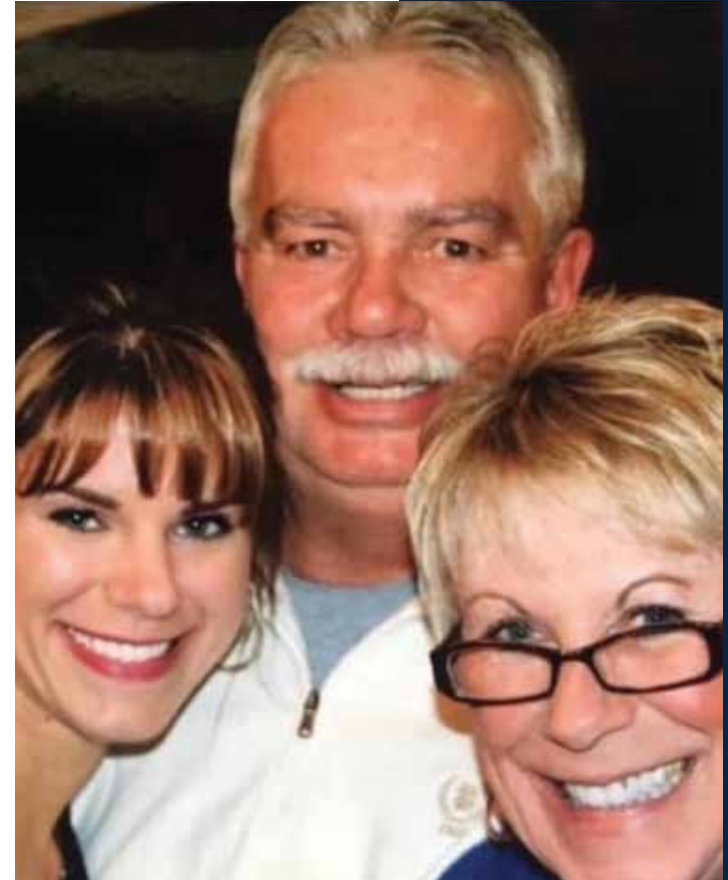
Michael T. Warfel

Career Master Firefighter ★ March 20, 2018 ★ Age 65

Mike was a true gift to everyone in his life and the definition of faith and love. Known as “Mother” at Station 8 for being the firehouse chef and his fabulous seven-pound chocolate cake, he always made sure to take care of his brothers and his family. He started with Montgomery County Fire and Rescue in 1977 and retired in 2001 with 24 years serving the community and doing what he loved.

Outside of the firehouse, you could find Mike continuously working to perfect his golf game, working at the country club, spending time with his beautiful wife and love of his life, Sherry, and daughter, Kristin, attending church, and cooking for everyone he loved. Known for his sense of humor and witty jokes, Mike brought a smile to everyone he met. He could light up a room, always offered support with a bear hug, and had a wise word and great advice as a man of faith.

His deep faith and connection with God gave him the ability to fight more than just a fire for four years. His resolve to battle line-of-duty cancer was all heart, and our family motto became “Whatever it takes.” Our world has not been quite as bright in his absence, but his legacy lives on through his wife, daughter, and brothers at Local 1664.



MARYLAND

**Montgomery County
Fire & Rescue Services**

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Adam Loren Finseth

Career Firefighter/Paramedic ★ February 18, 2024 ★ Age 40

MINNESOTA



Burnsville
Fire Department

Adam Loren Finseth was born 12 March 1983 in Faribault, Minnesota, to parents Brad and Brenda. When he was only a few years old, his family moved to Rochester with his new sister, Amber. He grew up there and attended John Marshall High School, graduating in 2001. Adam was extremely active in sports and loved the outdoors. He loved hiking, camping, hunting, and fishing, and if there was an option, he could always be found swimming in any available body of water. Adam was full of life and positivity, which he exuded everywhere he went with whomever he was around.

Adam had a servant's heart and made the decision to begin his career in service by enlisting in the U.S. Army, where he served with the storied 101st Airborne Division. This was a tumultuous time in the nation's history, less than two years removed from the attacks on 9/11, but that is a testament to Adam's strength of character. To volunteer at such a time, not ultimately knowing where that decision would take him, exhibits Adam's bravery and selfless mentality. Adam found tremendous success as a decorated soldier, achieved the rank of staff sergeant, and was often sought after by senior leadership for responsibilities far beyond his purview. Adam completed two tours in Iraq, spending 12 months in country on his first tour and 15 months on his second tour, as part of the historic "Iraq surge" in 2007-08. Adam was an extraordinary soldier, an even stronger leader, and was universally respected by everyone he served with.

Beyond his accolades and service, Adam was most proud of his family. He was a dedicated, loving husband and father who is survived by a remarkably devoted wife, Tara, and their two children, Liam and Nora. Adam took great pride in being present for his family and always wanted to be involved with family togetherness

to build a loving environment through an active lifestyle.

Adam earned his fire science/paramedic degrees and served with various fire departments until February 2019, when he earned his dream job with the Burnsville Fire Department. He was incredibly proud to be a part of the team and to continue his love for helping others in his work there. Adam always had the first in, last out mentality. He made sure to check on all his teammates at the department and was very active in the health and wellness committee. He was truly selfless, always making sure everyone else was healthy and strong while constantly working on himself. He loved his work and, although he was humble about all his accomplishments, he was sincerely proud and is a hero to his community.

James Louis Cova

Career Captain ★ July 9, 2024 ★ Age 54

Captain James Louis “Jim” Cova was born on November 14, 1969. He passed away on July 9, 2024, in his bunk room after responding to several emergency calls.

Jim attended St. George Catholic School in Affton, Missouri, for his elementary and middle school education. He graduated from Bayless High School in 1988. His leadership qualities were evident as he served as class president, and his warm personality earned him “Best Smile.”

Captain Cova began his 28-year firefighting career in 1995 with the City of Berkeley Fire Department. In 1997, he moved to the City of Frontenac Fire Department. In September 2001, Jim returned to his hometown with the Affton Fire Protection District, where he proudly served the community for the next 23 years.

Jim was a firefighter/EMT, firefighter/paramedic, hazmat tech, engineer, lieutenant, and in 2011 was promoted to captain. Jim achieved the level of Missouri State Fire Officer II and Chief Officer II certification from the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

Jim lived to inspire love for the fire service. Whether it was giving a fire safety assembly, saving a cat from a tree, or running into a burning building to save lives, Jim was driven by a deep sense of duty to help others.

In 2020 and 2024, he was honored as “Firefighter of the Year” by the Affton Elks and AFPD. He was also recognized as the Affton-Lemay Chamber of Commerce’s “2024 First Responder of the Year.”

Jim was a calm, selfless, fair leader, an extraordinary firefighter, and a dedicated hard worker who never asked anything of his crew that he wouldn’t do himself. He loved every aspect of his work as both a firefighter and a leader, living by his motto: If you love what you do, you’ll never work a day in your life.

However, his greatest pride and joy was his family, and he embodied the spirit of the ultimate family man. He is survived by his beloved wife of 29 years, Alanna, and his two daughters, Alyssa and Kelsey. Throughout his life, he was his family’s biggest supporter, whether in athletics, academics, or social endeavors.

Jim cherished quality time, whether it was family trips to visit Buc-ee’s, an adventurous vacation to Orlando, or road trips with unique pitstops he researched weeks before along the way. He enjoyed cheering on everyone at sporting events, enjoying a funny movie, and of course, no moment was complete without his witty dad jokes, told three times and followed by his little chuckle that brought a smile to everyone’s face.

He was the ultimate family man, the true definition of a Hometown Hero, and his legacy will never be forgotten.

MISSOURI



**Affton Fire
Protection District**

Remembrance 2025



63

Tad Nolan Russell

Volunteer Firefighter-Engineer ★ August 13, 2021 ★ Age 36

MISSOURI



**Brumley Fire
Protection District**

Tad Nolan Russell was born in Tuscumbia, Missouri, to Leonard Russell and Tina Russell of Iberia, Missouri, on November 28, 1984.

Tad was a dedicated firefighter for the Brumley Fire Protection District in Brumley, Missouri, from the age of 16. He was one of the highest response volunteer firefighters in the State of Missouri. Tad loved serving his community. During his 17 years of service, Tad had multiple accomplishments. He earned many certifications, including emergency vehicle operator/engineer, extrication operations, and TIMS, and he received his most recent Lifesaving Award in 2020.

Tad was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed hunting, fishing, barbecuing, and spending time with his family and friends. Tad left behind four children, Layne Nolan (Russell) Fisher, Nevaeh Lynn Russell, Robert David Leonard Russell, and Ivan Gene Russell; mother, Tina Russell, and stepfather, Joey Carrington; fiancée, Tiffany Maes; stepdaughter, Audrey Bradbury; paternal grandfather, Ralph Forbis; brother, Gail Russell (Theresa); and many friends. Tad took great pride in taking care of his family, whether through support, encouragement, or even a little tough love.

He was preceded in death by his father, Leonard Russell; daughter, Charlotte Creed Russell; sister, Geraldine Russell; and grandmother, Margie Forbis.

Tad departed this earth doing the exact thing he loved doing and was devoted to doing for so many years, serving his community.

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Matthew Lawrence Tobben

Career Assistant Chief ★ July 8, 2024 ★ Age 42

MISSOURI

Matthew Lawrence Tobben was born November 5, 1981, in Washington, Missouri, to Lawrence and Sharon Tobben (née Schaefer). Matt grew up in Franklin County, Missouri. He attended Beaufort Elementary School and graduated from Union High School in 2000. He continued his education at East Central College for paramedic technology/fire technology and later at Ashland University with his B.A. in organizational management.

Matt began his career as a volunteer firefighter for the Union Fire Protection District in 2005 and was hired full-time by the department in 2008. During this time, Matt also worked for Union Ambulance District and St. Clair Ambulance District as an EMT. Matt served the Union Fire Protection District in many capacities over the course of his 20-year career and was promoted to assistant chief in 2019. Matt also served on Missouri Task Force 1 for 12 years, was a task force Leader for St. Louis Metro Task Force 5 (USAR), board member for the St. Louis Area Regional Response System (STARRS), and a member of many other emergency response organizations.

Matt was always striving to learn as much as possible. He had this intense drive to better his department, himself, and everyone around him. It was always the joke to say, if there was a certification out there to get, Matt has probably already gotten it.

Matthew left the Union Fire Protection District after being appointed the assistant chief for training with the Boone County Fire Protection District in May 2024. Tragically, on July 8, 2024, during a swift water rescue, Matt did not resurface after the rescue boat stalled and was overturned in the flood waters.

Matt left behind his wife of nearly 15 years, Jackie, and their two sons, Jack and Henry. He committed his entire life to caring for his family and serving the public as a firefighter. Matt enjoyed camping, fishing, and spending as much time as possible with his family and friends.

Matt was quiet. If he was saying something, then it was worth listening to. He loved playing with his sons, supporting his wife, sitting around the campfire listening to music, and just being in the moment. He had so many plans and was doing his best to make sure they were going to happen.

Even in death he is still making sure his family is taken care of.



**Boone County
Fire Protection
District**

John Norris Raisler

Career Assistant Fire Management Officer ★ April 16, 2024 ★ Age 59

MONTANA



Montana Department
of Natural Resources
and Conservation

John Norris Raisler was born to Warren and Dee Raisler on July 23, 1964, in Bozeman, Montana. He grew up all over the country on various ranches and graduated from the University of Arizona with a bachelor's degree in agricultural education in 1989. He moved to Plevna, Montana, where he taught for five years before finishing his grades 7-12 teaching career in Fromberg in 1998. John was a proactive teacher, as he designed several courses and initiated an agricultural exchange program between Russian and Montanan students in Fromberg. John loved to teach and spent the next roughly 26 years teaching fire courses to many individuals throughout Montana. He LOVED the Band of Brothers and Sisters! They shared a mutual respect and admiration for each other. John spent a total of 34 years in fire. He loved training others and found the Staff Rides very fulfilling because they applied the decisions made during historic battles toward modern firefighting tactics and leadership.

Being a volunteer was John's love language to his Church and community. He was a 4th degree Knight and one heck of a "Pig Dad" and grill master in 4-H! He spent much time "slinging hash" for the church breakfasts, delivering Meals on Wheels, "selling explosives (fireworks) to children" at deeply discounted prices, and was always the last to leave when it came to helping clean up after weddings and banquets.

John met his future wife, Lori, as a favor for a friend. It worked out that both couples were happily married for at least 28 years. He and Lori enjoyed being empty nesters and truly loved each other's company. John and Lori have four children; Laina (Trevor) Anderson; Joel, Katrina, and Jill. His family was very important to him, and he made sure their vehicles all ran, their guns were sighted

in, and that his home cooked "grub" would make the kids "squeal with delight!" He loved to buy "used meat" at Reynolds where he could find yummy meats on discount.

John is survived by his wife and children; his first grandson, Shepherd John Anderson; his mother, Dee Raisler; and his favorite one-eyed cat, Squeakers; as well as his notorious "Mafia Car." He is also survived by his aunts, uncles, and cousins on the Raisler side; by Lori's parents, Mel and Lois Lawson, of Arizona; his brother-in-law, Cory Cole, of Washington; his sisters and brothers-in law of New Zealand, Beth and Kel Ritchie and Alex and Paula Lawson; and his five nieces and nephews, Flynn, Peyton, Sophie, Pippi, and Miles. He is preceded in death by his father, Warren Raisler, his grandparents, many aunts and uncles, and his younger brother, Randy.

Charles A. Gallant

Career Lieutenant ★ **December 14, 2023** ★ **Age 56**

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Charles A. "Chuck" Gallant of North Hampton, New Hampshire, passed away unexpectedly on December 14, 2023. Born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, to the late Alfred Gallant and Shirley Downs Gallant, he graduated from Whittier Vocational Technical High School and worked as a mason before he realized his true calling and entered the fire service.

He started as a volunteer with the Hampton Falls Fire Department in 1997 before accepting a position with the Rye Fire Department, where he served for 20+ years. Chuck became a certified Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT) and achieved the rank of lieutenant. He was awarded the Paul W. Sypek Medal of Valor for conspicuous bravery at extreme risk of life, when he rescued a fellow firefighter during a fire aboard the USS Miami in 2012. He helped train and mold future firefighters, impacting their lives and the lives of people they served.

He proudly volunteered his time as president of Firefighter's Local Union 4411, president of the Seacoast Area Firefighters Toy Bank, and director of the Annual Rye Holiday Parade. Chuck proudly maintained and operated Rye Fire Department's 1931 Ford Model AA/McCann fire truck, keeping "his baby" in tip-top shape.

He supported the towns of North Hampton and Rye, serving on multiple committees. A lifelong cyclist and huge presence in the Seacoast bike community, he worked at Philbrick's in Dover as a bike mechanic and participated in countless rides. He was sought out by many riders who requested that only he work on their bikes. The friendships he made were so valuable to him.

Nothing compared to the joy that family brought to his life. Chuck shared over 35 wonderful years of marriage with his elementary school sweetheart, Kelley (Brindle) Gallant. He was a devoted husband, a loving father and brother, but being his grandchildren's "Bampy" was his role of a lifetime. Their countless memories of imaginative adventures, rolling around on the floor, outdoor activities, warm hugs, and rebellious chocolate ice cream breakfasts are treasured. Chuck beamed with pride talking about his family.

In addition to his wife, Chuck is survived by his daughters, Crystal Ruhland (husband Brad) and Tia Gallant (partner Jamar Greene); four beautiful grandchildren, Aubrey and Pierson "Rex" Ruhland and Jayvian and Jahair Greene; his sister, Meaghan Gallant (fiancé, Jonathan Desell); and many extended family members.

Chuck is loved and missed by so many. He lived a good life and always had a smile on his face. We will forever cherish his smirk and that twinkle in his eyes as he told tales and jokes. He was an exceptional hero to all!



Rye Fire Rescue

Jeffrey M. Whitcomb

Career Senior Instructor ★ October 2, 2021 ★ Age 53

NEW HAMPSHIRE



New Hampshire
Department of
Safety, Division of
Fire Standards and
Training and EMS

Jeffrey Mark Whitcomb was born on February 6, 1968. He attended St. Rose of Lima Catholic School until its closure and then Littleton Public Schools, graduating in 1986. He was a three-sport athlete and held a lifelong passion for the game of hockey. This passion led him to join a men's league, participate in the CHaD Battle of the Badges charity game, and participate in a charity game against the Boston Bruins Alumni team. Upon graduating from Littleton High School in 1986, he enlisted in the United States Navy and served from 1986-1990 on the USS Canopus, R-9 Division.

Upon his honorable discharge, he was hired as a firefighter for the Littleton Fire Department in March of 1990. He was later promoted to captain of the department in 1997 and served in that role until his retirement in 2015. He also served the New Hampshire Department of Safety as a Senior Staff Instructor for the Division of Fire Standards and Training and Emergency Medical Services, from 1997 until he died in 2021. He taught and trained hundreds of New Hampshire fire service colleagues. Upon his retirement from the Littleton Fire Department, he brought his passion for the fire service and teaching to Littleton High School at the Career and Technical Center, where he could share his passion with local high school students considering the fire service as their future career path.

Jeff was a devoted family man, leaving behind his beloved wife, Carlene, their two daughters, Emma and Sara, who were his pride and joy, and a large, loving family. Jeff shared a love of the outdoors with his father and uncles. He was a talented craftsman, amazing cook, loyal friend, and born entertainer. He was never happier than when he was hosting one of his legendary get-togethers, where friends and family alike would leave after extensive laughter ensued. He was a passionate

believer and defender of the underdog and was never afraid to share his opinion.

Jeff was injured in a training accident in the fall of 2021 and succumbed to his injuries on October 2 of that same year. He leaves behind a loving family and a legacy that they aim to honor and protect in the times ahead. Life has not been the same without him, but his family finds comfort in knowing that he got to live his life fulfilling his true passion as a firefighter and an instructor to future firefighters.

Jessica L. Wyman

Career Lieutenant/Paramedic ★ November 28, 2023 ★ Age 52

Lieutenant Jessica L. Wyman of Nashua Fire Rescue, Engine Company 4, died Tuesday November 28, 2023, at Southern New Hampshire Medical Center in Nashua, after a courageous battle with occupational lung cancer from her 26 years as a firefighter.

Lieutenant Wyman worked for the Nashua Fire Department for 16 years and was the first female firefighter to be promoted to the rank of lieutenant in department history. Prior to that, she worked for the Merrimack Fire Department as a firefighter/paramedic. Lieutenant Wyman also served as a rescue specialist for Massachusetts Task Force 1 (FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Team) and had been deployed several times throughout the country, including a two-week deployment to New Orleans immediately following Hurricane Katrina.

Lieutenant Wyman also worked in several positions at Southern New Hampshire Medical Center in Nashua, serving as a paramedic, emergency department nurse, and executive director of In-Patient and Critical Care Services. In 2021, she graduated from Eastern Kentucky University, receiving her Doctor of Nursing Practice.

Early in her career, Lieutenant Wyman competed in multiple sports, which included soccer, hockey, and semi-pro football. She was a world ranked powerlifter and competed in events across the United States and in Europe.

In 2007, Lieutenant Wyman created Camp Fully Involved, a weeklong program hosted at the New Hampshire Fire Academy that focused on young women ages 14 to 20 who have an interest in the fire service. The program focuses on strength, confidence, and leadership, while allowing the program participants to experience the daily life of a firefighter. Lieutenant Wyman lived by the program motto "Tell me and I forget; show me and I remember; involve me and I understand."

Lieutenant Wyman shared her love for the fire service with her husband, Chris, for the 30 years they were together. Jess and Chris enjoyed life to the fullest. They worked hard, played harder, travelled the world together, and enjoyed raising some amazing dogs.

NEW HAMPSHIRE



Nashua Fire Rescue

Brian F. Ellerson

Career Firefighter ★ September 16, 2010 ★ Age 57

NEW JERSEY



Jersey City
Fire Department

Brian Ellerson was born on October 29, 1952, to the late Robert and Anna (Pat) Ellerson. He was a proud veteran of the U.S. Army (1972) with an honorable discharge in 1976.

Brian was a dedicated part of the Jersey City Fire Department for 25 years. He was a devoted and loving family man, leaving his wife of 36 years, Gail Ellerson; two sons, Brian and Shawn; daughter-in-law, Christina; and two grandchildren, Brian Patrick and Mara Rae. Also surviving are his brothers, Glenn Ellerson and his wife, Maureen, and Mark Ellerson and his wife, Lorraine. Both Glenn and Mark are retired Jersey City firefighters.

Brian enjoyed fishing with his sons and gardening. He took so much pride in creating the most beautiful flowers in his yard and the most beautiful lawn in the neighborhood. Listening to his favorite musicians, especially Steely Dan, was also one of his pleasures.

Brian coached both his sons' baseball teams and enjoyed going to sporting events that his sons participated in. His son Brian was a minor league baseball player, and Shawn was an All-State football quarterback. Brian never missed a game that his sons played in.

The most gratification to Brian was being a grandfather and spending time with his grandchildren. That fulfilled his life.

Brian departed this earth on September 16, 2010. He is missed dearly by his family and friends.

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Marques Hudson

Career Lieutenant ★ **January 26, 2024** ★ **Age 32**

From the very beginning of Marques's 32-year journey, which began September 4, 1991, he made sure that the victories he sought were not only for his enrichment, but for everyone within his sphere.

Born to Vickie and the late Allan B. Hudson, Marques grew into a superior athlete, excelling in various sports, but it was his baseball prowess that earned him a scholarship to Lincoln University in 2009. His love of the sport continued to grow, but it could not overtake the longing he had to return home and be present for his firstborn son, Kaleb, whose medical crises were ongoing. After two years at Lincoln, Marques resumed his duties as a hands-on dad and caregiver to his son. That decision was a prime example of the commitment Marques demonstrated throughout his life to family and friends alike.

Josiah, the second born of Marques's three sons, is a mirror of his dad's culinary ability and exuberance. A shared love of video games and cooking made their bond even stronger. Marques's third son, Isaiah, an avid sports fan and athlete, also benefitted from his dad's sports acumen when Marques volunteered for Isaiah's T-ball team, the Oreos

Kessie (pronounced Kee-See), the nickname used by his closest family members, was always known as a man of service, a man of the people. No matter who you asked, the same descriptors were used repeatedly: calm, kind, loving, humble, dedicated, brave, and protective. Family and friends spoke often of the way Hudson nurtured his sons, lovingly addressing their collective and individual needs.

Hudson's affinity to serve humankind made him a perfect fit for the City of Plainfield's Fire Department, which would be his final career path. Despite the rigors of the job, Huddy, as he was called by his fellow firefighters, welcomed the sense of brotherhood born of his time at Station 4. Childhood friend and football teammate Kendall James, now a firefighter in New Brunswick, New Jersey, recalled, "He always wanted to be a firefighter. He showed us pictures when we were younger, of him at different fire stations throughout Piscataway township, where we grew up."

While battling a house fire on January 26, 2024, Marques left this world as he lived in it, in the service of others.

The acts of love and kindness demonstrated by this beloved father, son, brother, and firefighter will forever reside in the hearts of his family, friends, and colleagues.

NEW JERSEY



**Plainfield
Fire Department**

Craig M. Konkle

Volunteer Deputy Chief ★ March 23, 2024 ★ Age 54

NEW JERSEY



South Bound Brook
Fire Department

Craig M. Konkle was born on December 25, 1969, in Seoul, South Korea. Craig lived a life filled with love, compassion, and dedication to his family and community. Craig graduated from North Warren Regional High School and attend Glassboro University (Rowan University) where he earned a BS in engineering. He was a manufacturing engineer at Veeco, located in Somerset, New Jersey.

Craig was a committed volunteer firefighter for the South Bound Brook Fire Department, where he served as the deputy chief, after working his way up the ranks. His bravery in the face of danger was a testament to his commitment to serving and protecting others. In 2017, Craig humbly accepted the Valor Award on behalf of his fire department.

Craig joined the fire department in November 2013. Craig was dedicated to continuing his training and teaching others. He became one of the department's first state certified fire instructors. He could always be counted on to assist at all department fundraising functions. During work details and training classes, he enjoyed sharing his vast knowledge of knot making with his fellow fire department members. He was vigilant on safety, keeping a watchful eye on his fellow members during fire calls and training classes. During his tenure, he was always in the top 10 responders. He also served as a department trustee for several years.

He was deeply rooted in the scouting community, having served as a leader with Troop 42 and Troop 154. He was an Eagle Scout himself, earning this accomplishment at the age of 14, exemplifying the Scout Oath and Scout Law in everything he did. His passion for scouting extended beyond his own achievements as he mentored and guided young scouts, instilling in them the values of leadership, service, and camaraderie.

Craig's love for the outdoors and his desire to provide opportunities and experiences for youth were evident in his involvement as a coach for the Franklin Township South Bound Brook Little League. He found joy in working with young athletes, nurturing their talents, and instilling in them a sense of teamwork and sportsmanship. His impact extended beyond his immediate circle, and his dedication touched the lives of many.

Craig leaves behind his wife, Beth, and children, Raymond and Sophie, to carry on his legacy of love, service, and dedication. Though his physical presence may be gone, Craig's memory will forever be cherished by his family, friends, and the lives he touched through his selfless service and boundless generosity. Always with a warm smile, giving spirit, and selflessness, Craig won the hearts of all that knew him.

Robert R. Boire

Volunteer Firefighter ★ **January 3, 2024** ★ **Age 64**

Robert “Rory” Boire died on January 3, 2024, after suffering a heart attack on scene during response to a motor vehicle accident on December 27, 2023.

He was born in Plattsburgh, New York, on October 7, 1959. After graduating from Beekmantown Central School in 1979, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, where he proudly served his country until 1983. He continued serving with the Reserves from 1983-1985 and again from 2001-2003, supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

Rory worked as a corrections officer at Clinton Correctional Facility, retiring in 2016.

He was a past member of the Beekmantown Fire Department and the Chazy Fire Department. At the time of his death, he was an active member of the Cumberland Head Fire Department. He was an EMT.

He was a member of VFW Post 1466, where he served as commander. He also served on the board of the Peru Rod and Gun Club. He enjoyed woodturning and riding his motorcycle.

Rory was survived by his wife, Tina; his son, Ryan Boire, and daughter, Jessica Boire; a stepson, James Bouyea; several grandchildren; his siblings, Ron Boire (Faith), Dames Boire (Kimberly), and Alex Boire (Lisa); a cousin, Dan Noonan, who was like a brother to Rory; and several nieces and nephews.

Rory was predeceased by his mother and stepfather, Elizabeth and Orville Favreau.

He was remembered as a great storyteller and a steadfast and committed public servant.

NEW YORK



**Cumberland Head
Fire Department**

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Daniel S. DeWolf

Volunteer Firefighter ★ January 21, 2024 ★ Age 52

NEW YORK



Fairville Volunteer
Fire Department

Dan's life was defined by relentless dedication to service. Born May 10, 1971, he was introduced to the fire service at an early age through his father, Ed Sr. At just 20 years old, Dan followed in his father's footsteps, joining the Fairville Volunteer Fire Department on August 8, 1991. From the beginning, Dan's commitment was clear.

Dan quickly enrolled in programs to become an interior firefighter and, over the years, was driven to learn and grow, including becoming a paramedic. His journey saw him rise through the ranks, earning the title of lieutenant and later training officer, where he had a hand in shaping the next generation of firefighters.

In 2013, Dan became assistant chief, a role he filled with extreme dedication. His outstanding contributions didn't go unnoticed, earning him the title of Firefighter of the Year in 2013. After earning the trust and respect of his peers, he was elected chief of the department in 2015, where he continued to make a profound impact. But Dan's humility was evident—after serving as chief, he chose to return to the firefighter role in 2017 and continued to receive recognition, including being named Firefighter of the Year again in 2018. Stepping back to allow others to lead, he continued to serve as assistant chief from 2019 to 2022, before once again choosing to serve in a firefighter capacity in 2023.

On January 21, 2024, Dan responded to a call for a structure fire at a property that held personal significance. Dan's own family lived there. As the driver of the third truck, Dan did what he had done countless times before—secured the apparatus, immediately directed younger members, and began assisting the second truck with making the hydrant, ensuring a steady water supply.

But that night, something went terribly wrong; Dan experienced a sudden medical emergency. Despite medics just feet away, that night, the Lord called him home.

Dan's passing was a devastating loss, not only to his family and the fire department, but to the community he served so faithfully. His legacy is one of selfless service, leadership, and sacrifice. He gave everything to help others—whether it was fighting fires, teaching new recruits, building equipment, or providing safety to the community. Dan will be remembered as a cornerstone of the department, a brother in arms, and a family man who gave his all to the people he loved.

His memory will live on in the countless lives he touched—through his work, his leadership, and the values he instilled in those who followed him. Dan's impact will continue to resonate for generations to come.

Niel G. "Skip" Frazier

Volunteer Firefighter ★ **September 5, 2021** ★ **Age 68**

Niel G. Frazier was born on March 7, 1953, in Jamestown, New York, to the late Niel and Katherine Frazier. To many, he was only known as "Skip." Niel and Brenda were married in December of 1972. Together, they raised six children, Jennifer, Lisa, Elizabeth, Eric, Valerie, and Zachary, and have nine beautiful grandchildren. Niel is survived by four siblings and many nieces and nephews.

Niel was a member of the Ellington Volunteer Fire Department for over 50 years. He held all the chiefs positions, was an EMT and truck captain, co-instructed the annual OSHA training, cooked the chickens for the annual department fundraiser, and worked at the fundraiser at the annual town picnic. He participated in the water battles between departments and played on the department's softball team. Brenda supported him through all these years. At the time of his passing, he held a position on the fire commissioner's board.

Niel enjoyed hunting, fishing and spending time with his family. He was known to be the one to run the grill. He was a member of the Randolph Rod and Gun Club, where he participated in the Trap League and placed in the top ten for many years.

Niel retired in 2015 after working for over 35 years with the Ellington Highway Department. Skip enjoyed umpiring the town's youth baseball and softball teams years ago and also instructed hunters safety education courses. We miss his contagious smile, his hugs, and the bit of advice he was willing to give. He would help anyone who was in need, no matter the situation.

Skip is missed dearly by all who knew him.

NEW YORK



**Ellington Volunteer
Fire Department**

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Deo Lall Jr.

Career Firefighter ★ March 27, 2024 ★ Age 38

NEW YORK



Fire Department
City of New York

Deo Lall Jr. was the epitome of what a firefighter should be. Long before his FDNY career, Deo demonstrated the qualities of New York's bravest. He showed strength and athleticism on the football field of Port Richmond High School. His leadership skills were evident to his coaches and teammates, who elected him to be the team's captain.

Deo pursued a career centered around helping others. He studied to become a radiology technologist and furthered his knowledge and skills by training as an interventional radiology technologist, a highly specialized role within the field. While employed at Staten Island University Hospital, he worked with a wide variety of patients and was respected by the physicians, nurses, and technologists who worked with him. His cheerful smile and good humor calmed the most nervous patients. His expertise and technical skills were appreciated during crucial emergency situations.

Deo amassed the attributes and skills of an athlete, leader, caregiver, and critical thinker, which paved the way for him to become a New York City firefighter. After completing the competitive FDNY testing and rigorous training, Deo became a member of New York's Bravest. He was assigned to Engine 153 in Staten Island, his home borough. He was a valued addition to the firehouse, where his work ethic and humor were legendary.

In his 10-year career, Deo was a "go-to guy" at Engine 153. He was involved in many emergencies and gave his best effort to help others. At structural fires, medical emergencies, or in personal matters, you knew you were getting his best. Early in his career, he was asked to become an engine chauffeur, a highly regarded position.

Deo was known for his playful sense of humor. He always seemed to have a bag of tricks up his sleeve, keeping those around him on their toes. He was resourceful, always ready to lend a hand by rigging up solutions and fixing things with ease. Whether it was a fellow firefighter, or someone in need, Deo was always willing to help.

Although Deo had many roles in life, his favorite was being a husband and father. He met his wife, Devon, while working together as radiology technologists. Their sons, Deo III and Luca, were the light of his life. He cherished every moment spent with his boys. He loved being a family man and enjoyed frequent gatherings with extended family.

Whether rooting for the Miami Dolphins, playing recreational sports, undertaking a new project, or concocting his next playful prank, Deo displayed his funny, handy, and courageous spirit. His laughter will continue to echo in the hearts of his family and friends forever.

Roderick John MacLeod

Volunteer Firefighter ★ **January 28, 2024** ★ **Age 67**

NEW YORK

Rod served his community with a wide range of professional abilities and civic contributions, always serving people and building relationships. Through his high school and college years and beyond, he worked as a meat cutter, serving and getting to know the clientele at Metzger's Meat Market. Eventually convinced that was not his life calling, he enrolled in New York Law School, receiving his Juris Doctor degree in 1993. In his professional role he served as an attorney and later a partner with Gellert, Klein & MacLeod, LLP in Poughkeepsie. Along with the many individuals who sought out and relied personally and professionally on his counsel, he also ably provided legal counsel and advice to dozens of volunteer fire departments throughout Dutchess County and beyond.

Music was a vital theme throughout his life. In high school he sang in the John Jay chorus and performed a vocal solo piece in the senior recital. Church choir participation was a constant throughout the years. He served for many years as a dedicated and musically creative church organist at New Hackensack Reformed Church.

He grew up at Immanuel Church in Myers Corners. Moving back to this community after college, he served there on the church council and taught Sunday School. In the wider community he volunteered with a range of local civic and charity interests including 19 years with Hudson River Housing Inc.

Whether spending time on his model train layout or collecting railroad memorabilia, trains were a lifelong passion and hobby, fueling his involvement in the transformation of what is now the Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park and in the restoration of the Hopewell Junction and Hyde Park Depots.

The New Hackensack Fire Department was his closest community. He would have joined the fire company when he was 14 but had to wait until 16, serving for 51 years and remaining a top responder, answering over 300 calls in 2023. At the time of his death, Rod was serving as the chairman of the Board of Fire Commissioners for New Hackensack Fire District.

Rod was married to the love of his life, Karen. He loved and was loved by daughter, Kate, and grandchildren, Mance, Roddy, Ruthanne, and Megan. He was proud of his Scottish ancestry. He and Karen spent many vacations exploring Scotland and developing relationships with family and friends on Isles of Skye and Lewis.

He served and protected his community and family with dedication and kindness. Many benefited from his quietly offered personal and professional generosity, and he was known for his honest and realistic counsel, wry smile, and unconventional sense of humor.



**New Hackensack
Fire District**

Nicholas J. Morosco

NEW YORK

Volunteer Assistant Chief ★ August 27, 2024 ★ Age 38



Yorkville Fire
Department

Nicholas Joseph Morosco of Yorkville, New York, was born on January 29, 1986, to David and Sherry Morosco. Nick was a 2004 graduate of Whitesboro Central Schools.

Nick was born into the brotherhood of volunteerism. From a young age, he lived and breathed every facet of the fire service while learning the importance of giving back to his community. Being a firefighter was in his blood, as it was passed down through generations from his maternal grandfather, father, and four uncles. Nick officially joined the Yorkville Volunteer Fire Department at age 16 as their first junior firefighter and climbed through the ranks during the years. At the time of his passing, Nick had served for 22 years and was serving as 1st assistant chief, "Car 2". He was laid to rest posthumously as fire chief.

In addition to the fire service, Nick previously worked for the New Hartford Police Department as a 911 dispatcher and animal control officer. He assisted the police with many tasks and was known for his dedicated commitment to any and every aspect of public safety. He was a NYS and Nationally Certified Fire Investigator, a NYS and Nationally Certified Fire Instructor, a NYS EMT, and an excellent leader. He completed countless courses in several areas of the fire service, including HAZMAT, leadership, strategies, tactics, fire sciences, arson, and incident command. He had a passion for learning and an even bigger passion for leading and mentoring his crew. He was well-respected and looked up to by those he worked with. He knew his apparatus and station inside and out. He worked diligently to design several pieces of apparatus for the department, taking the greatest pride in Engine 7 and Tower Ladder 13, which he worked closely with Seagrave Fire Apparatus and Salt City Fire Equipment to build. He was an avid follower of the FDNY, which inspired

him daily. Nick was an integral part of the Village of Yorkville.

In addition to his steadfast and unwavering commitment as a first responder and fierce leader, Nick was part of a very tight-knit family. He was a wonderful son, brother, nephew, grandson, uncle, cousin, and friend. Nick passed away on August 27, 2024, from a cardiac event shortly after leaving the fire station. At the time of his passing, he was serving alongside his father, Dave (fire commissioner); sister, Ali (captain); Uncle Joe (fire chief); Uncle Larry (assistant fire chief), brother-in-law, Eric; and niece, Bianca. His untimely passing has been felt strongly by the entire community, especially his family and fellow first responders, as they continue to carry his legacy to keep his memory alive.

Romano Petrucco

Volunteer Firefighter ★ **October 9, 1981** ★ **Age 53**

Romano Petrucco was born to Italian parents on October 27, 1927, in Havana, Cuba. In 1930, the family returned to their home base in Fanna, a small municipality in the province of Pordenone in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region of northeastern Italy. There, Romano and his family lived through the horrors of World War II. After the war, in December 1948, he immigrated to the United States of America, where his skills and training as a tile, terrazzo, and marble setter were in demand. He became a naturalized citizen in March 1955.

While working on a job in Cooperstown, New York, Romano met the woman who would become his wife, Cora Bridger. They married in 1952 and settled in Cooperstown. In 1959, he joined the Cooperstown Fire Department, despite the fact that his job took him out of town almost on a weekly basis. He remained a member of that department until 1963, when he bought a house and relocated his young family to Cortland, New York, for employment reasons. Many years later, after a small electrical fire in his residence, he requested to join the Homer Fire Department in 1975, which was contracted to cover the Town of Cortlandville, in which he achieved the rank of lieutenant. In both volunteer fire departments, he found comradery, a spirit of friendship and community, and an avenue to give back and help others.

During his lifetime, Romano enjoyed activities such as fishing (especially ice fishing on Otsego Lake), snowmobiling, bowling, bocce, pitching horseshoes, music, and dancing, and there was always a home improvement project to complete.

In the late evening hours of October 8, 1981, Romano responded to a call at a local gas station where a vehicle had rammed a gas pump. Upon returning to his personal vehicle, he collapsed across the steering wheel. Despite lifesaving efforts, he succumbed on October 9, 1981, at the age of 53.

At the time of his death, Romano left behind his loving wife, Cora; daughters, Maria, Teresa, and Angela; and son, Richard.

Although Firefighter Petrucco never got to see the final formation of the Cortlandville Fire Department in January 1982, we are certain his inspiration and dedication to the fire service lives on in his legacy. He was posthumously given the CVFD Frank K. Taylor Memorial Fireman of the Year Award for 1981 and has been honored by the CVFD with their meeting room bearing his name.

NEW YORK



**Homer Fire
Department**

Remembrance 2025



George E. Snyder Jr.

Career Supervising Fire Marshal ★ August 10, 2024 ★ Age 53

NEW YORK



Fire Department
City of New York

George E. Snyder Jr. was born September 14, 1970, to Rosanne Snyder and the late George E. Snyder Sr., and was the youngest of four children. George attended St. Denis School, Saunders Trades & Technical High School, and Queens College. He was an avid New York Yankees and New York Giants fan. He attained his lifelong dream of becoming a firefighter with the FDNY in 2002.

The bravest thing a firefighter can do is take the oath of office. Everything else is in the line of duty, and we are extremely proud of his bravery, dedication, and sacrifice.

George was first assigned to Engine 36 in Harlem and then transferred to Engine 47 in Morningside Heights. George became a fire marshal in 2009 and was promoted to supervising fire marshal in 2019. He was assigned to the Special Operations Command, where he headed up the Lithium-Ion Battery Task Force. His work there included investigating lithium-ion battery fires and partnering with other agencies in enforcement. He was cited five times for meritorious acts throughout his 22-year career. "Snyder" was never afraid to lead or take charge. He knew his role and how to handle it. George was always ready with a joke and jab but most importantly a willingness to get the job done.

George had an infectious personality with a larger than life laugh, a contagious smile, and a most giving and generous heart. There wasn't a person he came in contact with who didn't feel better after spending time with him. He was devoted to his family and friends, always bringing joy and laughter to others with a true passion for people both on the job and those he served in the community.

To know George was to love him, and life will never be the same without him. His smile could light up a room. His humor and wit only made it brighter.

George leaves a legacy of love, laughter, and service. He accomplished so much in his lifetime, except the wisdom that comes from old age. His absence leaves a void that will never be filled, and his presence will be profoundly missed.

Thank you, George, for being you, the countless memories, and never failing to put a smile on our faces. You will continue to live on in the hearts of all those whose lives you touched, and we will forever remember your love and service.

Thomas J. Wutz Sr.

Career Deputy Chief ★ July 15, 2023 ★ Age 74

Deputy Chief Thomas J. Wutz Sr.'s fire service career spanned over 50 years and multiple organizations, both with the volunteer and career fire service.

Chief Wutz's volunteer fire service included the Hutchison Hose Company in Williamsville, New York (1968-1972), Niagara Engine Company #6 in Schoharie, New York (1973-1986), and finished with the Midway Fire Department in Colonie, New York (1986-2000). He served as chief of department in Schoharie (1975-1980), lieutenant in Midway (1994-1996), and fire commissioner in Midway (1989-1996). Chief Wutz was active in both the Firefighters Association of the State of New York (FASNY) and the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs (NYSAFC).

He proudly served in the New York Air National Guard at Stratton AFB in Schenectady, New York, from 1976-2001.

He started as a fire instructor for the NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) in 1982 and rose through the ranks to become deputy chief of the Fire Services Bureau. During his time at OFPC, Chief Wutz was instrumental in the creation and deployment of both the New York State Incident Management Team (IMT) and the New York State Urban Search and Rescue Team (NYRRT-1). It was in this capacity that he responded to and operated at the World Trade Center after the attacks on September 11, 2001. Chief Wutz and his team worked in the rescue and recovery efforts in the early days of the operations at Ground Zero.

After 9/11/2001, during the rebuilding efforts of the FDNY, both of Chief Wutz's sons became firefighters with the FDNY. His son Thomas joined in 2002 and is currently the captain of Ladder Company 29 in the South Bronx. His son Jared joined in 2006 and is currently a firefighter in Engine Company 84 in Washington Heights, Manhattan.

As a result of his tireless work and effort at Ground Zero, Chief Wutz succumbed to World Trade Center related illness on July 15, 2023.

NEW YORK



**New York State
Office of Fire
Prevention and
Control**

John Alexander Bowen

NORTH CAROLINA

Career Battalion Chief ★ April 16, 2022 ★ Age 35



Fayetteville
Fire Department

John Alexander Bowen was born in Dunn, North Carolina, on March 3, 1987, to Ronnie and Betty Ann Bowen. He grew up on his family's farm enjoying all the pleasures a young child could imagine—exploring in the woods, playing alongside his best bud Scott, hunting, fishing, and trailing after his dad, whom he adored. His toys were those of children long ago—a shovel, a stick, a rope, a bike, and an unbelievable imagination. John knew the value of hard work as a teen. He had several jobs during that time, including working in the log woods with his Uncle Joe. He learned that perseverance and determination were his best friends in a man's world. He was a longtime member of Sardis Presbyterian Church in Linden, North Carolina.

He graduated from Triton High School and attended Campbell University, Fayetteville Technical Institute, and Fayetteville State University. His goal was to continue his education to earn a master's degree in the field of ministry, perhaps as a counselor or in some area where could share his gift of helping people through their struggles at work, on a personal level, or with any needs they possessed.

John had an early interest in firefighting. He joined the West Area Volunteer Fire Department at age 16 and began developing skills that would enhance his career goals in the years to come. He joined the Fayetteville Fire Department and became part of the brotherhood of firefighters, encouraging, loving, and supporting each other the same as a closeknit family. His life impacted many of the members of the department, from the top ranks to the newest recruits. John rose to the rank of battalion chief relatively early in his career. He was a humble servant and was always eager to assist individuals in need. His passion to serve was shown each day he came to work, as well as in his community. He was a model example that many firefighters and officers strive to emulate, and he spent time pouring his life into others to see them succeed.

His fellow firefighters pulled together in his honor when he was diagnosed with colorectal cancer and followed his journey with tremendous support. #BowenStrong is still being worn on bracelets to honor his cancer fight and can also be found on Facebook. His family established a fishing tournament to provide scholarships to future firefighters. Chief Bowen was honored as Fire Officer of the Year by the Fayetteville Fire Department after his death.

John is remembered by his fellow man for his constantly repeated motto:
Always do the right thing, no matter the cost.

Nathan Clark Burgess

Career Captain ★ **November 12, 2023** ★ **Age 49**

Nathan Clark Burgess was born on February 17, 1974, in Kansas City, Missouri, to Gene Burgess and Carleen Jung. He spent his childhood in Missouri and Illinois and graduated from Perryville High School in 1992. Nathan always knew he wanted to live a life of service. After graduating from high school, he enlisted in the United States Navy, spending most of his time on aircraft carriers.

After his commitment to the Navy, he continued serving others by joining the ranks of public safety in 1998. He began dedicating his time to the citizens of Johnston County as an EMT before transitioning into the 50-210 Fire Department in 1999. It was there that he found his calling. Nathan joined the Raleigh Fire Department in 2003. Throughout his career, he served the residents of Wake and Johnston Counties. Nathan's dedication to the profession throughout his career with the Raleigh Fire Department earned him the titles of firefighter, lieutenant, captain, academy instructor, live burn instructor, and ultimately Task Force 8 Team Leader. With the 50-210 Fire Department, Nathan rose to the position of fire chief.

When he wasn't in uniform, you could find Nathan on the lake fishing, in the woods hunting, or working in his shop. Nathan took great pride in his family and was a very proud father. He was a devoted husband, leaving behind his wife of nearly 20 year, Christy, and his children, Chayse, Garris, Peyton, and Neise. He was preceded in death by a daughter, Hope Noelle.

Nathan started having throat issues in January of 2022 and was diagnosed with occupational throat cancer in May 2022. Ever a servant's heart, while undergoing treatment Nathan was enrolled in a trial study to help others who would walk the path behind him. He fought valiantly for 18 months and passed away at Duke University Hospital on November 12, 2023.

Husband. Father. Veteran. Firefighter. Son. Brother. Uncle. Friend. Hero. These were all titles he wore with honor. Nathan is missed not only by his family but also by the men and women he served alongside. He truly lived a life he loved, and we will forever find solace in knowing that his life made a difference in the lives of those in the communities he served.



NORTH CAROLINA

**Raleigh
Fire Department**

Tony Ray Garrison

NORTH CAROLINA

Career Battalion Chief ★ September 27, 2024 ★ Age 51



Fairview Volunteer
Fire Department

Tony Ray Garrison, also known as “Bones” or “G,” was born November 1, 1972. He was a man of unwavering dedication—a loving son, brother, uncle, beloved husband, devoted father, and an honored battalion chief. His career journey in the fire service began in 2004 with the Fairview Fire Department, where his passion and leadership quickly became evident. Rising through the ranks, he was promoted to captain in 2007 and to battalion chief in August 2016. His service extended beyond his career, as a volunteer firefighter with the Garren Creek Fire Department and a proud member of NC USAR Task Force 2.

Tony was, above all, a family man. He shared a beautiful life with his wife, Mary, and their two cherished children, Dylan and Hannah. His love for them was boundless, and though he held firm in many things, he could never resist giving in to his children’s wishes. His conversations were often filled with stories of treasured moments spent with his loved ones, a testament to the deep joy they brought him.

Tony’s life was defined by his character—one of kindness, generosity, and unwavering service to others. His presence was a light in the lives of so many, and in the fire service he embodied the true meaning of brotherhood. His infectious smile, steady leadership, and genuine heart left an impact on every person he met.

Beyond the firehouse, Tony found solace in the outdoors. Whether fishing, woodworking, or brainstorming his next project, he was always creating something meaningful. His handcrafted distressed wooden flags, birdhouses, and other pieces are now treasured keepsakes, each carrying a part of his spirit.

On September 27, 2024, during the devastation of Hurricane Helene, Tony made the ultimate sacrifice. In a selfless act of bravery, he gave his life in the line of duty, saving others as he had always done. His legacy of courage, service, and love will live on in those he taught, led, and inspired.

Though his absence leaves an unfillable void, we take comfort in knowing that Tony left this world doing what he loved—serving others. We will forever honor his memory, cherishing the lessons he taught us and the love he so freely gave. His spirit will remain with us always, in every life he touched and every heart he lifted.

Rest easy, Chief. We’ll take it from here.

Thomas M. Lee Sr.

Volunteer Assistant Chief ★ February 19, 2024 ★ Age 82

Thomas Minter Lee Sr., known to most as “Tommy Lee” or “Chief Lee,” was born October 28, 1941, in Portsmouth, Virginia, the only child of the late James Edward Lee and Margaret Minter Lee. He was a graduate of Woodrow Wilson High School in Virginia and worked at Globe Iron Shipyard and Norfolk Shipbuilding and Drydock.

In 1972, Chief Lee and his family moved to Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, where he worked as an electrician. He enjoyed fishing, going to the beach, softshell crabbing, fish netting, and pig pickings in the old neighborhood. He joined the Kill Devil Hills Fire Department in March 1973 when it was an all-volunteer department.

In 1984, he started L&L Drywall with his son, Tom Jr. After retiring in 2014, he enjoyed working around the house on different projects, spending time with his grandchildren, and serving his community through the fire department. He was one of the founding members of Outer Banks Baptist Church, where he remained active. During the 70s, he served as Scoutmaster for Troop 161 in Kitty Hawk. He was a welcome sight at the “Table of Wisdom,” where he could be found just about every morning enjoying his cup, or cups, of firehouse coffee.

Chief Lee proudly and heroically served the citizens and visitors of Kill Devil Hills as a volunteer firefighter for just a few days shy of 52 years! He was a great mentor for the new firefighters and never tired of passing on his wisdom to others. He considered all members of the department his family. He performed just about every job there was to do around the fire station at one time or another.

He received many awards and commendations during his firefighting career. Shortly before his death, he received the Certificate of Appreciation from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. In 2022, he was Firefighter of the Year, and he received the Most Calls (Volunteer) Award in 2021 and 2022. He was also awarded the Mayor’s Achievement Award for 50 years of dedicated service.

If you asked Chief Lee what his greatest accomplishment in life was, he would proudly reply, “My family.” Left to cherish his memory are his wife, Brenda Lee; daughter, Sheri Henley (David); son, Tom Lee Jr. (Sandra); daughter, Jo Ellen Kiourtzidis (Vasilious); eight grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild, along with the many friends he met throughout his lifetime.

The members of the Kill Devil Hills Fire Department thank Chief Lee for his heroism, bravery, and service. We also thank his family for sharing him with us all these years.

Rest in Peace, Chief Lee; we will take it from here.

NORTH CAROLINA

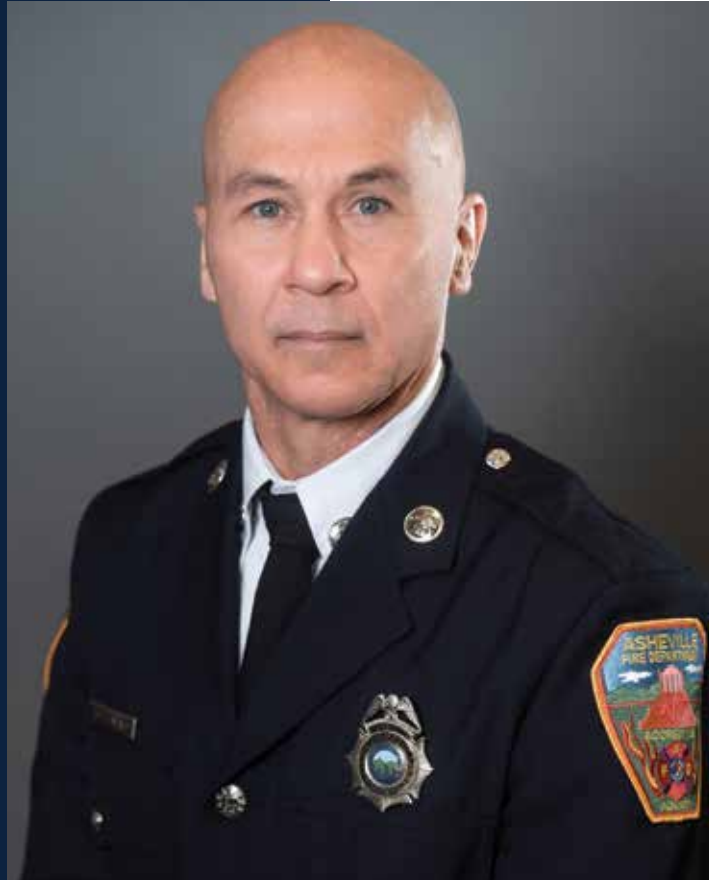


**Kill Devil Hills
Fire Department**

Jeffrey M. Lyons

Career Captain ★ November 16, 2022 ★ Age 61

NORTH CAROLINA



Asheville Fire
Department

Jeffrey Lyons was born in Boone, North Carolina, to Archie and Joann Lyons on September 17, 1961. He was the second of five brothers and sisters. Growing up, Jeff was an avid outdoorsman, adventurer, and wrestler which led him to join the U.S. Army as an airborne infantryman in 1985. Jeff served in the U.S. Army from 1985 until 1994. Jeff would later serve in the U.S. Air Force Reserve with the 560th RED HORSE Battalion from 2010 until his retirement in 2021. Jeff served his local community of Asheville as a firefighter for 26 years, from 1996 until his passing in 2022.

Jeff was a dedicated husband, father, grandfather, and brother, leaving behind his wife of 37 years, Janet Lyons; children, Mead Lyons (son) and Forest Lyons (daughter); grandchildren, Harper Lyons, Brooke Lyons, and Buchanan Lyons; brothers, Dean Lyons, Greg Lyons, Brent Lyons, and sister, Allyson Lyons. Jeff also left behind numerous extended family members and friends whom he loved dearly.

Jeff was always moving. At the fire house you could often find him on the treadmill, lifting weights, or having a deep conversation with "Paco." Jeff built a home for his family on a mountain in Barnardsville, North Carolina, where he always had a couple of projects running simultaneously. Jeff was a man of integrity, hard work, and humility; he was always willing to lend a helping hand, check in on a friend, or offer a word of encouragement. Jeff was a leader and source of security for his subordinates, peers, and superiors alike.

Jeff's honors and awards are too numerous to list completely but include The Army Commendation Medal, The Army Achievement Medal (5th Award), Army Good Conduct Medal (2nd Award), Expert Infantryman Badge, Parachutist Badge,

The Air Force Achievement Medal, GWOT Expeditionary Medal, associate degrees in forestry and fire protection technology, and Open Water PADI certification.

Jeff isn't remembered for his impressive resume and accolades. Jeff is remembered for the impact he had, and continues to have, on our lives. He is with us always. Stories of Jeff are shared regularly at home and in the fire station. The filter of "How would Jeff handle this?" lives on in the decision-making process for many of us. We are all forever grateful for the love he gave us, the role he continues to play in our lives, and the sacrifices he made for us.

We love you, Jeff. 'Til we meet again.

Anthony Bryant “Tony” Mauldin

Career Chief ★ **November 26, 2022** ★ **Age 60**

NORTH CAROLINA

Anthony Bryant “Tony” Mauldin was born in Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina, to the late James and Marie Mauldin on July 24, 1962. Tony came from a long line of firefighting. His father, James, served over 50 years with the Fuquay-Varina Fire Department.

Tony’s 32-year service to the community began when he joined the Fuquay-Varina Rural Fire Department in 1990 as a volunteer firefighter. Falling in love with serving his hometown community, in 1993 he became the first career fire captain hired by the department. After the department merged with the Town of Fuquay-Varina in 1999, Tony was promoted to assistant fire chief. He was appointed fire chief for the Town of Fuquay-Varina Fire Department in 2002, serving faithfully in that role until his death. Tony also loved being a fire instructor for future firefighters.

Tony was very active in the Wake County Fire Service throughout his career, serving on many committees, including the Wake County Fire Commission for over 18 years. His leadership, accountability, integrity, empathy, and devotion to serve Wake County and his fire department family grew Fuquay-Varina to be a better place to work and live. He served as a model of hard work and dedication to the fire service. His passion for the community, the fire service, and the people he served will be deeply missed.

Chief Mauldin was an inspirational leader. His favorite quote was, “We might not do good at it, but we will look good doing it.”

Tony was a devoted and loving family man, leaving behind his wife of 36 years, Lenette Arnold Mauldin; his son, James Anthony; and his daughter-in-law, Sarah.

Tony loved hunting and fishing with his son, Anthony, and sitting outside playing with his chocolate lab, Bubba. In his spare time, he was perfecting his grilling skills and sharing it with the town of Fuquay-Varina and his family.

Under his leadership and vision, the fire department achieved many accomplishments, including building additions to Fire Station #1 and Fire Station # 2, opening Fire Station #3, adding a second ladder truck to the fleet, and his consistent effort to build Fire Station #4, which opened in 2024.



**Town of Fuquay-
Varina Fire
Department**

David Scott Merritt

Career Assistant Fire Marshal ★ December 26, 2021 ★ Age 54

NORTH CAROLINA



Durham Fire Department

Scotty was born in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on August 2, 1967. For his first three years, he lived with his mother, Brenda Kirby Whitaker, and his grandparents, John Henry and Tessie Mae. Wherever John Henry went, Scotty followed. Some of his favorite memories were playing in the orchard between their home and learning from the older generation that congregated at the country store that his grandfather owned in White Cross. Scotty always remembered the lessons that his grandparents taught him—most importantly, how to treat others with respect.

In 1989, Scotty graduated from Alamance Community College with an associate degree in criminal justice. He was employed with the Wake County Sheriff's Office for 2.5 years but discovered that criminal justice was not for him. He moved back to White Cross, where his best friend, Kenny Stewart, introduced him to the fire service.

In 1996, Scotty started his first paid firefighting job with the Carrboro Fire Department. He worked in fire suppression until 2001, when he was promoted to lieutenant. In 2006, Scotty became assistant fire marshal of Orange County. In 2009, he became fire marshal for Columbus County, where he first tried boiled peanuts, collard greens, and hog liver and discovered that they are an "acquired taste." In 2014, Scotty returned to the Triangle to be closer to his family. He served as an assistant fire marshal with the Durham Fire Department from 2014 until his death, performing routine and construction inspections and investigating numerous fires. Some of his biggest projects were the 18-story building in downtown Durham and the Amazon and FedEx distribution centers. Scotty held numerous fire service certifications and was often sought for his expertise. He was the City of Durham Firefighter of the Year (2016) and White Cross Firefighter of the Year (1995 and 2021). He was a member of the NCFIAI, NCFICIE, and the NC Fire Marshals' Association.

Some of Scotty's favorite things were watching Clemson and East Carolina University play football, family gatherings, pizza with pepperoni and mushrooms, sitting on the beach with a cold beer, and teaching younger firefighters. He was the life of every party, with a beautiful smile that reached his blue eyes. A wonderful son, devoted father, and compassionate husband, he was welcoming, entertaining, kind, generous, and helpful. Scotty always let others know what he was thinking, through his words or simply "the look."

On December 26, 2021, Scotty passed away after a short battle with cancer. He was survived by his mother, Brenda Kirby Whitaker; wife, Christy Haik; children, Austin Merritt and Anna Merritt; stepson, Heath Robbins; uncles, Raymond and Norman Kirby; aunts, Brenda and Gwen Kirby; and many cousins, some of whom he considered brothers.

Ronnie Buren Metcalf

Career Captain ★ **March 29, 2024** ★ **Age 53**

Ronnie Buren Metcalf was born January 25, 1971. He was raised in the small town of Denton, North Carolina, and graduated from South Davidson High School in 1990. On February 22, 1992, he married Carol Bell Metcalf. Together they were blessed with a son, Joshua Metcalf; a daughter, Holly Metcalf Worley (husband Anthony); granddaughters, Addilyn and Savannah; and grandson, Waylen.

Ronnie started serving his community in 1992 at Denton Fire Department. He briefly worked with Badin Lake Fire Department as well as Healing Springs Fire Department. In 2005, he was hired by the City of Lexington Fire Department and worked up to the rank of captain. When he was not working on shift, he would help teach fire classes at Rowan Cabarrus Community College. His favorite class to teach was pumps. He was always working on ways to better himself and help others.

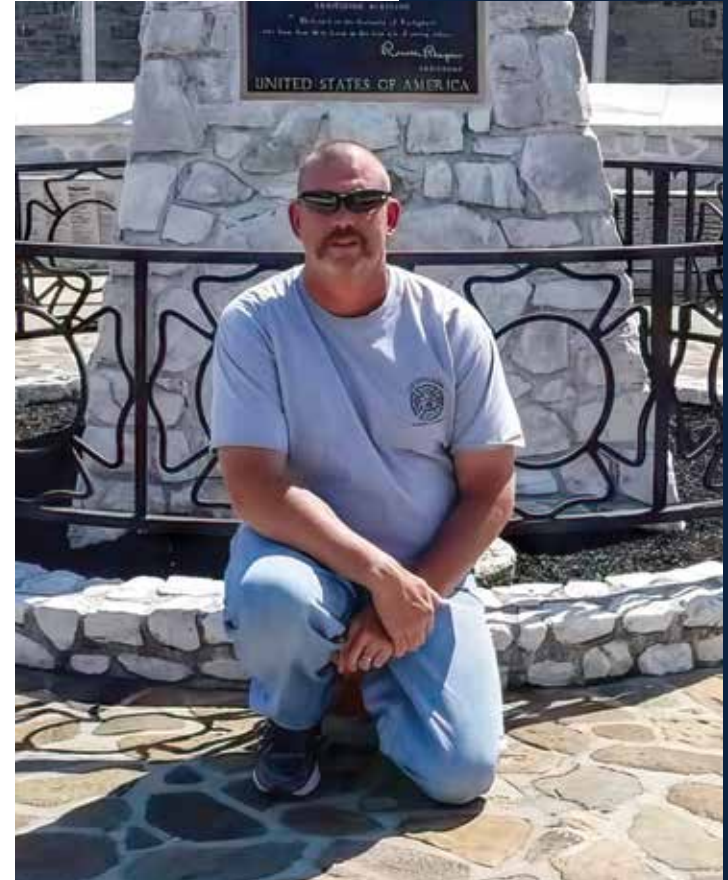
He knew early in his life that he wanted to be a fireman. He always respected the fire service but most importantly he always wanted to honor those that made the ultimate sacrifice. Traveling to Maryland to visit the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial was very important to him.

Ronnie loved the Lord. If he was working a shift on Sunday, he would always watch his church's service on Facebook. He loved gospel music, and he loved to sing in his church choir. Ronnie put GOD first in everything he did. He was a devoted husband to his wife Carol for 32 years. His famous saying to her was, "I love you more today than I did yesterday, but not as much as I will tomorrow." The love Ronnie and Carol had was truly a gift from GOD.

On March 26, 2024, the Lexington Fire Department responded to a house fire. Ronnie responded with his crew and immediately went in to try to get control of the fire. Conditions quickly deteriorated, and all personnel were told to evacuate. Captain Metcalf found himself trapped inside. Once his crew realized he was still in the structure, they quickly went inside and were able to locate and remove him from the blaze. He was airlifted to Wake Forest Baptist Hospital. Sadly, on Friday, March 29, 2024, he succumbed to his injuries and the Lord called him home.

Ronnie was my soulmate. I fell in love with him on our first date. I knew that night that he was the person GOD wanted me to marry. He was my rock and my everything. I will never know why GOD chose to take him home when he did, but I know that every day I wake up, I am one day closer to being with him again.

NORTH CAROLINA



**Lexington
Fire Department**

Robert Paul Nordman

NORTH CAROLINA

Volunteer Captain ★ December 17, 2018 ★ Age 48



Northern Wake
Fire Department

Captain Robert P. Nordman was born April 4, 1970, in Stoughton, Massachusetts. He served three tours with the United States Navy on the destroyer USS Elliot during Operation Desert Storm. During his years of active service, he worked as a gas turbine engine technician and achieved the rank of petty officer second class. His love of the fire service began in the Navy, resulting in more than 30 years of service to the citizens of Wake County as a member of the Apex, Wendell, and Stony Hill Fire Departments (now Northern Wake Fire Department), where he worked his way up to the rank of captain.

From a young age, his bubbly personality was magnetic. He played soccer and football throughout his youth and loved all things engines. Despite not being fond of sitting in class, he was a walking history book. His phenomenal memory and recall for facts gave him an ability to converse on most any topic, and he was not afraid to tell you his opinion. He loved movies and music. His favorites were Forrest Gump and Elvis. He could recite almost any line and attempted to sing like Elvis.

He enjoyed leading junior firefighters and instilled in them the values of teamwork and service. His hope was to leave a legacy in the lives of those he trained. In addition to Firefighter of the Year, he had two favorite awards. "Horse Whisperer" was a title he earned when he and his crew were dispatched to an unknown hazard call. When they arrived, a couple of horses escaped from a property near this corner. They used their engine and themselves to protect the horses and return them to their property. He earned the "Driving Backwards to a Fire Award" during Emergency Vehicle Operations Training. When directed to drive through a maze of cones, he did it perfectly, then drove it backward without contacting a single cone. The instructor declared that he should back the engines to calls.

He is survived by his wife, Robin; sons, Johnathon and Michael; daughters, Savannah Bartninkaitis and Christina Nordman; his parents, Will and Sue Nordman; brother, Rick Nordman; sister, Gin Cooper; nephews, Casey, Nico, Ethan, and Jake; niece, Devon; and six grandchildren. He was predeceased by his brother, Chuck Nordman.

He dearly loved his family, his fire department, and his service in the Navy and community. He loved the work he did restoring the battleship USS North Carolina, docked in Wilmington, North Carolina. He cherished his membership with the Red Knights Motorcycle Club, where he rode with brother firefighters on his Harley-Davidson. His relationship with the Lord was an anchor in his life that carried him through his last breath.

Thomas Ray Patterson

Volunteer Captain ★ **September 12, 2024** ★ **Age 74**

A lifelong public servant, Thomas Ray Patterson had over 50 years in the North Carolina fire service. He began his career by serving on the Eastover Fire Department, where for six years he was a captain and an EMT.

After returning to Louisburg, he joined Louisburg Rescue and served for many years as an EMT. He became a member of the Louisburg Fire Department, where he served for 36 years in various capacities including lieutenant, captain, assistant chief, and secretary/treasurer.

Ray Patterson and his heart for helping others led him to serve for many years in the Louisburg Police Department as well as the Franklinton Police Department.

He was a certified instructor with Vance Granville Community College, and for many years he taught classes at various fire departments throughout the county and taught Con-Ed classes.

Ray was a huge part of the Franklin County Firefighters Association. He was instrumental in the rookie school, which is now named after him, and took great pride in teaching the younger generation of firefighters. He always assisted other departments within the county and was especially loved by the Franklinton Fire Department.

He was a loyal and faithful employee with the Town of Louisburg for 44 years, having started as a lineman, and had worked his way up to assistant town administrator when he retired on December 1, 2022. Ray had a passion for service to others, and he dedicated his life to helping in any way that he possibly could. Following his retirement, he could often be seen around the town, checking in on his boys and lending helpful advice.

On a Friday night, you would find Ray Patterson being the voice of the Louisburg High School Warriors, calling all the home football games for many years!

Sadly, on September 12, 2024, Thomas Ray Patterson passed away unexpectedly at his home from a heart attack after responding to two fire calls earlier that day. Louisburg Fire Department personnel, Franklin County EMS, and Louisburg Police Department all responded to the cardiac arrest call and exhausted all efforts to save his life. Our family will be eternally grateful for what each of you did that day, not only for him but for us, too.

Indeed, Thomas Ray Patterson left a remarkable legacy upon Franklin County.

NORTH CAROLINA



**Louisburg
Fire Department**

Troy Thompson

Volunteer Firefighter ★ October 4, 2023 ★ Age 46

NORTH CAROLINA



Seven Springs
Volunteer Fire
Department

Firefighter Troy Thompson dedicated his life to service—his family, his community, and his fire department. A devoted father, trusted friend, and selfless public servant, Troy’s legacy is one of bravery, kindness, and unwavering commitment to helping others.

Born on May 25, 1977, in Wayne County, North Carolina, to Pam Price and the late Bobby Thompson, Troy was raised with strong faith and a heart for service. His passion for firefighting led him to join the Seven Springs Volunteer Fire Department, where he became a respected and dependable firefighter. Whether responding to fires, medical calls, or community emergencies, Troy met every challenge with courage and dedication.

One of the greatest honors of his life was serving alongside his son, Mason, in the fire department. He took immense pride in mentoring younger firefighters and ensuring that the department continued its tradition of excellence and commitment to the community. His knowledge of firefighting techniques, equipment maintenance, and emergency response made him a valued team member and a trusted friend to his fellow firefighters.

Troy’s service extended beyond the firehouse. A dedicated member of Daly’s Chapel Church, he served as a deacon, choir member, and active volunteer, always putting his faith into action. His generous spirit and willingness to lend a hand made him a beloved member of both his church and the greater Seven Springs community.

Outside of firefighting, Troy was known for his vast knowledge of vehicles. He could identify make, model, and details of almost any car or truck, a skill that amazed and entertained his friends. He never met a stranger and had a gift for conversation, making everyone feel welcome in his presence.

Troy’s greatest joy in life was his family. He was a devoted father to Mason and Mackenzie, always putting their needs above his own and guiding them with patience, wisdom, and unconditional love.

Shawn P. Calvey

Career Firefighter/EMT ★ July 30, 2024 ★ Age 37

OHIO

Shawn was the epitome of living authentically. He knew what mattered most and embodied loyalty and integrity. An eight-year veteran of the Cleveland Fire Department, he worked primarily on the city's West Side, earning universal respect for his work ethic, instincts, strength, and sense of humor. He served Cleveland selflessly, showing determination and courage in numerous lifesaving incidents.

If you didn't have the pleasure to meet Shawn, you missed a great opportunity to laugh, hear about Notre Dame football, his love for golf, the Cleveland Browns, and stories of his firehouse and family. He was an avid golfer and loved all things sports. His enthusiasm for the game was contagious, and he could often be found on the golf course perfecting his swing. He got to fulfill a lifelong dream of being a patron at The Masters golf tournament in Augusta, Georgia, which was an experience he cherished deeply. Shawn's passion for life and sports left a lasting impression on everyone he met.

Shawn had a unique ability to care for those around him, making everyone feel special. His infectious personality made people complain less and laugh more. After his cancer diagnosis, he taught those around him what truly mattered in life, reminding everyone to appreciate the small moments. Instead of giving up, he fought with grace, dignity, and tenacity, embodying his motto, "If you see me in a fight with cancer, pray for the cancer." Shawn and his wife, Kelly, pursued every treatment option, leaving no stone unturned. Their journey inspired others to remain hopeful and resilient despite life's challenges.

Shawn personified the essence of a devoted family man. He was a loving husband to Kelly and a remarkable father to his two young children, Landon and Madeline. His family was the heart of his existence and the driving force and motivation for his relentless fight against his disease. To Landon and Madeline, their dad was a living, breathing superhero. Shawn imparted a profound life lesson to his children—when faced with adversity, rise up like a superhero and fight with all your might. Shawn was an extraordinary son, brother, uncle, cousin, coach, and friend, touching the lives of everyone fortunate enough to know him.

Shawn was cherished, leaving an unforgettable impact on every life he encountered. His absence is felt deeply; words cannot fully capture the extent to which he is missed. Cleveland feels a little quieter and significantly dimmer since his final call. Yet, his legacy will continue to shine through his wife, children, family, friends, and everyone fortunate enough to have known him.



**Cleveland
Fire Department**

Remembrance 2025



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Jarod F. Kammeyer

Volunteer Assistant Chief ★ February 14, 2023 ★ Age 48

OHIO



Noble Township
Fire Department

Jarod Fredrick Kammeyer was born in Defiance, Ohio, to the late James and Judy Kammeyer on January 24, 1975. He always felt loved and was raised by his Aunt Diana and Uncle Robert Doster and his grandparents, the late Paul and Erma Feeney.

Jarod passed away on Valentine's Day after a courageous and extensive 880-day battle from COVID-19 complications he contracted on a fire call. He was known as "The Miracle Man" throughout his complicated battle.

He joined the Noble Township Volunteer Fire Department on September 8, 1993, at age 18, right after graduating from Tinora High School, Class of 1993.

He was a dedicated part of the department for 30 years. He worked his way up through the ranks to assistant chief of Noble Township Volunteer Fire Department in Defiance, Ohio. He was also certified with Hazardous Materials Operations and was a member of Defiance County Hazardous Materials Response Team.

On September 23, 2000, he married Cristina, who survives.

Jarod was a faithful member of St. John Lutheran Church in Defiance. In his early career he worked as an assistant director at Spartan Retail in Napoleon, Ohio. In 2004, he was the store manager at Dollar Tree in Defiance. In 2015, he was promoted to district manager of Dollar Tree Stores, Inc., overseeing stores in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana.

His true calling in life was firefighting and prevention. Jarod was a dedicated public servant, loved his community, and wore his heart on his sleeve. He always put others first. He loved to teach elementary students about fire safety.

He enjoyed being with his family, working outdoors, and doing construction projects around the house.

For over 20 years, Jarod dressed up as Santa and delivered packages and meals to those less fortunate and visited the local elementary schools.

Jarod was a Notre Dame fan, and his father-in-law, the late Otto Nicely, was an Ohio State fan. Certainly, there was an exchange of good old trash talk since both their teams made it to the playoffs. Otto was also a charter member of Noble Township Volunteer Fire Department who passed 14 days before Jarod.

Jarod departed this earth on a high note. He sacrificed his life doing something he loved, serving his community and helping his fellow man in their time of need. His family and friends were very important to him. His hope was that his battle would be the strength for others. Jarod rests now in perfect hands.

Amanda Karduck

Career Lieutenant ★ **June 26, 2024** ★ **Age 42**

Amanda Karduck was born in 1981 and lived in the Nordonia Hills community. She was a second-generation firefighter. Her parents met while serving on the Northfield Center Fire Department.

In 2000, Amanda graduated from Nordonia High School, receiving recognition from both the Akron Beacon Journal and Cleveland Plain Dealer. She earned a Bachelor of Communication from Eastern Michigan University in 2004, and a Master of Public Safety Leadership and Administration from Arizona State University in 2021.

While in high school, Amanda earned 12 varsity letters in basketball, soccer, softball, and track and maintained the highest GPA on each team. She was inducted into the Nordonia High School Sports Hall of Fame in 2014. While attending Eastern Michigan University, she was a founding member of the Women's Division 1 Rowing Team, earning three letters from 2001-2005.

Following an EMT course in 2004, Amanda developed a passion for the firefighting/EMT profession and went on to complete her Fire and Paramedic certifications. She began her career with the Northfield Center Fire Department in 2006 and later went on to make history by becoming the first female firefighter in the City of Painesville in 2008. In 2017, she was sworn in as lieutenant and became the first female officer of the Painesville City Fire Department. She shunned the attention and preferred to make a name for herself strictly on her merits. Amanda was respected by both peers and officers as an excellent firefighter and employee. She was in charge of the Juvenile FireSetter Counseling program and the Fire Investigation Team. During her career, Amanda received two Life-Saving Medals (2011, 2018), Firefighter of the Year (2014), a Unit Citation (2017), and an Exemplary Service Award (2018). Amanda opened doors for other women who aspired to join the fire service, and she touched innumerable lives during her career.

Amanda retired from the fire service in 2022 and went from fighting fires to fighting occupational cancer. The Painesville City Fire Department was an important part of her life, and she deeply missed being part of it. Between treatments, Amanda enjoyed watching Ohio sports in the company of family and friends, trips to various destinations in the U.S., visiting national parks, hiking, and kayaking. Her orange kayak was her Happy Place. Her legacy of bravery, commitment, and unconditional love will live on well past her 42 years, carried by those who were fortunate enough to receive the gift of her friendship. She gave cancer hell and lived life.

OHIO

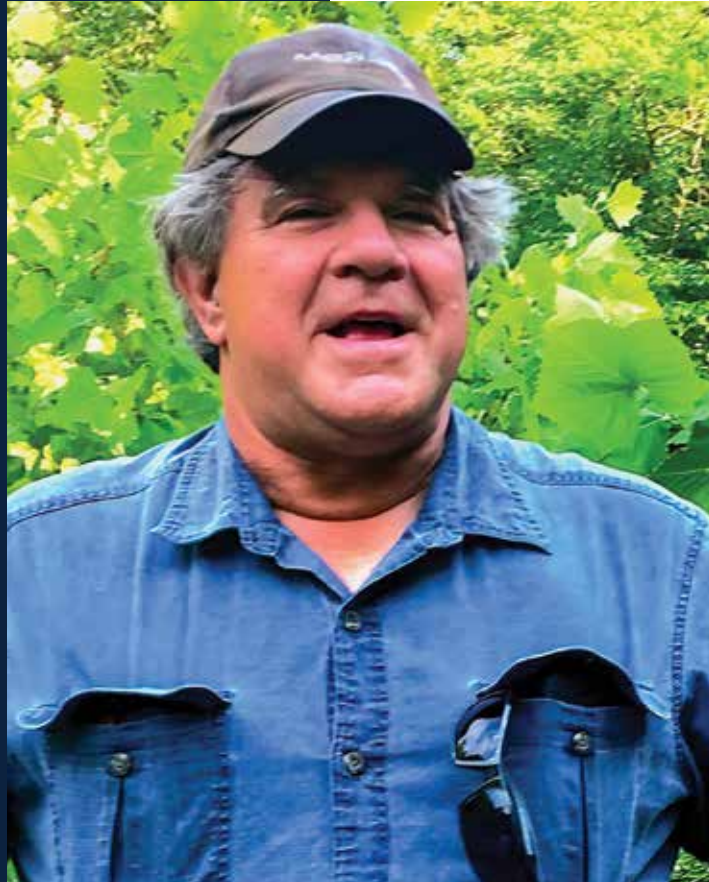


**Painesville City
Fire Department**

James Stephen Lamp

Volunteer Assistant Fire Chief ★ January 14, 2022 ★ Age 62

OHIO



Newport Volunteer
Fire Department

James Stephen “Steve” Lamp was born in Marietta, Ohio, to James E. Lamp and the late Patricia Lamp on June 6, 1959. Steve was an active member of the Newport Volunteer Fire Department for 35 years. For many of those years, he served as the assistant chief and chief.

Steve was a devoted family man and friend, leaving behind his wife of 37 years, Barbara; his twin sons, Justin (Kelsie) and Dustin (Michelle); father, James E. Lamp; brothers, David (Tonda) and Troy; sister, Sharon (Craig) Henegar; sister-in-law, Christy; mother-in-law, Geneva Kiggans; and many nieces, nephews, and friends. Since his passing, the family has welcomed his two granddaughters, Lilith and Isabella. He was preceded in death by his mother, Patricia; brother, Michael; and father-in-law, Warren Kiggans.

Steve enjoyed being with his family. He always participated in the motorsports that his sons were involved in, usually as the mechanic and coach. He loved to take care of animals and do his fair share of volunteering at the local animal shelter with his electrical skills. He never turned down a good rock concert. For a quiet individual, he really enjoyed the atmosphere and excitement. He enjoyed being outdoors, working on oil wells, fishing, and shooting. He was also dedicated to his employer for 45 years.

Steve left this earth too soon, but we know he is in good hands.

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

William J. "B.J." McCale

Volunteer Firefighter/EMT ★ June 10, 2023 ★ Age 50

William John "B.J." McCale, the son of the late William F. McCale and Jeanne M. McCale, was born June 20, 1972. He passed away one week after having a cardiac emergency while at training with his brothers on the Vermilion Township Fire & Rescue Department.

He joined the city fire department in 2010 before transferring to Vermilion Township in 2022. Over the years he was promoted to chief engineer and received awards for Firefighter of the Year and exceptional service. He completed his Emergency Medical Responder program in 2012.

If B.J. was not at his mechanical contracting job, or cheering on his kids at sporting events, he was at the fire station. He truly gave his blood, sweat, and tears for the community and never complained. He strived for the best in everything he did, including caring for his family.

Growing up, B.J. was a role model for his younger sister and brother, Colleen and Greg McCale. He participated in every sport that the town of Vermilion had to offer. Being very athletic in high school led him to play college ball at Quincy University in Illinois.

He met his loving wife in 1994, and they were married in 1997. He worked hard over the years at his job at Avon Lake Sheet Metal, as well as updating his home and raising two beautiful children. Izzy was the firstborn, and she has his ambition. She would be making her dad proud, as she graduated from The Ohio State University with a degree in law. Tyler, the second born, shared his father's athleticism, playing multiple sports throughout his school years and shining on the football field in high school.

You went away so suddenly, we didn't get to say goodbye, but you can never be parted from us, as precious memories never die.

You were forever leading by example, maintaining dignity and duty, a combination of qualities that are hard to find.

Our Hero forever in our hearts
William John McCale
June 20, 1972 - June 10, 2023

OHIO



**Vermilion Township
Fire & Rescue
Department**

Richard D. Richardson

Career Battalion Chief ★ January 25, 2023 ★ Age 57

OHIO



Columbus
Division of Fire

Richard D. Richardson passed away peacefully on January 25, 2023, surrounded by his loving family.

He was born on January 16, 1966, to Earl and Karen (Kendle) Richardson in Steubenville, Ohio. Rich graduated from Buckeye North High School and Mount Vernon Nazarene University.

Rich became a volunteer firefighter for the town of Brilliant, Ohio, in 1980 at the age of fourteen. He joined the Columbus (Ohio) Division of Fire on July 25, 1988. He was promoted to the ranks of lieutenant, captain and battalion chief. He received numerous awards throughout his career, including the Distinguished Service Award, Fire Service Award of Merit, EMS Award of Merit, and the Battalion Chief's Commendation. He was dedicated to serving the citizens of Columbus for over 34 years, ending his career serving Battalion 5 on the city's west side. At the time of his passing, he was six months from retiring.

His two sons followed in their father's footsteps. Michael is a lieutenant, and Matthew is a firefighter for the Columbus (Ohio) Division of Fire. His two daughters have followed in careers of service as well. Megan is a nurse, and Madeline is a social worker.

He was the loving husband of Patti for nearly 34 years, the devoted father to Michael (Taylor), Matthew (Shannon), Megan (Jake), and Madeline, and the loving grandfather of four.

He was a faithful and devout member of St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, where he served as an usher, a member of the Knights of Columbus, Men's Club, Men's Bible Study, Faith Formation, and served as a volunteer in various ministries.

Rich faced his health challenges with unwavering faith, strength, dignity, and grace. He remained an inspiration to those who knew and loved him.

He was a beloved husband, father, and grandfather, a brother to many, and a friend to all. We miss his laughter, kindness, cheerful personality, optimism, and his presence tremendously.

Daniel R. Ritchey

Volunteer Chief ★ October 18, 2021 ★ Age 60

Daniel Ray "Dan" Ritchey, 60, of Reno, Ohio, passed away Monday, October 18, 2021, at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. Dan was born August 7, 1961, in Marietta, Ohio, to the late Reuben U. and Willia J. Wright Ritchey.

Dan was chief of the Reno Volunteer Fire Department, a department he joined when he was 15 years old. He owned and operated Ritchey's Detail Shop and served proudly as a Marietta Township trustee. He was a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the Ohio Township Association, American Union Lodge #1 F.& A.M., a 32nd Degree Mason, a member of Aladdin Shrine, Marietta Shrine Club, New Matamoras Social Shrine Club, and the 6th and Washington Streets Church of Christ.

Dan is survived by his wife, Peggy; son, Josh (Sydney); daughter, Lori Ludwig (Stephen); and grandchildren, Madi, Gage, and Jace Ludwig.

Dan was dedicated to serving others for his adult life. He would stand by you no matter the circumstances but would be the first one to call you out if you were wrong. He was a fighter who weathered many health scares in his life, but even while going through his health problems he didn't slow down. He continued serving his community through it all. Dan was a grateful organ recipient when his own kidneys failed, and that allowed him to enjoy more years with his family and friends.

He may be gone, but he will never be forgotten.

OHIO



**Reno Volunteer
Fire Department**

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Alan Van Kramer

Career Lieutenant ★ January 3, 2024 ★ Age 55

OHIO



Madison Fire District

Alan Van Kramer began his career in 1986 as a volunteer firefighter with Harpersfield Volunteer Fire Department. He earned his Firefighter II certification in 1988, joining Madison Fire District part-time. In 1996, he added a Paramedic certification and was among the first full-time hires in 1998.

A meticulous leader and cutting-edge innovator, he brought life experience to the fire service and was adaptable to any situation. With self-motivated integrity, his philosophy was "Do it right the first time." A strategic thinker steps ahead of everyone at complex calls, he could identify a comprehensive plan of attack based upon a strategic operation. He was a Renaissance man with beyond-the-book knowledge of building construction and practical knowledge of how things work. Alan's talent was information technology, pager, radio communication, and mapping software. He oversaw the 800-radio system, developing communication improvements. His electronic genius developed a simulcast on low band radios, alerting firemen to respond from home. Alan retired after 35 years of selfless and dedicated service.

He greeted his crew with, "Hi, happy good day!" Compared to the Energizer Bunny, he worked late nights, earning the nickname "Batman." Expertly utilizing human resources, he encouraged his crew to expand their knowledge, assisted them in achieving and exceeding goals, and had their best interest at heart.

With his infamous smirk, he never passed on a spirited debate. He envisioned multiple ways to perceive a situation. Solution oriented, he engaged in open discussion for the best possible outcome. He loved being with fellow firefighters celebrating St. Patrick's Day in Cleveland, sailing on cruise ships, or shaking lemonade at the Harpersfield Ox Roast. On shift or not, Alan would drop what he was doing to help. A larger-than-life Jack-of-all-trades, loyal friend, and go-to guy, everyone knew he was only a call away.

Alan spent 23 years with "the girl of my dreams," his wife, Kitty. The love of Alan's life was their son, Juseppi, who at age 12 lost his cherished father far too soon. Fatherhood completed Alan's longing to be needed. No greater love existed than between father and child. Alan was an award-winning school volunteer, sports dad, baseball coach, and certified umpire. Juseppi's baseball families formed the AVK All Stars team in Alan's memory. Winning the championship game, the kids raised the trophy to the sky chanting Alan's initials, "AVK...AVK."

Knowing his life was coming to an end, Alan's message to all was, "I've lived a great life." He gathered family and friends close, preparing for eternal life. His spiritual awakening gave him peace. The wisest of men follow the star...

Gregory Alan Warner

Volunteer Assistant Chief ★ **October 30, 2023** ★ **Age 68**

OHIO

Gregory Alan Warner, 68, was born November 8, 1954. He was a lifelong resident of Wheelersburg, Ohio. Upon turning 18, he joined the Porter Township Volunteer Fire Department while still a senior in high school. He worked up the ranks and became chief at just 24 years old. Chief Warner served on the department for 51 years. He was also a founding member of the Porter Township Emergency Rescue Squad in 1975 and a special deputy with the Scioto County Sheriff's Office for many years. Additionally, he was a member of the Ohio Valley Fire Association.

Early in his career, Greg worked as a supervisor for Mullins Construction. In 2001, he became the Porter Township Safety and Service Director where he oversaw all staff and operations for fire and EMS, road and bridge services. He served in this role for 20 years during a time of tremendous growth for the community. Greg was appointed by Governor Mike DeWine to serve as the fire service representative on the Ohio Board of Building Standards. He also enjoyed being an advisor to his son's company, Energy Storage Response Group.

The most devoted family man, Greg is survived by his wife of 47 years, Patty, and his children, Nicholas and Brittany. He was a member of St Peter's Catholic Church, where he was active in the Knights of Columbus and held the distinction as a Fourth Degree Knight and had served as Grand Knight.

Greg loved to hunt, golf, travel, and go to Ohio State football games. He rode his bicycle 120 miles every week, mostly to check out the town and help neighbors along his route. Each spring he planted a large garden and shared his vegetables with neighbors and friends. Greg always had a smile on his face and was genuinely loved by all who knew him.

One of Greg's favorite memories was helping to coach his daughter's softball team to the Little League World Series twice. He spent many hours coaching youth soccer, baseball, softball, basketball, and football. Greg was selected into the Wheelersburg High School Hall of Fame for his dedication to his hometown. A major pillar in his community, he was physically involved in nearly every project there for the last 50 years. Sadly, the one project he never got to finish was the expansion of the Fire Department. After his death, the department dedicated the new building in his name.

Greg received his angel wings on October 30, 2023, after a brief and courageous battle with esophageal cancer. Kind, humble, hardworking, and always fair, Chief Warner had a servant's heart and embodied the core values of the fire service.



**Porter Township
Volunteer Fire
Department**

Remembrance 2025



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Gregory Cross

Career Chief ★ September 23, 2023 ★ Age 57

OKLAHOMA



Altus Fire-EMS

Gregory Eugene Cross was born June 6, 1966, in Clinton, Oklahoma. He was raised and educated in Choctaw, Oklahoma, before moving to Navajo, Oklahoma, during his sophomore year of high school. In high school Greg was an accomplished baseball and basketball player. In 1984, Greg graduated from Navajo High School and then attended Western Oklahoma State College in Altus, where he played basketball.

In October 1987, Greg volunteered for the Friendship Fire Department. In 1994, he started working for the City of Altus, where he served for 29 years with distinction. Greg served in numerous capacities at the department and was serving as the fire chief at the time of his passing. He loved his community and his fellow brothers at the firehouse.

On August 31, 1991, Greg married the love of his life and soulmate Ronna, (Snyder) Cross, at Friendship Baptist Church. They were married for 32 years. Greg and Ronna were blessed with three children, Nathan Cross (wife Taylor Cross), Kalee Gorman (husband Austun Gorman), and Kasey Cross. One of Greg's favorite things to do was to attend his children's sporting events, and he was always cheering the loudest.

Greg was an active member at Martha Road Baptist Church. He loved to spread the good word to those around him. Greg enjoyed flying his airplane and going to OU football games with friends and family. He liked Sprint, Indy, and NASCAR races and going on vacation in the mountains with his family.

Of all Greg's hobbies, being around his family was his number one priority. He cherished every minute he had with his family. Throughout his life, Greg cracked jokes with those who came to see him, told stories, and loved every moment he got with his loved ones. He had a great ability to make others smile, and his sense of humor will be missed.

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Robert Bryan “RB” Ellis

Career Chief ★ February 24, 2021 ★ Age 60

OKLAHOMA

Robert Bryan Ellis was born on December 15, 1960, in Pawnee, Oklahoma, to Robert “Bob” and Ruth Ann Ellis. Bryan was the oldest of four children, and his sister remembers Bryan as being the best storyteller, often laughing too hard at his own story to finish the punchline. He was also known for making the rules for games they played, regularly changing the rules for whatever he needed to pull things in his favor. That worked well until everyone got older and figured out his shenanigans.

Bryan, also known as RB within the fire service, joined the Tulsa Fire Department in 1988. In 2016, he took the title of Chief of Health and Safety. A friend once said RB attained the title of Legend in the fire service by learning from the elite. RB traveled the U.S., learning directly from those individuals who were considered the masters of the craft in fire rescue. Whether RB was telling a joke or teaching, people gathered around to soak it up. RB often had a piece of rope at training and meetings, showing off his rope tying skills and teaching others how to tie a certain knot.

One of the most impactful accomplishments for RB was the desire to develop OKTF-1, Oklahoma’s Urban Search and Rescue Task Force, that shaped countless lives and inspired others. He was instrumental in helping colleagues organize special assistance for local jurisdictions for the Oklahoma Disaster Task Force, made up mostly by local emergency management agencies throughout Oklahoma. His larger-than-life presence, unwavering passion for rescue programs, and unforgettable spirit will forever leave an indelible mark.

RB had an affinity for anything outdoors—hunting, fishing, rafting, camping, and fishing some more. He always looked forward to his next outdoor adventure, such as running with the bulls in Spain and reeling in a 103-pound tuna. He knew that with proper planning and preparation, anything was possible. In doing so, he lived life to the absolute maximum. RB was also a pillar for Cavetime, participating in outdoor adventures with Church 3434, and was given the title “Chief.”

RB leaves behind his loving wife of 20 years, Teresa; daughters, Lauren and Jennifer; sons, Robert Bryan II “Bobby” and Thomas Franklin; and grandchildren, Hailey, Dax, Neil, Davis, Cooper, and Ruston.

RB’s devotion to his family, his God, and his fire service was unquestionable. He spent every day working to serve, and it showed in his actions. Every person who knew RB would tell you they were better off for having the association with him and his “Giddy Up.”



Tulsa Fire Department

Mark Eugene Meyer

Career Firefighter ★ March 16, 2019 ★ Age 53

OKLAHOMA



Tulsa Fire Department

Mark Eugene Meyer, age 53, left this world on March 16, 2019. He was the son of Dennis and Sharon Meyer. After moving from Nebraska to Oklahoma when he was eight, he attended school in Tulsa and graduated from East Central. Upon graduation, Mark began his career with the City of Tulsa.

During a summer outing at the lake, he met the love of his life, Selina Ferrell. They married in 1990, settling in Jenks, where they welcomed their daughter, Kinsey Taylor Meyer. In 1998, Mark entered the Tulsa Fire Academy with a dream of becoming a firefighter. He began at Station 30, later working at Stations 21 and 31. Throughout his career, he earned the nickname "Mr. We Otta," as he was always using his wit and humor to inspire others with his ideas to do something ornery.

In September 2014, after 15 years, Mark retired due to his battle with cancer, but his commitment to making a difference didn't end there. He often expressed his belief that, "If you surround yourself with good people, good things happen." In 2012, fueled by his commitment to help others, he founded a charity called Hydrants of Hope, which provides resources for families with kids battling cancer. He chose the symbol of a fire hydrant, a vital resource for firefighters; he sought to offer these brave kids a lifeline they could rely on.

Mark's commitment to improving the lives of others earned him the prestigious title of Firefighter of the Year in 2013 by the Tulsa Rotary Club. In 2019, the Tulsa Fire Department recognized his exceptional service as a dedicated firefighter and a passionate advocate for children. In honor of his contributions, they established the Mark Meyer Humanitarian Award, a tribute designed to inspire others to follow in Mark's footsteps and make a positive impact in their communities.

Mark's love for family and life was profound, but nothing compared to the love and joy he felt when his granddaughter, Taylee, was born, earning him the cherished title of Papa. Mark's passion for softball was strong. He was dedicated to coaching his daughter throughout her career and also coached the Verdigris High School team. His enthusiasm and coaching talent earned him a top 5 qualifier for the Nationwide U.S. Cellular Coach of the Year in 2018.

Mark often reflected on the quote, "Being challenged in life is inevitable. Being defeated is optional." Ultimately, he triumphed over his illness, leaving behind a legacy of courage and strength that will be remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him. "We Otta" all be more like Mark Meyer.

Harrison E. Moseby

Career Firefighter ★ **January 22, 2024** ★ **Age 26**

Harrison Moseby was born on July 9, 1997, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He attended Owasso Public Schools from elementary to high school and graduated in 2016. Quickly after graduation, Harrison went on to earn an associate degree in business from Tulsa Community College.

In 2019, Harrison became a third-generation Tulsa firefighter, graduating first in his fire academy class. Harrison loved everything about being a firefighter. He loved serving the people of the Tulsa community. He loved the bond between the guys on the job. He loved the adrenaline rush of getting a first in-house fire, but what Harrison loved most was playing ping pong at the station. Harrison never took being a firefighter lightly. It was a hard job for him, but it was rewarding because he had the chance to serve others.

Not long into his firefighter career, on March 4, 2022, he was diagnosed with epitheloid sarcoma. His cancer diagnosis eventually led to a forequarter arm amputation. For most people, the thought of losing an arm would be devastating, but it gave him the will to keep fighting. Harrison was never discouraged when there was a setback. He was empowered because he knew that each obstacle and closed door was another opportunity for God to use him. He was ambitious. Harrison knew that God was going to provide a way if it was supposed to happen. Harrison's calling was not only to be a Tulsa firefighter but to bring others to Christ.

He served The Lord and honored God with his fight. Harrison knew, as a Christ follower, that his purpose on Earth is to run the race given to him. Harrison gave everything he had to make his life worth something, and he did that by serving The Lord. He had God by his side, which gave him the power to keep fighting each day. He fixed his eyes on what's above, because he put his hope in Jesus. The joy of The Lord was his strength. Harrison's call into ministry awarded him an honorary degree from Midwestern Seminary in December 2023.

Harrison left behind his wife of three years, Mallory Moseby, and two daughters, Kollyns and Gracelee Moseby. Harrison had a special calling to be a light to others around him. Harrison set a great example of how we should all live our lives and be a light in this world. The only thing that he wanted people to remember about him is that he loved The Lord.

But those who hope in The Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:31

OKLAHOMA



Tulsa Fire Department

Daniel Richard Foley

Career Wildland Firefighter ★ July 9, 2024 ★ Age 27

OREGON



United States Forest Service - Bly Ranger District

Daniel Richard Foley was born on September 17, 1996, in Buffalo, New York, to Daniel D. Foley and the late Michelle Foley. Daniel attended Depew Union Free School District from second grade through high school graduation in 2014. He was a four-year member of the Depew football and lacrosse teams. He was also a member of the school's bowling team, where he was voted team captain for his senior year. After graduating from high school, he was an assistant coach for the junior varsity lacrosse team.

Daniel was a fan of his hometown Buffalo Bills and especially the Buffalo Bandits professional lacrosse team, where he was a season ticketholder for many years. He was truly a difference maker for all that he made friends with. He was known for his corny dad (Dan) jokes, which would be followed by his famous finger guns and infectious grin.

Since his youth, Daniel wanted to serve his community and country. He was diagnosed at age seven with Type 1 diabetes, which prevented him from taking the plunge into military service, but it didn't stop him from serving his community first with Twin District Volunteer Fire Company in Lancaster New York. He would become an EMT with AMR of WNY. At age 21, he took a job with Fauquier County Fire Rescue in Virginia, where he stayed for a couple years before missing friends and family and moving back to the Buffalo area. He took a job as a CNA in the ICU at the Buffalo VA Medical Center, where he thrived. He so enjoyed helping veterans who had sacrificed so much for their country. Again, his jokes and personality endeared him to the veterans and the staff at the hospital.

In early 2024, Daniel caught the firebug again and joined the United States Forest Service as a wildland firefighter. He joined three lifelong friends from his school days and went to Bly, Oregon. He truly found his calling with his three best friends and the entire Bly District. Daniel passed in the line of duty on July 9, 2024.

Daniel leaves behind his father, Dan, and stepmother, Donna; brother and sister, Wil and Caitlin Foley; best friend and brother, Dan Sutch (also with the USFS); grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and countless other friends. He also leaves behind his fiancée, Ayla Magliarditi, and her son, Devin.

Maurice “Mo” Stadel

Career Firefighter/Paramedic ★ February 24, 2019 ★ Age 61

Maurice “Mo” Stadel was a dedicated husband and father to his sons, Jeremy and Tony, and his daughter, Anjel. He and his wife, Tina, were married for 33½ years at the time of his passing. Mo and Tina were foster parents for the State of Oregon for 15 plus years. Mo was a devoted family man and cared deeply for his fellow human beings.

Mo was a firefighter/paramedic with the City of Salem Fire Department, IAFF Local 314. He started his career with Salem in 1992. Mo worked at Salem Fire Station #6, which served as the ARFF response for Salem’s airport and the surrounding residential and commercial district off the airport. Mo was ARFF certified and was the department’s hose repair technician. Additionally, Mo was our Station #6 cat meat representative. What’s a cat meat representative? Ask any Salem firefighter.

Mo was the epitome of a civil servant, always looking for ways to assist members of the public and his fellow firefighters above and beyond what was expected. He did so because he wanted to. That’s who Mo was.

An example of Mo’s selflessness is the time we responded to a disabled vehicle on the freeway. A young couple traveling through our city broke down. They kept repairing a part on their vehicle until it was no longer repairable. They had not nearly enough money to pay for the part. Mo went to the auto parts store, bought the part, and wouldn’t let us help him cover the cost. It wasn’t much, but it helped them get on their way. That’s who Mo was.

Mo carried that same attitude and effort for his fellow firefighters. Whenever somebody brought turnouts to our station to be laundered or a hose to be repaired, he jumped right on it for them. When we ran out of station supplies, many times he would go right after shift and shop for something that could have waited. He didn’t want his brothers and sisters to go without. That’s who Mo was

Mo was a curious man. There wasn’t a shiny piece of equipment that he didn’t like. If we went to the Cat dealership, he would get lost in all the fantastic new shiny equipment. He was like a kid in a candy store. Interesting planes would come into the airport, and he was fascinated with them with a sense of wonderment. That is who Mo was.

Mo was proud to call himself a firefighter and paramedic and was even prouder to be a Salem firefighter. It was an honor to serve the citizens of Salem with Mo and an even greater honor to call Mo our friend. He will be missed but not forgotten. Rest in Peace, Brother Mo.



OREGON

**Salem Fire
Department**

Remembrance 2025



Brian Robert Wolgamott

Career Fire Planner ★ November 28, 2024 ★ Age 42

OREGON



U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service

Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge firefighter Brian Wolgamott passed away on November 28, 2024, after a two-year battle with cancer. Brian started his wildland fire career in 2012. In 2022, after many years working with the USDA Forest Service as a firefighter, Brian accepted a position with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wildland fire program at the Klamath Basin refuges in Tule Lake, California, as a fire engine operator and fire planner.

Shortly after accepting this position, Brian and his family found out he had cancer. He began treatments in Seattle, Washington, while he continued to work. Despite his diagnosis and many long days of travel to receive treatment, Brian maintained a positive attitude and a hearty sense of humor.

“Brian’s unwavering strength and dedication to his profession, even in the face of adversity, truly stands out,” said Ken Griggs, Project Leader of the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex. “Despite the challenges posed by chemotherapy, Brian didn’t take a back seat and maintained his fitness and fire qualifications for as long as possible. Brian’s relentless work ethic shone through as he continually sought ways to make impactful contributions to the team.”

When he was no longer able to staff a fire engine, Brian stepped up to support his refuge in other ways. He took on tasks such as water quality monitoring, reprogramming radios, maintaining the local wildland fire supply cache, and serving as the station’s safety officer. Brian continued to support operations on the many large wildfires in the northwest as a dispatcher. He completed his last fire assignment just a month before he passed.

Troy Parrish, Klamath Basin Fire Management Officer, shared that, in the thick of receiving chemotherapy, Brian was still the first to volunteer and help a coworker unload a truck of firewood. “Brian consistently proved to be a man of his word. Whenever I needed someone reliable to get a job done, Brian was undoubtedly my first choice,” said Parrish.

To his friends and family, Brian was charismatic and always extended a helping hand. He shared his love of adventure and athletics with his wife, Marie, and their three children, Bryton, Maddox, and Elsie.

Brian was brought home to his final resting place with dignified transport and under a 24-hour Honor Watch. The Honor Guard held a memorial service and burial with full honors for Brian, and he was laid to rest in his service uniform.

Brian’s wishes are to spread awareness, especially to his brothers and sisters in wildland fire, to advocate for themselves and to get cancer screenings early and often.

J. William Bunardzya

Volunteer Safety Officer ★ **April 7, 2024** ★ **Age 73**

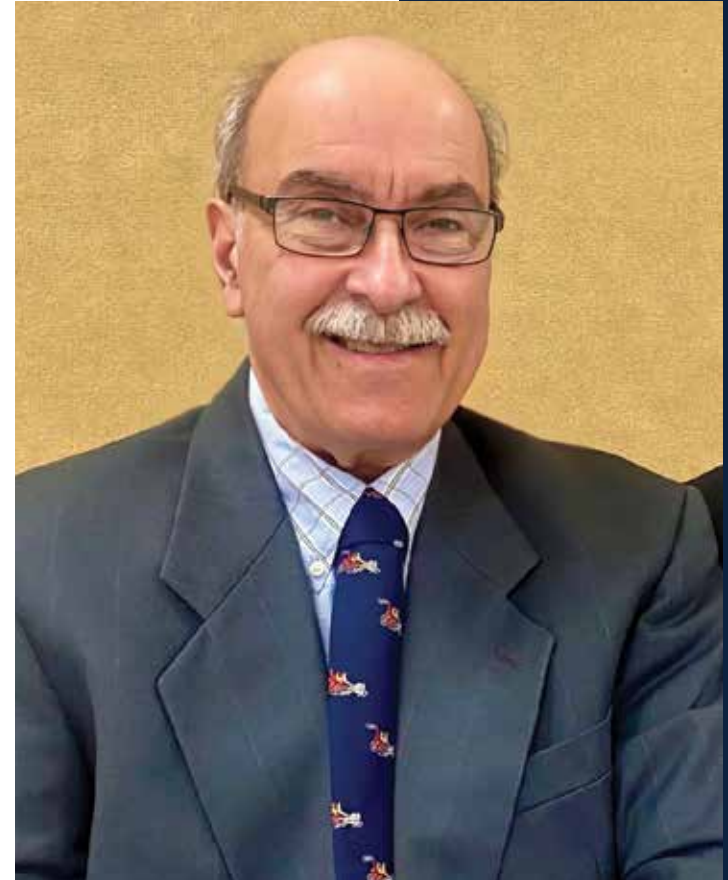
John William “Bill” Bunardzya was born on September 21, 1950, and passed away on April 7, 2024. A 1968 graduate of Belle Vernon Area High School, he attended California State Teachers College, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in education, majoring in industrial arts, in 1973. Bill continued his education and received an associate degree in fire science technology from Westmoreland County Community College.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Bill held various business positions. In 1991, Bill began work as a self-employed contractor, blessing him with the opportunity to continue to respond to emergencies, work he continued until his passing. He was a volunteer firefighter with Belle Vernon Volunteer Fire Company #2 from 1971 through 1975, when he joined the North Belle Vernon Volunteer Fire Department. He held several offices at North Belle Vernon, including 12 years as the fire chief. In 2001, he attained Life Membership status.

In 2004, Bill joined the Rostraver Central Fire Department, where he was an active member and served as a safety officer and a trustee. He attained Life Membership status in January 2024. Bill was a member of the Pennsylvania, Western Pennsylvania and Fayette County Firemen’s Associations, as well as the Southwestern Chiefs Association. With the Westmoreland County Firemen’s Association, he served for 14 years as secretary, was elected president in 1995, and served as treasurer from 2000 until his death. He was also elected president of the Westmoreland County Fire Chiefs Association and was a member and past big chief of the Westmoreland County Mohawks Association, where he served as the scribe (secretary-treasurer) for 10 years.

Bill was married for 42 years to his wife, Janet. He had two daughters, Kyra (John) Barbiaux and Chryste (Nicholas) Zimmerman, and four grandchildren, Ben and Elizabeth Barbiaux and Westin and Lia Zimmerman.

PENNSYLVANIA



**Rostraver Central
Volunteer Fire
Department**

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

John Paul Kalynych

Volunteer Safety Officer ★ August 27, 2023 ★ Age 50

PENNSYLVANIA



Lower Saucon
Fire Rescue

John Paul Kalynych was born June 13, 1973, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to Paul and Pauline Kalynych. John lived a life dedicated to serving others and left an indelible mark on countless friends, family, and strangers through his service to the community.

John devoted countless hours to emergency services in Lehigh and Northampton counties, starting when he was just 16 years old. John's family recalls him waking in the middle of the night to the Plectron alert. They were concerned for his safety, but his desire to help his community sent him out the door and to the station, ready to pitch in wherever he could.

John was a hard worker who seldom seemed to rest when there was a job to be done. The scarce times he did take a moment to himself, he could be found fishing, hunting, spending time with family and friends, or relaxing in his favorite recliner.

John's career in emergency services encompassed volunteer and professional appointments and activities including Hanover Township VFC, Bethlehem Township VFC, Catasauqua FD, Lower Saucon Fire Rescue, Easton EMS Board of Directors, Lehigh County Fire Chief Association, Lehigh Valley Rescue, Dewey Fire Company, Berwick EMS, Lehigh County Special Operations, FEMA Task Force 1, MERT Team, Northeast PA Regional Counter Terrorism Task Force, In-State Urban Search and Rescue PA Company 3, Lehigh County Emergency Management Director, fire school instructor for Bucks County, and September 11, 2001 Ground Zero Response.

John was a teacher and a leader who helped shape the next generation of first responders. This was one of his passions. He loved to share his knowledge, be a mentor, and see others grow and succeed in the field. He took pride in their successes and offered words of wisdom when they needed it most. Today, there is a foundation named in John's honor dedicated to educating and guiding first responders. John had a unique ability to push everyone to be better. He inspired people to want more. If John didn't have the answer or couldn't help, he'd always "have a guy" to connect you with who could help. Despite his training, certifications, and accolades, he remained one of the humblest people you'd ever encounter.

John was a proud father to two sons, Andrew and Dylan, and grandfather to Parker John. He is lovingly remembered by his parents, Paul and Pauline; sister, Rebecca, and her husband, Dave; nieces, Caitlyn and Rachel; and his wife, Jacquelyn.

John's legacy will live on forever. The impact he had on emergency services and his family and friends will continue to carry on through all of them.

Derrick L. Nester

Career Deputy Chief ★ **May 6, 2024** ★ **Age 43**

Derrick L. Nester was born on July 6, 1980, to Donald and Sharon Nester, a tiny miracle born three months premature. Derrick enjoyed spending time on his (Schmale) grandparents' farm growing up and shared a love for cars with his brother, Jace. He followed in his father's footsteps of being a volunteer firefighter. Sadly, his father also died in the line of duty in 2001. Derrick grew up in the Amity Fire Company (AFC) in Douglassville, Pennsylvania, and became a junior firefighter in 1994. He rose through the ranks as assistant engineer, chief engineer, captain, and assistant chief, and was a life member.

He graduated from Universal Technical Institute as a diesel mechanic.

Derrick started as a career firefighter with the Wyomissing Fire Department (WFD) in 2007. He was promoted to captain in 2014 and chaired the apparatus committee throughout his tenure at WFD. Derrick's list of firefighting classes is extensive and impressive. He had a passion for advancing his knowledge and sharing that knowledge to help others advance as well. He received awards and recognition throughout his career. Derrick assisted in designing multiple fire apparatus for AFC and WFD, spending countless hours to be sure they were perfect. He was posthumously promoted to deputy chief of the Wyomissing Fire Department.

Derrick's friends and colleagues were an integral part of his life. He was described by many as a great friend, mentor, leader, listener, and confidant. He was professional, hardworking, dedicated, honest, selfless, kindhearted, and respectful. Derrick went out of his way to help anyone and was a well-respected community member and leader in the fire service. His cool, calm, and professional demeanor is missed every shift at the Wyomissing Fire Department. The outpouring of stories and memories reinforces how much he meant to so many. His infectious smile and laugh and willingness to lead "shenanigans" with a PBR in hand will always be remembered and missed.

Above all, Derrick was most proud of being a father. He loved being a girl dad to Kayla and was sure to tell everyone how perfect she was to him and all about her academic and sports achievements. They shared a special bond, and he was looking forward to teaching her how to drive, but not his beloved Dodge truck! She is forever grateful for every day they had together and cherishes their memories. His sudden passing left an emptiness that can never be filled, but there is comfort in knowing that he lives on in his beautiful "baby girl."

PENNSYLVANIA



**Wyomissing
Fire Department**

Stephen M. Pavetti

Volunteer Assistant Chief ★ November 21, 2024 ★ Age 58

PENNSYLVANIA



Kiski Township Fire
Department No. 1

Stephen M. Pavetti was born in Natrona Heights, Pennsylvania, to the late Raymond and Margaret Pavetti on November 13, 1966. Steve graduated with High Honors from Kiski Area High School in 1984 with a concentration in welding from the local vocational technical school. After graduation, Steve utilized his welding certification to begin his career at Allegheny Ludlum Steel, where he worked until he retired in 2019.

He was a devoted volunteer fireman at the Kiski Township Fire Dept No. 1, where he had served since October 2006. During his 18-year tenure with the department, Steve held many positions including treasurer, chief engineer, EMT, and assistant chief 3. He earned Firefighter of the Year in 2009.

One of Steve's proudest possessions was his 2013 Harley-Davidson Ultra Firefighter Edition Motorcycle. Taking things apart and putting them back together was one of his favorite pastimes. This bike had a fully redone motor over the years, a custom flame paint job, top of the line speakers, and flame throwers.

When not volunteering at the fire hall, Steve would rebuild/customize motorcycles, ride motorcycles, hunt, and watch NASCAR racing and any Pittsburgh sports. Steve found a way to combine his hobbies with his volunteer efforts and was responsible for planning and coordinating the annual Kiski Township Fire Department Bike Run each June. The department plans on continuing Steve's favorite fundraiser event in upcoming years.

Steve leaves behind his family and the community who misses his smiling face, easygoing personality, and positive attitude to lend a helping hand when needed.

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Brian K. Peek

Volunteer Fire Police Officer ★ August 16, 2024 ★ Age 67

Brian Keith Peek was born December 14, 1956, in Schenectady, New York. He was the son of the late Howard and Ella Anne (Freer) Peek. Brian was the loving husband of the late Wendy Peek, who passed away in 2022.

He was a proud member of the Goldsboro Fire Company and the Goldsboro Fireman's Club. He previously served as a member of Fairview Township Fire Company in York County, Pennsylvania; Malabar Fire Company in Brevard County, Florida; and Middle River Fire Company in Middle River, Maryland.

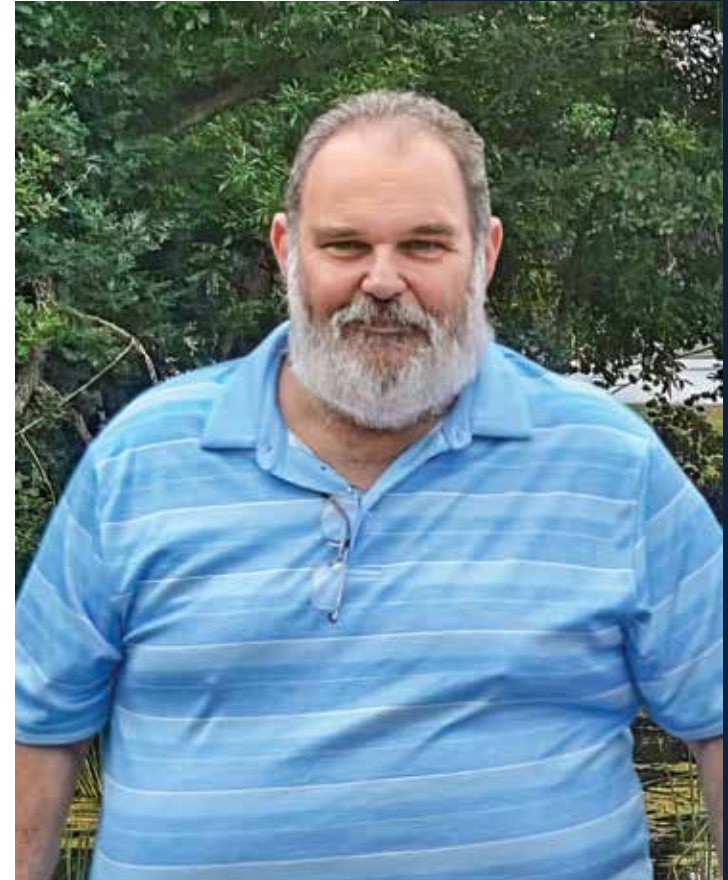
Brian began his career in the fire service when he was 17. During his time with the Fairview Township Fire Department, he held positions as station captain, fire police lieutenant, and fire police captain. His passion was for firefighting and helping the community wherever he could.

Brian also enjoyed camping with his family and friends and taking trips to Florida prior to moving to Florida. He was an amateur ham radio operator and belonged to "21 Club" and the "52 Crew" in Florida. He enjoyed talking with people all over the world on his ham radio and spending time with his family.

Brian leaves behind his sons, James Peek and his wife, Pamela, and Jonathan Peek and his wife, Carmella; his brother, Gary Peek; stepsons, David Diodato and his wife, Patti, and Robert Diodato and his wife, Nancy; 18 grandchildren; many great-grandchildren; extended family; his fire company family; and friends.

In addition to his wife and parents, Brian was preceded in death by his stepmother, Nancy Peek.

PENNSYLVANIA



**Goldsboro
Fire Company**

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Remembrance 2025



Daniel E. Stack

Volunteer Firefighter ★ May 10, 2024 ★ Age 51

PENNSYLVANIA



Highland Volunteer
Fire Department

Daniel Edward Stack was a devoted husband, loving father, devout Catholic, dedicated firefighter, and a pillar of his community. Born in McCandless Township, Pennsylvania, he grew up in the North Allegheny school system, graduating in 1992. From a young age, he had a passion for service, sports, and family—values that defined his life.

A standout varsity hockey player, he was an avid sports fan, golfer, and diehard Steelers supporter. His love for Jimmy Buffett was unmatched. He would have proudly worn Hawaiian shirt-themed turnout gear if possible.

Daniel met his soulmate, Suzanne, in high school, and their love story spanned decades, culminating in their marriage on December 31, 1999. Together, they built a life centered around faith and family, raising their three children, Riley, Kelby, and Laney—his “Irish Princess.” As a father, he never missed a game or moment to support his kids.

Service was at Daniel’s core. He joined the Ingomar Volunteer Fire Department in 1989, later serving as assistant chief, and continued at the Highland Volunteer Fire Department as an interior firefighter, becoming a life member in both. He was also a fire instructor at the Allegheny County Fire Academy and a state-certified fire instructor. In 1999, he became fire marshal and emergency management coordinator for the Town of McCandless, serving for 27 years. In 2021, he became director of safety and security for North Allegheny School District, uniting first responders and faculty through emergency response plans.

Outside of work, Daniel loved cooking, hunting with his cherished family heirloom shotgun, and organizing the “Balls of Fire” Golf Outing, which he started in 1999.

He lived by faith, putting others before himself and inspiring those around him.

On May 8, 2024, Daniel and his son Riley responded to a mutual aid call for a structure fire. Two days later, Daniel passed away unexpectedly. Despite heroic resuscitation efforts by Riley and fellow first responders, his loss left a grieving community but also an enduring legacy of service, love, and commitment. Even in death, he united those around him, bringing together the first responder family he cherished.

To those who knew him, Daniel was a protector, leader, and friend. His legacy is honored daily by his family, friends, and the community he served. To navigate life’s challenges and honor his memory, loved ones embrace the reminder “W.W.D.D. – What Would Dan/Dad Do?”

John P. Walsh

Career Battalion Chief ★ **November 20, 2024** ★ **Age 60**

PENNSYLVANIA

Chief John P. Walsh was a distinguished chief officer and a devoted family man, mentor, and friend. His legacy extends far beyond his remarkable career in the fire service; it is built on the relationships he forged, the trust he earned, and the respect he inspired from all who had the honor to serve with him.

He began his career with the Pittsburgh Fire Department in 1987 and ascended the ranks, earning promotions to lieutenant in 2000, captain in 2002, and battalion chief in 2012.

Chief Walsh's leadership style was integrity, respect, and, above all, example. He was known for his commanding presence. His knowledge of firefighting was unmatched, and his ability to make critical decisions in high-pressure moments inspired those around him to rise to the occasion. It wasn't just his fire ground expertise that made him great; it was his fierce loyalty to his crew. He was always ready to defend firefighters, often putting himself in harm's way to ensure their safety and well-being.

In 1994, while fighting a fire, Chief Walsh sustained severe injuries when he encountered a live electrical line, suffering third-degree burns to his arms and back. After undergoing a year of painful skin grafts and rehabilitation, he returned to duty, determined to continue serving his department and his community. His perseverance and resilience in the face of such adversity served as a testament to his character and deep commitment to the profession.

He had an uncanny ability to balance his tough-as-nails persona with a warmth that made him approachable and beloved by all. His nostrils would flare and his mustache would twitch, a telltale sign that he was displeased or something was amiss. Still, those rare moments of reprimand were always followed by a gracious apology, showing the humility and kindness that defined him. Chief Walsh's greatest joy was the camaraderie of his crews. He was a "Fireman's Chief" in every sense. He understood the unique bond that forms among firefighters and cherished the teamwork, loyalty, and brotherhood that came with it. Whether on the fireground, in the firehouse or on the training ground, Chief was a constant presence, always there to offer guidance, encouragement, and sometimes a good-natured ribbing.

Chief John P. Walsh's legacy is exceptional service and dedication to the fire department and a profound influence on the lives of those privileged to work alongside him. His leadership, mentorship, and friendship will never be forgotten, and he will always be remembered as the Chief we all aspired to be.



**Pittsburgh
Bureau of Fire**

John N. Carnegis

Career Battalion Chief of Training and Safety ★ August 10, 2024 ★ Age 61

RHODE ISLAND



North Providence
Fire Department

John N. Carnegis was known as many things to many people—a leader, a mentor, a friend, a husband, and a dad. But to all, he was known as a firefighter.

John's passion for the fire service began at a young age when he became a volunteer in Marieville North Providence, Rhode Island, at age 16. John later became a career firefighter for North Providence Fire Department in North Providence, Rhode Island, where he held several ranks before he was promoted to battalion chief of training and safety in 1996. After retiring from the department, John and his family moved to Frederick, Maryland, where he took a position with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. During his time with Homeland Security, John held many positions. Before retiring in 2019, he was responsible for the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer and Managing Officer programs.

John has always been passionate about teaching the next generation of firefighters. He had the opportunity to share his knowledge when he became an instructor for the Maryland Fire Rescue Institute (MFRI) in 2008. Some of his favorite courses to teach were Hazardous Materials, Advanced Life Support, EMS, Fire Suppression, and Instructor Evaluator Disciplines. In 2023, John took on the position of MFRI's state programs manager, where he managed three out of the six regional offices throughout the state of Maryland.

John also became involved with the Frederick County Fire Service. He was a member of the Vigilant Hose Company and an instructor for the Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue. He served as a member of both the hazardous materials and technical rescue teams and participated in their Advanced Life Support program.

In addition to the many positions he held in the fire service, John was proud to be a registered nurse.

John enjoyed spending quality time with his wife, Tricia Carnegis, and his daughter, Zoe Carnegis. He also enjoyed spending time with his dog, Max. John always looked forward to family trips to Disney World and taking the opportunity to visit as many fire departments around the country as he could.

After a ten-month battle with pancreatic cancer, John entered the gates of Heaven with his family by his side on Saturday, August 10, 2024.

Though John is no longer here, his legacy will live on.

As John always said, "No Surrender, No Defeat."

Allan P. LePage

Volunteer Assistant Chief ★ **June 30, 2009** ★ **Age 67**

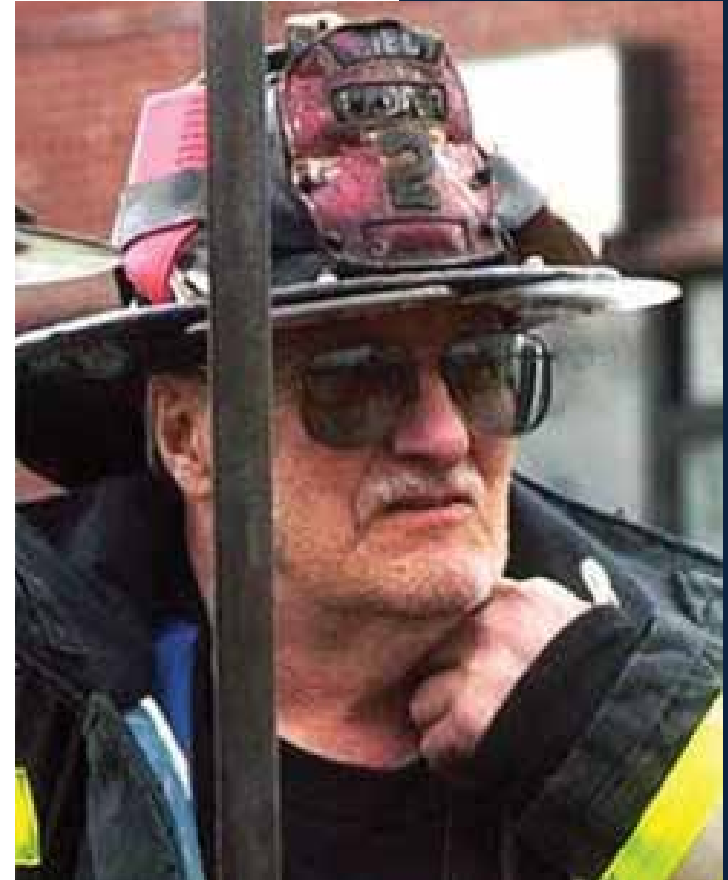
Allan P. "Pickles" LePage, 67, of West Kingston, Rhode Island, died June 30, 2009, after a tragic accident. He was the husband of Dianne (Segar) LePage. Born in Pensacola, Florida, he was the son of the late Leo P. and Addie (Rushton) LePage. Mr. LePage was retired. For 25 years, he worked at the Kingston Water District. He was a U.S. Navy veteran of the Vietnam War Era. Allan grew up in East Greenwich, was active in 4-H, and after marrying lived in Kingston and West Kingston. He owned Vern's 66 in West Kingston and was a long-haul truck driver for many years.

Pic was assistant chief of the Kingston Fire Department, where he served for over 40 years. He was a life member of the West Kingston Fire Department and a former member of Hope Valley-Wyoming Fire Department. He received various citations and awards for his service, including being the first recipient of the Henry Fortin Award for distinguished service at Kingston Fire Department (1991) and Firefighter of the Year, awarded by the Richmond Grange (2009).

He was a member of Safari Club International, South County Rod and Gun Club, and the National Rifle Association. He was an avid hunter and outdoorsman, spending weeks at a time at his favorite place in Amherst, Maine, bird hunting. He had hunted in Montana, Pennsylvania, Newfoundland, Alaska, and the Northwest Territories. His Alaska-Yukon moose trophy scored 222-3/8 and is listed in the Boone and Crocket Club record book. He also was fortunate to bag two impressive caribou trophies and a beautiful 900-pound grizzly bear. Many grouse and woodcock were enjoyed at the dinner table after his side-by-side shotgun retorted. He hunted over many well trained springer spaniels, who were the joy of his life.

Besides his wife, he leaves a son, Allan P. LePage Jr., of West Kingston and Hope Valley. He is also survived by his many firefighter brothers far and wide, many of whom he mentored.

RHODE ISLAND



Kingston Fire District

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Remembrance 2025



117

Landon Cale Bodie

SOUTH CAROLINA

Volunteer Firefighter ★ September 27, 2024 ★ Age 18



Circle Fire
Department –
Saluda County
Fire Service

Landon Cale Bodie was a true genuine soul that left a mark wherever he went. A native of Saluda, South Carolina, he grew up in Saluda County and spent most of his life there. In May 2024, he graduated from Blythewood High School, where he was a member of the Technical Honor Society, certified in OSHA, and a member of the National Society of High School Scholars. He was a faithful and active member of the FFA, always having a love for the outdoors and agriculture. He was an avid hunter and fisherman, skills he had learned through his grandfather since the age of two.

He attended Beulah Baptist Church and had a strong faith in the Lord, always toting his pocket Bible with him anywhere he went.

Landon always had a passion for helping others. He worked alongside his grandfather doing construction and serving others. Since the age of 5-6 years old, he had a passion to serve others and wanted to become a firefighter.

He joined the Circle Volunteer Fire Department at the age of 18. Always devoted and dedicated to any interest he had, Landon was more than proud to serve his community as a volunteer firefighter. If he was not serving others through his work, he was serving others in his community.

He is greatly missed beyond measures but will never be forgotten for his heroic act of service during Hurricane Helene and the impact he left on so many lives.

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Chad Satcher

Volunteer Chief ★ **September 27, 2024** ★ **Age 53**

From a young age, Chad Satcher desired to serve others and his community. He was active in the Boy Scouts of America, earning the rank of Eagle Scout and Vigil Honor in the Order of the Arrow. After graduating from Batesburg-Leesville High School, he joined the Circle Fire Department in 1989. He faithfully served his community over the next 35 years, becoming fire chief in January 2023.

Tragically, on September 27, 2024, Chief Satcher passed away when a tree fell on his firetruck as he and fellow firefighter Landon Cale Bodie responded to a structure fire during Hurricane Helene. His death has left a void in the hearts of many.

Although Chad was a licensed plumber with Derrick Plumbing for 32 years, his passion was firefighting. He received Circle Fire Department “Fireman of the Year” multiple times during his career. He was recognized as Saluda County Fire Service “Firefighter of the Year” in 2017 and “Officer of the Year” in 2024. As a training officer, he enjoyed mentoring the next generation of firefighters. He was committed to community safety and education and served on the Saluda County Fire Board and Fire Prevention Committee.

Most Fridays, he was at the station working on records, training, maintenance, and other tasks to improve the department. Whether you were a neighbor or a stranger, he was always willing to help. His spirit was gentle and steady. He was quiet, patient, and a friend to all. He embodied the essence of a servant’s heart.

Chad was a devoted and affectionate husband, a loving father, and a true family man. He married his sweetheart, Summer, in 2001, and their son, Will, was born in 2002. Chad and Summer built a life filled with laughter, shared adventures, and a bond that weathered life’s ups and downs. In December 2020, Chad survived a “widow maker” heart attack, which brought about a new appreciation for life and reinforced the unbreakable ties of love within his family.

Family getaways always included visiting fire departments to collect T-shirts, patches, and challenge coins. Chad took immense pride in nurturing Will’s love for firefighting, cherishing every moment spent sharing his knowledge and serving beside him in the fire department. Will follows in his father’s footsteps, carrying on Chad’s legacy of community service.

Chad is survived by his loving wife of 23 years, Summer Smith Satcher; his son, William “Will” Satcher; and family and friends who will forever cherish his memory. Chief Satcher’s unwavering dedication to serving others as a firefighter and community leader and his deep love for his family will never be forgotten.

SOUTH CAROLINA



**Circle Fire
Department -
Saluda County
Fire Service**

Remembrance 2025



Michael “Mike Mike” Vinson

SOUTH CAROLINA

Career Engineer ★ March 31, 2024 ★ Age 27



Clinton Fire Department

Michael Douglas Vinson was born on January 2, 1997, in Anderson, South Carolina. He is the only child of Phillip and Christy Vinson. He graduated from Laurens District 55 High School in 2014. He was an active member of the FFA. He was successful in tractor driving competitions throughout high school.

As a young child, he grew up around the fire service. He always had a great interest in firefighting. He joined Ekom Fire Department in the explorer program when he turned 15. He began taking classes and joined as a volunteer when he turned 18. He later went on to lead the explorer program through their training.

Michael became a career firefighter with Laurens County Fire Department and worked part-time as a firefighter at Clinton City Fire Department. Michael was a Firefighter 2 and began taking specialized rescue classes such as rope rescue and hazmat.

Michael had a strong desire to help his community and help others in need. Becoming a career firefighter was a dream come true for him.

Mike Mike was a huge Atlanta Braves fan and loved his Clemson Tigers. He was known for always wearing his Braves baseball cap.

Mike Mike was a loving son and devoted friend. He left behind his parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and lots of friends who he loved like family. Mike Mike had a huge heart and always loved life. He had a kind smile and cracked a joke for everyone. There will never be another one like him. He was truly one of a kind.

Mike Mike left this world doing what he absolutely loved, and he will always be honored and remembered as our hero

Greater love has no one than this, than someone lay down his life for his friends. JOHN 15:13

Leland Warren Alexander

Volunteer Chief ★ **April 27, 2024** ★ **Age 78**

Leland Warren Alexander was born August 25, 1945, in Morris Chapel, Tennessee. He was the only child of Warren and Louise Alexander.

He was married to his sweetheart, Margie, for 54 years. She was his biggest supporter and forever teammate. You did not see Leland without Margie by his side. They deeply loved their daughter, Melissa Fischer, of Oakland Tennessee, her husband, Scott, and their two grandchildren, Ella and Elias.

Leland started his career at the Shelby County Penal Farm in Memphis, which later became the Shelby County Correctional Center. Leland held many roles while at the Penal Farm, including leading the escape squad and earning the position of chief of security. He later attended the Shelby County Sheriff's Academy and eventually retired after 26 years of service in Memphis.

He moved back to Milledgeville to be close to his parents and quickly fell in love with working on the Milledgeville Volunteer Fire Department. He had a great passion to help and lead the people in his community, becoming an alderman, the mayor, and the fire chief. His days were filled with helping others, going on fire or EMS calls, and serving his community.

During the early morning of December 1, 2023, Chief Alexander had a wreck in the pumper truck while leaving a structure fire that had three people trapped. He was transferred to a trauma hospital in Memphis, where he began the long road to recovery from two broken legs, a broken arm, and a broken rib and collar bone. He worked hard trying to heal but became sick with an infection in April. He fought the infection for over three weeks, undergoing several surgeries, but died on April 27, 2024. His wife, the love of his life, died five months later from a weak heart wounded by heartbreak.

Leland will always be cherished by his family as a loving father, a doting grandfather, and a hero who gave his life while trying to help others. He is incredibly missed every day, forever deeply loved, and his legacy will not be forgotten. We are so immensely proud of him.



TENNESSEE

**Milledgeville
Volunteer Fire
Department**

Clois Cearley

Volunteer Firefighter ★ March 7, 1986 ★ Age 52

TENNESSEE



East Polk Fire & Rescue Department
(now Copper Basin Fire & Rescue)

Clois Cearley suffered a fatal heart attack on scene while fighting a large brush fire on March 7, 1986. His son, William, served on the same department and was on scene with him.

He was a former member of the carpenter's union of Chattanooga and Florida.

He was survived by his wife, his parents, his son, six brothers, and three sisters.

A monument was dedicated in his honor at the fire station in 1988. In 2017, the monument was moved to a more prominent location and rededicated, with family and friends in attendance.

Cearley was remembered as an inspiration and a hero in his community.

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Jason Matthew Edmison

Career Captain ★ **January 3, 2023** ★ **Age 47**

TENNESSEE

Jason Matthew Edmison was born December 27, 1975, in Erie, Pennsylvania. He spent most of his youth in San Diego, California, where he graduated from high school in 1993. While serving as a volunteer firefighter after graduating, the passion for a career in firefighting and serving others was ignited. He moved to Palmer, Alaska, in 1994, and joined the Butte Fire Station as a volunteer.

Jason served the next 25 years as firefighter/EMT at the Butte Fire Station, making his way through the ranks, and retired as deputy fire chief in June 2019. Throughout his career he was the recipient of the Lifesaver of the Year (2005), Officer of the Year (2014) and Rescue of the Year (2015) awards. Upon his retirement, he and his family moved to Tennessee. Jason not only loved serving in the fire service, but also loved educating and training others in the fire service. He turned his focus to this endeavor and was hired at the State of Tennessee Fire and Codes Academy as lead instructor to train fire recruits across the state. He was there to see six classes of fire recruits graduate from the Academy. His desire to be operational again spurred him to apply for a district fire captain position with Williamson County Fire and Rescue in Franklin, Tennessee, in 2020.

To his family, he was our hero! He deeply and genuinely loved his family and friends. In all ways he strived to set an example in leadership, integrity, accountability, and passion for the duty he was “born to do.” He was known for his wicked, awesome sense of humor and always tried to lighten the mood with a joke or two. Jason loved a good cigar with a friend on the back porch by a fire. He loved watching and listening to thunderstorms, especially with his wife by his side. He loved history and was an avid Civil War buff. He loved going for backroad drives in his restored pickup and cherished exploring and finding that next adventure; he loved traveling. He enjoyed trying out new recipes and smoking things on his grill. He absolutely loved music and having “music night” where we would play random songs and sing and dance the hours away in our living room and kitchen.

This man touched so many lives that we couldn’t help but love him for the person he was and the person he is in our hearts. He left behind a legacy that simply can’t be duplicated and departed this earth doing the thing he loved the most, serving and loving others in his path. We know that he is still watching over us, and that has brought us much peace, even though we miss him every moment of every day.



**Williamson County
Office of Public Safety**

Scott D. Jenkins

Career Engineer ★ July 19, 2024 ★ Age 62

TENNESSEE



Nashville Fire
Department

Scott Duncan Jenkins was born in Nashville, Tennessee, on December 22, 1961, to the late Elizabeth and James Jenkins. He graduated from Glencliff High School in 1980. He had a passion for cars, planes, motorcycles, cooking, fishing, and playing the bass guitar.

He enjoyed riding his motorcycle with friends on weekend trips. They would plan their trips from seeing restaurants they saw on the Food Network. He looked forward to riding his motorcycle in the St. Jude parade every year and raising money for St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. One of the highlights of his trip was getting to tour the hospital.

He spent 30 years as a firefighter with the Nashville Fire Department and worked as an engineer and a chaplain. He loved helping people in the community. He made lifelong friends, many of whom he considered family.

After he retired from the Nashville Fire Department, he started a monthly luncheon with fellow firemen. They gave Scott valuable moral support during his journey with cancer. His daughter Madison would go with him when she was out of school, which she enjoyed. Special thanks to firefighters Paul King, Mike Brady, James Myres, Brian Moat, and many others, who continue to give my family support and love.

He was a member of Tusculum Cumberland Presbyterian Church from 1996 to 2022 and served as an Elder. He loved playing his bass guitar in the choir and looked forward to performing in the yearly Christmas choir program. He started attending Southpointe Community Church in 2022 and played his bass in the praise band there.

Scott was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2009. Bryson, his son, would accompany him on his motorcycle to radiation appointments. When his cancer came back in 2018, his daughter, Madison, would go with him to his appointments and drive his

truck; she was just beginning to learn how to drive.

He was a devoted family man, leaving behind his wife of 28 years, Melody Jenkins; his daughters, Elizabeth "Beth" Jenkins (Brian Wilson) and Madison Jenkins; and son, Bryson Jenkins. Scott also leaves behind his brother, James "Jimbo" Jenkins (Debbie).

His daughter, Beth, lives in Juneau, Alaska. He always looked forward to her phone calls and visits. Scott and Bryson treasured the times when they would go fishing. They spent many hours talking about cars, guns, and knives. Some of Madison's favorite things to do with her dad were getting him to do TikTok videos with her and getting him to go shopping with her. He was so proud of his kids; they were the joy of his life.

He will always be missed by his family and friends.

Joseph Lynn Murphy

Career Chief ★ **December 20, 2024** ★ **Age 62**

TENNESSEE

Chief Joseph Lynn Murphy, age 62, served as a pillar to Henderson County and the state of Tennessee for many years. Lynn was born on September 30, 1962, and started his career in emergency services with the Henderson County Fire Department as a teenage volunteer. He served at Station 3 in Parker's Crossroads, Tennessee, where he grew and climbed the ranks of the station to become the district chief.

His professional career started in the mid-80s as a dispatcher for the Sheriff's Department, where he progressed up to ultimately becoming the director for 911.

In 1997, Murphy, as most called him, was selected to become the fire chief for Henderson County, where he served with honor until his sudden death. Chief Murphy had a reputation as a fire chief for the firefighters. On the day of his death, he responded, along with his men, to an 0200 early morning call. Many of his firefighters and citizens in the community with scanners have expressed what a calming and comforting sound it was to hear "Car One responding" when en route to a late night fire. Chief knew every road, lane, landmark, and water source in the county, and his experienced "leading from the front" style will leave very big shoes to fill!

In addition to his 27-year career as chief, he also served as emergency management director in a dual role. Furthermore, Murphy had the distinction of serving a term as president of the Tennessee Fire Chief's Association. He has directed the department in many state programs through the years, always wanting to be the first to try the program and better it with ideas if he had them. One of his proudest accomplishments is the successful "Get Alarmed" program, offering free smoke alarms to citizens. Lynn brought Henderson County to lead this state-funded program for most alarms installed in all 95 counties.

Chief also managed to twice improve the departments Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating, which directly impacts county insurance rates for homeowners. He was a gifted grant writer, which saved many local tax dollars. With Chief, you knew you would get an answer that was honest and pure. Chief Murphy had the dedication and drive in his heart for the community he served and loved. He expected no recognition or pats on the back.

Chief Murphy served as a deacon at his church and loved to fish as a way to relax and de-stress. He will always be remembered and loved for his selflessness, kindness, sense of duty, and love for his family, friends, community, and his firefighters.



**Henderson County
Fire Department**

G. Wade Cannon

Career Firefighter/Paramedic ★ October 1, 2022 ★ Age 33

TEXAS



Flower Mound
Fire Department

Wade Cannon passed away from occupational colon cancer at the age of 33. He was a firefighter paramedic for the Town of Flower Mound in Flower Mound, Texas. He was active in the SAFE Team school program, teaching the next generation about fire safety. Wade had a deep love for his brothers and sisters at the fire department and had an unwavering loyalty to his friends and family.

Wade was known for his intentional “Wade” hugs and exuberant joy for life. He was born for the outdoors. Wade enjoyed hiking, backpacking, fishing, kayaking, and doing just about anything with his wife, Chelsea. Wade passed away when his wife was 21 weeks pregnant with their first child, a beautiful little boy who looks just like him.

Wade is survived by his wife of seven years, Chelsea; his son, Stratton; his father, Brooks; his mother, Melissa; his sister, Jessica; his brother-in-law, Gray; his nephew, Cannon; his father-in-law, Roger; his mother-in-law, Patricia; his sister-in-law, Cecily; his brother-in-law, Shon; his nephew, Jon Hayden; and his nephew, Jace.

In Wade’s words “If you ever want to visit, leave the steel and concrete behind and see the beauty of God’s natural creation. Or just go see Chels and our son, ‘cause I’ll be there, too. What a wonderful life.”

You can honor Wade’s life by advocating for your own health and going to get checked! Get your colonoscopy scheduled and spread the word, especially those who are first responders. Cancer does not discriminate based on age.

We love and miss you, Wade. Always.

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Charles Freeman II

Career Lieutenant ★ **September 29, 2024** ★ **Age 40**

TEXAS

Charles “Buddy” Freeman II lived a life of selfless service, serving as a corporal for the United States Marine Corps and later as a lieutenant for the Montgomery Fire Department. As a Marine, Buddy proved his tenacity and dedication to his country over his six years of service. While on active duty, beginning in 2003, he was deployed to Cuba, Japan, and twice to Iraq to protect our freedoms, which he did with the utmost pride. He was awarded multiple medals.

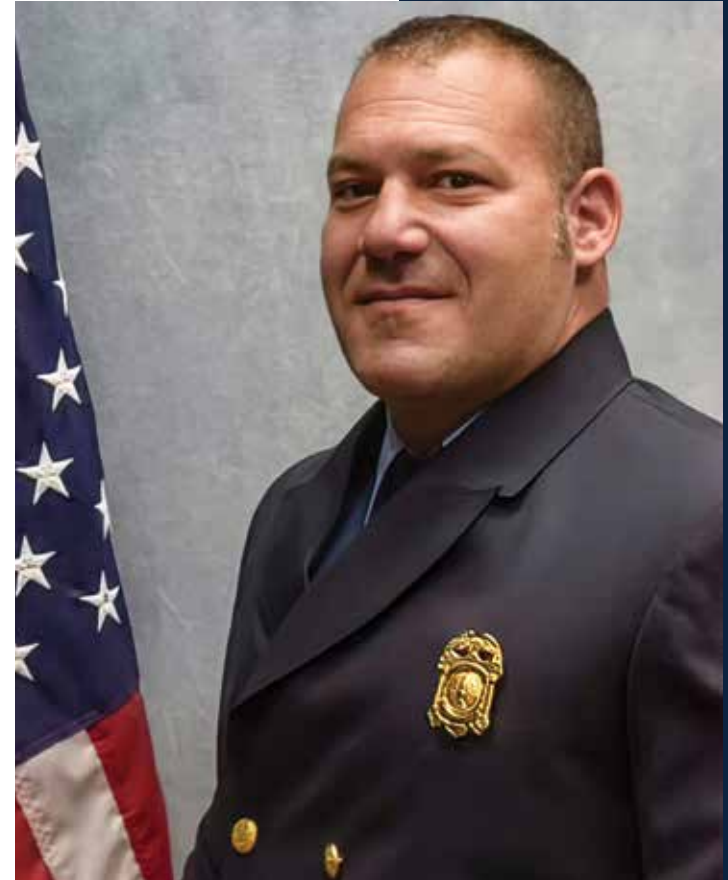
While there is no such thing as a former Marine, he did transition away from the military and into the fire service. His decision was greatly influenced by his father, Butch Hayes, a retired 28-year career Houston firefighter. Buddy began his career at Montgomery Fire Department in October of 2010.

Buddy was a quick study, and his leadership skills did not go unnoticed. He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in 2013. During his years as an officer for MFD, Buddy trained and mentored countless young firefighters. He could be described as a firefighter’s officer. He always looked out for his guys and was not afraid to speak his mind. Buddy was the definition of a strong-willed individual. The actions he took throughout his life and the courageous sacrifices he made contributed to countless lives saved. His impact and legacy will forever be remembered.

Buddy loved his career and the guys at the station, but what he loved most was his family. Buddy and his wife, April, were high school sweethearts and soulmates who met at the young age of 16 and were married in 2005. They went on to have two beautiful children, Payton and Porter. Life with Buddy was always an adventure. He cherished time with his family, because that was most important to him, and they spent time traveling and camping. He had the biggest heart, loved life, and lived it to the fullest.

Buddy was an incredible man, son, brother, husband, and father. His courage and strength were unmatched and will not be forgotten. His mother, Sandy Hayes, is the foundation of his strong attributes. She taught him so much about loving your family big and spending quality time with them. His brother, Cody Howard, was his partner in life; no matter the time or distance, they always picked up where they left off. They enjoyed many of the same hobbies and many family vacations.

The loss of Buddy has left a devastating hole in the hearts of those who loved him. He is missed beyond what words can describe. We honor him by living life as he did, to the fullest, because “the road goes on forever, and the party never ends.”



**Montgomery County
Fire Department
Emergency Services
District #2**

Remembrance 2025



Marcelo “Ox” Garcia III

Career Firefighter ★ November 6, 2024 ★ Age 42

TEXAS



Houston Fire
Department

Marcelo “Ox” Garcia III tragically lost his life in the line of duty on November 6, 2024. Born in Houston, Texas, on June 24, 1982, Marcelo’s love for his hometown and neighbors was evident throughout his life. Raised in the close-knit Magnolia Park neighborhood of Houston’s East End, he was deeply committed to giving back to the people and places he loved.

Marcelo attended De Zavala Elementary, Edison Middle School, Milby High School, and Texas Southern University, where he majored in business administration, demonstrating the same drive, determination, and passion that would later define his career as a firefighter.

From an early age, Marcelo excelled in athletics. He played football for the Magnolia Park Sharks and baseball at Milby High School and TSU, finding in sports the values of teamwork, discipline, and service. Over the years, he established the “Angels in the Outfield” annual kickball tournament, which brought hundreds of gifts to the children in the East End community. Recently, his vision included continuing to give back through a toy drive sponsored by golf, and we are proud to continue his legacy. Marcelo mentored younger athletes, volunteering with Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic School, Milby High School’s baseball team, and the Magnolia Park Sharks football.

Marcelo answered the call to serve in 2015. Known for his work ethic, infectious smile, and fierce dedication, he proudly served at Houston Fire Station 23, in the heart of the neighborhood where he grew up. For Marcelo, it wasn’t just a job — it was a calling. He loved the camaraderie, adrenaline, and the purpose it brought.

Outside of work, Marcelo cherished every moment with family and friends, often spending weekends around a barbecue grill, sipping iced mocha coffee and sharing stories. He always made time to visit and care for his elderly grandparents. He had a passion for classic cars, classic rock, and timeless movies, which he enjoyed watching again and again.

Marcelo always went out of his way to lend a helping hand, cutting a neighbor’s grass, picking up trash in the neighborhood, or simply being there for those around him. He always found ways to pay it forward, embodying the values of service and kindness he held dear. He leaves behind many beautiful memories that will forever be cherished. One of these was his 3:00 pm ritual at Houston Fire Station 23, where he would chant “LET’S GET IT” as a way to motivate his crew to work out.

Life will never be the same without him. He was the heart and soul of our family and is missed dearly by all his family and many friends.

Scott Glass

Career Assistant Chief ★ **October 20, 2024** ★ **Age 43**

TEXAS

Chief Glass was born in Shamrock, Texas, to Bob and Janet Glass on November 10, 1980. He grew up in McLean, Texas, graduating from McLean High School in May 1999. He served in the Army for four years. He reported to Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, for basic, then to Ft. Benning, Georgia, for paratrooper school. Unfortunately, he injured his knee. He then spent time stateside at Fort Drum, New York, 10th Mountain Division. He deployed to Kosovo, where he earned a NATO Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and a Kosovo Campaign Medal. Other medals and ribbons include Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Non-Commissioned Officer's Professional Development Ribbon, Expert Marksmanship Qualification Badge with Grenade Bar, and Sharpshooter Marksmanship Qualification Badge with Rifle Bar. He stood at the casket of fallen soldiers, serving on funeral detail.

In 2006, after Scott returned home from his military service, the Texas Panhandle had an outbreak of wildfires. Seeing all the trucks and action during that time, he went down to the local McLean Volunteer Fire Department and asked if he could join.

He attended the Amarillo Fire Academy, graduating in May 2007, and began his employment with Perryton Fire and EMS in July 2007. He was promoted to captain in 2013 and to assistant chief in October 2019. He obtained Master Firefighter Certification in May 2024 from the Texas Commission on Fire Protection. He also was certified as a Fire Officer II, Instructor, Firefighter I and II, Hazardous Material Awareness, and Operations. He worked from basic level up to paramedic in December 2011. He certainly loved the community he served, and every October he would teach fire prevention at the local elementary schools. Scott loved watching *The Price is Right* at the station, which always turned into a competition.

Chief Glass was a devoted, loving, and protective family man. He participated in his kids' activities and loved to play with them—wrestling, Legos, PlayStation 5—and he even let his daughter, Sarah, attempt to give him a makeover. He loved to take his wife and kids for a ride in his prized 1972 SS Chevelle, green with black racing stripes.

Chief Glass leaves behind his wife of almost 16 years, Melissa; son, Braden; daughter, Sarah; parents, Bob and Janet Glass; brother, Andy Glass; and numerous nieces and nephews. He departed this earth doing what he loved to do, serving his community. He now rests with his Savior Jesus Christ and daughter, Emily Glass.

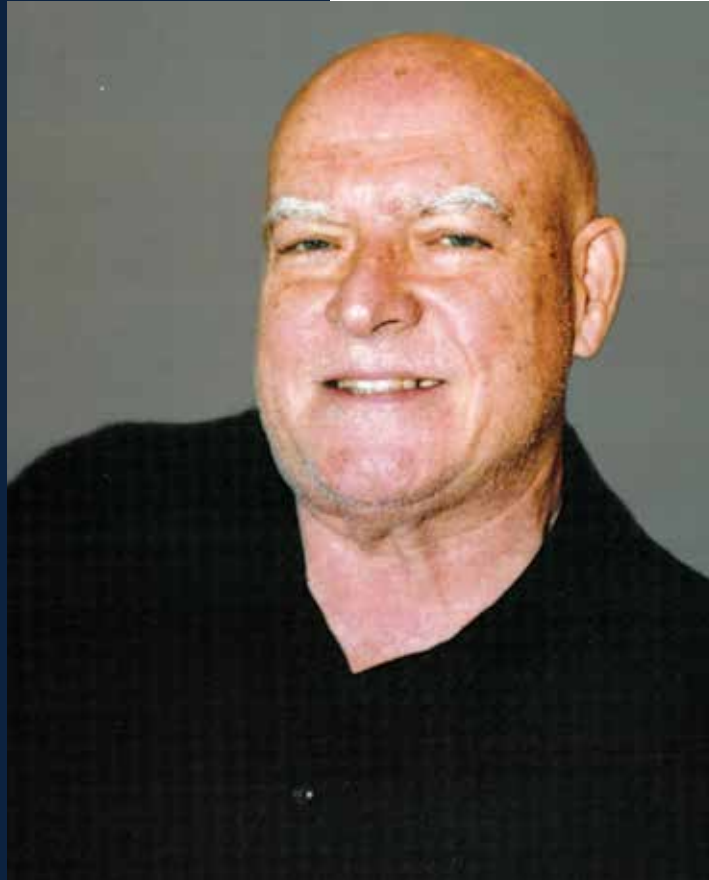


Perryton Fire and EMS

Daniel R. "Dan" Potts Sr.

Volunteer Safety Officer ★ **November 24, 2023** ★ **Age 74**

TEXAS



**City of Whitney
Fire & Rescue**

Daniel R. Potts Sr. was born February 2, 1949, in Fort Worth, Texas, making him a native Texan. After completing Grand Prairie High School, Dan worked for a funeral home that also provided ambulance services. In the 1960s, ambulance attendants were trained in first aid and how to administer oxygen. Their main task was to grab the patient and drive like Hades to the emergency room.

He joined the U.S. Air Force, where he advanced to inventory management supervisor and was trained to handle ammunition and nuclear bombs. He took his job very seriously and followed regulations carefully. During his career, Dan was stationed in Colorado, Texas, Maryland, Guam, and at Yokota Air Base Command in Japan. He was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal for meritorious achievement and service.

Dan and his family moved back home to Grand Prairie, where he excelled in the security industry. Dan held many positions, including site post security, site supervisor, private investigator, first responder to incidents and medical emergencies on site, and coordinator with law enforcement agencies. Dan retired in 2011 but continued to work part-time. His most unique security position was with the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible exhibit at Southwestern Seminary. He was a Red Cross instructor for CPR, EAD, and first aid.

Dan purchased an RV with the hope of traveling around the country with his wife. They only traveled around Texas before settling in Whitney, Texas, in 2021. An acquaintance mentioned that there were openings with a local fire department. Dan applied, was accepted as a firefighter, and attended training classes with the Peoria and Woodbury Volunteer Fire Departments while answering calls. Dan relished being a volunteer firefighter and the camaraderie with other firefighters.

During a doctor's appointment, several nurses and then the doctor checked his blood pressure. When Dan's pager went off, the doctor told Dan the ambulance was for him. He had suffered a silent heart attack. After the cardiologist cleared Dan to go back to work, he completed paperwork to become a firefighter with the Whitney Fire Department. After he had cardiac stents placed, he was put on the injured reserve list. He worked around the fire house and attended training, even if he could not physically participate. He was given the job of safety officer, a position he took very seriously.

On November 24, 2023, Dan answered an early call for a structure fire, but he suffered a fatal heart attack before reaching the scene of the fire.

He leaves a grieving family and many friends that miss him deeply.

Zebulin Earl “Zeb” Smith

Volunteer Chief ★ **March 5, 2024** ★ **Age 40**

TEXAS

Zebulin Earl “Zeb” Smith was born on November 14, 1983, in Borger, Texas, where he was raised by his parents, Joe and Lisa Smith. He was “Bubba” to his siblings, Jennifer Anderson, Jessika Sanders, Matthew Smith, and Cody Smith. He graduated from Borger High School in 2002 and was a member of the church of Christ at Borger.

Zeb’s pride and joy were his two sons, Zane Smith and Braylan Brown. His boys were his life, and he did everything for them. He was such a proud dad.

Throughout Zeb’s life he had a deep love of all things rodeo and ranching. He started out riding bulls but quickly turned to team roping. This led him to working and lending a hand on area ranches and farms. He loved working cattle, as that was where he found his peace. He was a former member of the Hutchinson County Sheriff’s Posse. Growing up, Zeb was involved in raising pigs to show and sell at the Hutchinson County Livestock Show. He later became an active member of the board, ultimately serving as its president. He proudly served the kids of the county.

Zeb became involved in firefighting through his employment with Chevron Phillips Chemical Company. In 2016, he became a member of the company fire team. This led him to his greatest passion in life, firefighting. He jumped all in. In 2017, Zeb became a volunteer with the Fritch Volunteer Fire Department in Fritch, Texas. By 2020, he was honored to become fire chief of the FVFD. Zeb graduated from the Texas Fire Chiefs Academy in 2023. He took this very seriously and was so proud.

While at FVFD, Zeb worked tirelessly to obtain grants and donation to benefit his fire family and ensure his crew had the finest training and equipment they could get. During his time as chief, he was able to get two fire trucks donated to his department. The safety of his crew and his community was a top priority for Chief Smith.

Zeb had a Texas-sized smile that let you know he cared. He was available to help in any capacity, official or personal. He embodied a servant’s heart and took pride in helping his fellow man.

On March 5, 2024, Chief Zeb Smith answered his final call. Before that fateful day, Chief Smith led his crew for days battling one of the worst wildland fires in the state’s history, the Windy Deuce Wildland Fire. They were all exhausted. Early on that Tuesday morning the tones dropped for a house fire. Chief Smith did not hesitate. He was the first on scene and to enter the burning home to save anyone that may have been inside. Chief Smith collapsed inside.

Chief Zeb Smith left this world a true hero.



**Fritch Volunteer
Fire Department**

Charles R. “Charley” Parker

Volunteer Captain ★ July 8, 2024 ★ Age 74

VERMONT



Chittenden
Volunteer Fire
Department

Charles R. “Charley” Parker, 74, of Pittsford, Vermont, died unexpectedly on Monday, July 8, 2024. He died in the line of duty, after a fire call with the Chittenden Volunteer Fire Department.

He was born on December 17, 1949, in Rutland, Vermont, the son of Fredrick G. Parker and Mary (Harmon) Parker. Charley grew up on the family dairy farm and continued working it into his late 30s while working part-time at the Wooden Barrel Country Store. Charley also worked at Vermont Tubbs in Brandon until their closing, then moved on to the State of Vermont Transportation in Mendon, before retiring in 2014.

He graduated from Otter Valley Union High School in 1968.

Charley enjoyed hunting, fishing, gardening, canoeing, woodworking, watching his grandson Nolan play baseball, and volunteering at the Chittenden Volunteer Fire Department.

You could faithfully find Charley every morning at the Wooden Barrel Country Store enjoying coffee with his friends. Charley loved people and was always quick to offer a smile, wave, friendly conversation, or helping hand. He helped and never asked for anything in return. He enjoyed his family and loved the big Parker gatherings with his siblings and all his cousins that he grew up with on Parker Road. Charley was a giver and gave his all to everyone he encountered.

Above anything, Charley loved the Chittenden Volunteer Fire Department, which was an extension of his family. He rarely missed a call and was usually the first one at the station. While in the department, he was honored with the 1st captain rank for most of those 40+ years. He played softball and participated in the Muster Water Wars. Charley felt at home with Chittenden and took watching over it seriously. At times, that meant he wouldn't go out of town on trips or day outings because he didn't want to miss a call.

Survivors include his daughters, Melissa Parker, Janice Parker, and Johanna Litchfield; a brother, William Parker, and his wife, Martha; a sister, Betty Landon; five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren; many beloved nieces and nephews and wonderful cousins; and his brothers and sisters, past and present, of the Chittenden Volunteer Fire Department and First Response. He was predeceased by his parents and a great-grandson.

Trevor Brown

Volunteer Firefighter ★ **February 16, 2024** ★ **Age 45**

VIRGINIA

Trevor Brown, 45, of Ashburn, Virginia, lost his life as a Sterling Volunteer Fire Company volunteer firefighter on Friday, February 16, 2024. Born on July 26, 1978, on a U.S. Army base in Landstuhl, Germany, Trevor grew up in Pennsylvania and Florida where he was active in sports and surfing. He studied at the American University in Cairo, Egypt, and moved to northern Virginia with his wife in 2006. Trevor was dedicated to the community and to serving others, which was shown through his devotion as a husband, father, son, brother, uncle, firefighter, and volunteer soccer and baseball coach. Trevor leaves behind his wife and three small children to carry on his legacy, as well as his sister, niece, parents, and other family and friends. Trevor inspired young hearts and left a lasting impact on everyone he met. He coached as he lived his life – with a passion to serve others – always stepping up to help with a smile on his face.

Trevor had a passion for learning, teaching, and following a stoic lifestyle. As a stay-at-home dad, Trevor had an immense bond with his children and was often found playing games with them or singing silly songs to lighten the mood. Trevor had a unique way of looking at life. He was a faithful believer that bare feet are happy feet and was barefoot as often as possible, except at the firehouse. Trevor lived his life based off several stoic philosophies, including core beliefs that “it doesn’t matter what bad event occurs, there will always be good. With the worst of suffering, comes the best of love...I become stronger with each hardship I face...I learn and grow from all events, good ones and bad ones; my mission in life is to constantly learn, apply, and teach the qualities necessary to become the best person and leader I can, while at the same time improving the lives of everyone that I encounter.”

Trevor had a passion for community service and thoroughly enjoyed giving back to his community. In his entry-level training class as a volunteer firefighter, Trevor wrote, “I’ve always wanted to be involved with emergency services to be able to challenge myself and learn new things. I see volunteering as a good way to give back to my community and help others. I know that I am mentally and physically capable to do this job and I hope to have a positive impact on at least one person’s life.” Trevor’s motto in life was often, “If not me, then who?”—words his wife and children are committed to living by in his honor.



**Sterling Volunteer
Fire Company**

Gary Clark Campbell

Career Battalion Chief ★ January 20, 2022 ★ Age 52

VIRGINIA



**Spotsylvania
County Fire, Rescue,
and Emergency
Management**

Gary Clark Campbell, 52, was born in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, to the late Clinton Byrd Campbell and Mary Louise on November 18, 1969, and lived an exciting life enjoying family and friends. Gary began his career with Spotsylvania County Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Management on October 5, 1992. He worked through the ranks and was a battalion chief when he was exposed to COVID on the job.

Gary led a life serving and protecting county residents in a paid and volunteer capacity as a lifetime member of the Spotsylvania Volunteer Fire Department. In his service to county residents, he saved many lives and was a dedicated leader. He was a loving and devoted family man and dedicated friend; he was always willing to give more to others than he ever expected to receive. In his spare time, Gary, known as Hound Dog, was an avid hunter and one of the original founding members of the Flat Top Hunt Club. He was a talented carpenter, and he never passed up an opportunity to travel and see new places. In retirement, Gary was looking forward to his dove hunt in Argentina and taking a cruise with his entire family.

Gary left behind his best friend, Denise Campbell; his daughter, Victoria Moore; his sons, Seth Campbell, Gary Ryan Campbell, and Dustin Davies (wife, Laney); and his beloved grandson, Wesley Davies, who knew him as Pop Pop.

Any extra projects that needed to be accomplished around the firehouse, Gary was always willing to help. He built bunk beds, wooden signs, and trophy cases around many firehouses throughout the county. Gary was also the "numbers guy." He could do any math calculation in his head, from building a

deck to accomplishing pump testing on the county's fire apparatus. He received an award from the Board of Supervisors for completing the county's latest Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating.

Gary was great at cracking a joke and making everyone laugh. Gary was a true leader and was always looking out for his firefighters. Of all Gary's accomplishments, his proudest was being Pop Pop to Wesley.

He is missed dearly by his family.

James Carson Ward Jr.

Part-time Firefighter ★ **March 30, 2024** ★ **Age 49**

James Carson Ward Jr. was born in Sullivan County, Tennessee, on January 9, 1975, to the late Carson Ward and Annie Edwards Ward.

He started fighting fires on February 15, 1998. He was very passionate about being in forestry and fighting fires.

Left to cherish his memory are his wife, Karen Hartsock Ward; sons, Hagan Ward and Braxton Fansler; sisters, Janice Hall, Connie Ward, Sharon Ward, and Anna Greene; special cousin, Billy Ward; and several nieces and nephews.

His parents, his brother Earl Ward, and his niece Santana Keith preceded him in death.

The family would like to extend their special thanks to the Virginia Department of Forestry and all medical staff for their love and care of James.

James passed away on March 30, 2024, at Holston Valley Medical Center. He died doing what he loved.

VIRGINIA



FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

**Virginia Department
of Forestry**

Remembrance 2025



Ron Cato

Career Battalion Chief ★ May 30, 2024 ★ Age 73

WASHINGTON



Pend Oreille County
Fire District 2

Before Ron found his true calling, he was a medical technologist for a family practice clinic from 1974-2017. Ron discovered his true love for helping people, and during this time he decided to become a volunteer with the local fire department.

Over the course of more than 30 years, Ron served the Spokane community in more ways than can be seen on paper. He was a Boy Scout leader, where he taught the scouts his love for nature. Ron also ran a fire explorer post where more than half of those involved went on to some sort of service career. The members became firefighters, paramedics, police officers, and military officers.

During his career, Ron worked for three fire departments and ran an EMS service company. Ron worked as a volunteer for Spokane County Fire District 8, Spokane County Fire District 10, and Pend Oreille County Fire District 2. Ron held positions as a station lieutenant, station captain, and battalion chief.

Ron found his love of teaching the community and fellow firefighters. During some of Ron's classes, he was known to get their attention by tossing candy at them for answering a question. Sometimes he would throw candy at those who seemed to not be paying attention to liven them up.

During shift, Ron was not one to let his crew sit idle. After truck checks, you could expect to be training for a good portion of the shift. During that training, Ron would remind his firefighters that we are called to help someone who is having the worst moment in their lives, and it is up to us to be the best. Ron said that his crew was like his family, and he treated them as if they were. Nobody on shift was neglected, and he was always there for someone if they needed help, advice, or just an ear to bend.

As impressive as Ron's career was, his devotion to family was second to none. He made sure that his children had what he didn't and everything else they needed. His proudest day may have been when he became a grandfather, and he did so three times. He was there for the birthdays, school events, sports events, camping, snow shoeing, and finding Bigfoot with his grandchildren. He was able to develop a special relationship with each of them.

Ron was a loving husband of 50 years to his wife, Debbie, an amazing father to his son, Chris, and daughter, Sarah (Robert), and a fantastic papa to Charlie, Joey, and Brennen. Words cannot describe how much Ron is missed, cherished, and honored.

James Bailey Maxwell

Contract Air Tanker Pilot ★ **July 25, 2024** ★ **Age 73**

James Bailey Maxwell, age 73, passed away July 25, 2024, while fighting a lightning strike fire associated with the Parasol Fire outside of Burns, Oregon. Jim was born on August 22, 1950, in Enterprise, Oregon. He graduated from high school in 1968 and went on to study at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton, Oregon, graduating in 1972 with an associate degree in air transport technology.

His career in aviation started in 1972 as a flight instructor and charter pilot for Lewiston Aviation in Lewiston, Idaho, and continued for 54 years and over 26,000 hours of flight time. His experience was vast and included aerial application, flight instruction, charter piloting, international narcotics and law enforcement, A&P mechanic, and aerial fire suppression.

He enjoyed spending time outdoors and going fast! He spent time on the Snake and Salmon Rivers and for a short time owned a lodge on the Salmon River. He enjoyed racing sprint boats, stock cars, and legend cars. He also liked playing cribbage, camping, fishing, hunting, going to the Reno air races, motorcycle riding, and taking four-wheeler adventures in his UTV down in Arizona.

And of course, he was a lifelong aviator who found joy soaring through the clouds, James Maxwell was known for his passion for flying and his deep connection to the skies. He spent time in the hangar in the winter doing maintenance on all types of aircraft with family and friends, telling all kinds of good stories. People said, "Jim put on an airplane like most people put on their pants." He always enjoyed going into new airports, seeking the experience, and sharing it with all his loved ones.

James Maxwell was a skilled pilot who expertly navigated an Air Tractor 802, along with numerous other types of aircraft, leaving a long-lasting legacy and big footprint in the commercial aerial firefighting world. He took many to the skies with his passion that touched everyone and was always willing to share his expertise and inspire future pilots.

His spirit will forever soar among the stars.

WASHINGTON



**Aerial Timber
Applicator,
contracted by U.S.
Bureau of Land
Management**

Ryan T. Pleasants

Career Engineer/Paramedic ★ January 7, 2024 ★ Age 41

WASHINGTON



Walla Walla
Fire Department

Ryan Pleasants was an observant man of honor and integrity. Former WWFD Chief Knowles said, “He was an excellent firefighter, a compassionate yet firm medic who strove to provide the best care to his patients, and at the same time was willing to pass on his knowledge and experience to those who would follow in his footsteps. His calm, safe demeanor was a comfort in amongst itself, along with his infectious smile. Ryan dedicated his life to serving his communities.”

Ryan’s plans of college and enlisting in the U.S. Coast Guard were changed when he volunteered as a firefighter for Cowlitz-Skamania County District #7. While attending college and volunteering, he earned his Incident Qualification Card and became a mountain and volcano rescue EMT for North Country EMS in the Mount St. Helens and Gifford Pinchot National Forest area. It was there that Ryan met an important career mentor, Tom McDowell, who founded and was former chief of the North Country and the Volcano Rescue Team.

In January 2005, Ryan’s career as a firefighter paramedic for Walla Walla Fire Department began. He chose Walla Walla not only for the variety and complexity of calls he experienced during medic school, but mainly the family values of that specific department—respect, laughter, comradery, training, and professionalism. He was proud to be there, to serve his community and make lifelong friends.

During his career at the WWFD, Ryan was involved with the “Every 15 Minute” Program, Custom Helmets for “Chief for a Day”, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Local 404 Christmas Delivery, and the IAFF FF Motorcycle Group. He created shirt and hat designs for his fire family, covered OT, made himself available for state mobilizations, and furthered his career and training any chance he got. He

exemplified PMA—Positive Mental Attitude—and he mentored many paramedic students. In 2023, he earned the recognition and promotion to an engineer position on his shift. Even if the medics were busy, he would assist in any way he could with medical calls to help balance the work load.

Outside of his career, he found joy in being a son, brother, uncle, nephew, parent, husband, and friend. No matter how tiring his shifts were, he was always present. He was an extraordinary family man and an exceptional father. Summiting mountains, participating in running events, hiking, camping, lake life, sitting by the fire, and exploring the countryside with family and friends were his way to recharge. He cherished these moments and created long-lasting memories with his loved ones. He truly left a lasting impression on many and will always be remembered.

Leslee Denise Smith

Career Lieutenant ★ **March 26, 2024** ★ **Age 69**

Leslee Denise (Wickham) Smith brought her loving light into this world on December 7, 1954, and shone it on the world.

That bright, loving light dimmed and departed into the cosmos on March 26, 2024, after a lengthy, gritty-but-graceful, three-and-a-half-year dance with hepatocellular carcinoma, a cancer of the liver. Her illness ended a career that she loved, stole her from the community she cared so deeply for and served in so many ways, and has left her family and friends devastated.

Leslee's life and light may have been extinguished far too soon, but they were bright and beautiful throughout her 69 years here on Earth. Leslee spent the first 26 years of her working life dedicated to children and families, working as a child and family counselor and behavior specialist, both in the private sector and for the Blaine (Washington) School District. During her latter employment she received the Washington State Excellence in Teaching Award, which was presented to her by then Governor Gary Locke in the legislature of the state capital in Olympia, Washington.

Leslee became interested in the fire service and began volunteering locally. She was recruited and hired as a firefighter/EMT at age 45 and served with honor, integrity, and grace until she retired as a lieutenant in the fall of 2021. After 26 years in the fire service, serving the community that she loved, her second line-of-duty cancer diagnosis forced her to take a medical retirement.

Throughout her distinguished career, she was instrumental in mentoring and training many new recruits and set a fine example for women and men in the fire service. Helping people and making this world a better place was displayed in the way this wonderful woman led her life. During her final days in Whatcom Hospice House, where she shone her final light on the wonderful staff there, she received a letter of recognition from Washington State Senator Liz Lovelett, who honored Leslee for her service and inspiration and deemed her a "Firebrand" for women in the fire service. She was indeed that and so much more to her family and friends. She was her family's North Star and guiding light and will always be.

She died as she lived, bright and beautiful and full of grace.

WASHINGTON



**North Whatcom
Fire and Rescue**

Alvin D. Vaughn

Career Firefighter ★ December 25, 2023 ★ Age 61

WASHINGTON



Port of Seattle
Fire Department

Alvin Dean Vaughn's unwavering faith and love for his family, friends, and community brought light to countless lives. As the pastor of Beacon Avenue Church of God, he embodied a servant's heart—always ready to lend a hand, share a kind word, and make a friend. His warm smile and ability to bring joy and laughter wherever he went left lasting impressions on everyone he met. Alvin had a deep passion for fishing, basketball, traveling, and, most of all, spending quality time with those he loved.

In addition to his ministry, Alvin dedicated 36 years of his life as a firefighter for the Port of Seattle, serving with honor and commitment. Diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2016, he bravely fought the disease for seven and a half years, showing remarkable faith, strength, grace, and determination. Even in his final days, Alvin's unwavering faith, courage, and selflessness shone brightly as he continued to uplift and inspire others with words of hope and encouragement. His passing on Christmas Day leaves a deep void in the hearts of all who loved him.

Above all, Alvin was a devoted family man. He and his wife, Thomazine, shared 22 years of marriage built on love, faith, and partnership. He deeply loved his three children, Sean, Keonna, and Isaac, and found great joy in being present in their lives. He cherished his relationships with his brothers, sisters, and extended family, always making time for family gatherings, whether large celebrations or simple moments spent together. For Alvin, family was everything, and he was happiest when surrounded by those he loved.

Alvin's legacy of faith, kindness, and compassion will live on in the many lives he touched. His family and friends will forever cherish the memories of his love, laughter, and unwavering support. Though his physical presence is gone, his spirit remains a guiding light to all who were blessed to know him.

Dean G. Warren

Career Captain ★ July 21, 2024 ★ Age 60

Dean Gerld Warren was born in Wenatchee, Washington, to Dean and Ellen Warren. Shortly after he was born, their family moved across the mountains to Edmonds, Washington, into the home where Dean would live out his childhood. Dean graduated from Edmonds High School in 1982 but decided college was not for him. His passion was in the fire service! He followed in his father's footsteps and became a volunteer firefighter for the city of Edmonds.

Soon after that, he met the love of his life, Sue Conrad. They married in 1985 and had their first and only child, Elise Warren, in 1990.

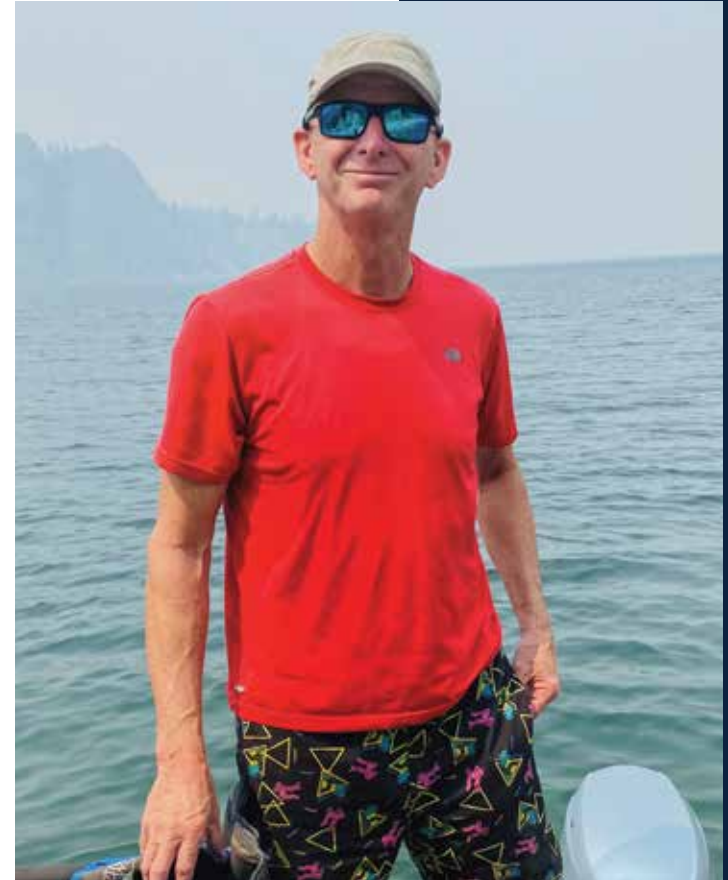
After testing in several fire departments, Dean was hired on with Edmonds Fire Department in 1991. During his tenure, the fire department went through several transformations and a merger, and it went from being called Edmonds Fire Department to South County Fire.

Dean's passion for the fire service knew no limits! He worked tirelessly to improve himself. Once he became captain, he helped with training his crew in boat rescue operations, something he excelled at with his knowledge, enthusiasm, and patience. His crew, along with numerous other firefighters, really missed Dean when he retired from duty in 2017. They all kept in touch, traveled together for vacations, and met once a year at Lake Roosevelt for a week of fun!

After his retirement, his passion for service did not stop. He joined Chelan County Search and Rescue and was an active member until his death on July 21, 2024.

Dean led a full and happy life and will be missed forever.

WASHINGTON



South Snohomish
County Fire and
Rescue Regional Fire
Authority

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Gary Edwin Berg

Volunteer Firefighter ★ October 19, 2021 ★ Age 54

WISCONSIN



North Prairie
Fire Department

Gary Edwin Berg of North Prairie, Wisconsin, was born March 20, 1967, in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Following in the footsteps of his mom and dad and many other family members, Gary was involved in Future Farmers of America during his high school years. He graduated from Kettle Moraine High School in 1985.

After graduating from high school, he was involved in everything that had to do with family, including the fire department. He became a member of the North Prairie Volunteer Fire Department in 1985, as soon as he turned 18. He served as lieutenant, captain, and MPO and was considered one of the best MPOs in the area. He was always there to help anyone and everyone, even if it meant leaving Christmas dinner. Once his children became old enough, they also pursued his passion for helping others.

Gary served with the North Prairie Fire Department for 36 years, until he succumbed to complications of COVID-19.

Gary was always with his family, whether it was camping with his grandchildren in the front yard of his home, riding his Harley down country roads, or taking his side-by-side on the back wood trails.

He was preceded in death by his mother and father, Cynthia and Edwin Berg.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 29 years, Lisa M. (Linde) Berg; sisters, Teri, Sherl and Cindy; children, Jessica (Dustin), Christine, and Tyler (Emily); and grandchildren, Jayden, Paige, Brooke, Kesler, Cole, Ali, and Carson.

FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Robert A. Stevens

Volunteer Assistant Chief ★ January 27, 2022 ★ Age 66

Robert A. Stevens, age 66, passed away with his family at his side, on January 27, 2022, at ThedaCare Hospital in Neenah, Wisconsin.

He was born on June 5, 1955, in New London, Wisconsin, the son of the late Loren "Slim" and Linda (Timm) Stevens. Bob was a Boy Scout and an Eagle Scout. In 1973, he graduated with honors from Weyauwega-Fremont High School.

Bob worked with his father in his construction business for many years. In 1978, Bob took over the business, renaming it RA Stevens Builders, and was still doing construction work throughout the area at the time of his death. Bob was very involved in his community. He was a founding member of the Webfooter Waterski Club, where he earned the nickname "Hot Sticks Stevens," and a longtime member of the Invaders Snowmobile Club.

He served his community as an EMT with Fremont-Wolf River EMS from June 1991 through June 2016 and was an active member of the Fremont-Wolf River Fire Department for 35 years, where he was the former assistant chief. Bob also worked with Poygan Ice Salvage, helping to retrieve vehicles that went through the ice during the winter. Bob enjoyed being outdoors, especially boating, snowmobiling, both recreational and racing, hunting, waterskiing, and playing baseball. He enjoyed repairing motors of any kind.

On April 4, 2014, Bob married Faith Clements at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Fremont.

Bob was survived by his wife, Faith; daughters, Stacy (Randy) Weyland and Emmy (Joshua) Kiecker; seven grandchildren, Abigail, Rachel, and Robert "RJ" Weyland and Olivia, Isabella, Aiden, and Elliot Kiecker; a stepson, Brock Krenke; his sisters, Sandra "Sam" (Pete) Berens, Patricia Stevens, and Mary Hopfensperger; nieces and nephew, Curt, Cassie, Heather, and Heidi; Stacy and Emmy's mother, Meri Erickson; other relatives, and many friends. He was preceded in death by two grandsons, Everett and boy baby Kiecker.



WISCONSIN

**Fremont-Wolf River
Fire Department**

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for you.

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2024 NFFF Memorial Golf Tournaments

5th Annual Metro Atlanta Firefighter Classic

**9th Annual Southern Maryland Volunteer Firemen's
Association Golf Tournament**

**10th Annual Greater Pittsburgh NFFF Memorial Golf
Tournament**

11th Annual Protectowire Annual Golf Open

**15th Annual Geneva National Fallen Firefighters Golf
Tournament**

**17th Annual Central Ohio Fallen Firefighters Annual Golf
Tournament**

**17th Annual National Fallen Firefighters Golf Tournament
hosted by Raleigh Fire Department**

Annual Hawaii Fire Chiefs Association Golf Tournament

**NFFF Charity Golf Outing presented by SERVPRO Quad Cities,
Kewanee, Burlington**

NFFF Golf Tournament hosted by Genesis Construction Group

Utah Annual National Fallen Firefighters Golf Tournament



2024 NFFF 9/11 Memorial Stair Climbs

850 Heroes 4 Heroes 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

9/11 Memorial Stair Climb at Lambeau Field

Altoona Curve 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Baltimore 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Binghamton Fire 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Bishop 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Bisman 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Black Hawk 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Central Kansas 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb and 5K Walk

Charlotte 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Cincinnati 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Cintas Virtual 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Colorado 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Columbus 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Crosby VFD 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Denver 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Dickinson 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Fayetteville 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

FDIC 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Four Corners 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Gaithersburg 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Georgia 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Grand Rapids 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Greenville City 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Knoxville 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Lancaster 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

LION Gem City 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Morongo Reservation FD 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Nashville 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

National Capital Region 9/11 Stair Climb and 5K Walk

Nebraska 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

New Hampshire 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

New York City 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

NYSAFC FIRE 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Ocean City 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Philadelphia 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Roanoke 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Rochester 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb, Walk and Bike Ride

Salt River Firefighters 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Southeast Texas 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Tri-Cities 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

Union City Fire Department 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb at Discovery Park of America

VCOS 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb and Walk

Wiregrass 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

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www.firehero.org

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**2130 Priest Bridge Drive, Suite 6
Crofton, MD 21114**

**410-721-6212
410-721-6213 (Fax)**