

# *Remembering*



NATIONAL  
FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS  
MEMORIAL WEEKEND

OCTOBER 4TH AND 5TH, 2008

Theodore J. Abriel, Sr. • Jeremy “Chris” Adams • Edward L. Andrews, IV • Leonard R. “Lenny” Bailey, Jr. • Rodney Bradford Baity • Paul D. Baker • Robert C. Beddia • Peter Beebe-Lawson • Theodore Michael Benke • Jon Mark Bingham • Paul Ryan Brady • John W. Broom-Smith, Jr. • Frederick Allen Burroughs • Matthew C. Burton • Mark Stevens Carter • Anthony T. Catania • Melvin Edward Champaign • Austin Hague Cheek • Dennis Cheshire • William D. Church, Sr. • Adam E. “Coley” Cole • Gary Cook • Anthony P. Cox • John Jacob “JJ” Curry • Brandon Lee Daley • Shane M. Daughetee • Dennis L. Davis • Stephen R. Dembski • Scott Peter Desmond • Gerald “Jerry” Donley, Jr. • Craig L. Dorsey, II • Samuel W. Downing • James “Earl” Drayton • Carl S. Engdahl • Walter C. Fagan, Jr. • Michael Lee Fox • Michael “Frenchie” French • Billy A. Gafford, Jr. • Chelsea Lyn Garvin • Theodore J. Abriel, Sr. • Alphonse “Vincent” Germano, Jr. • Joseph P. Graffagnino • William F. Grant • Bradley Wm. “Wally” Green • Jeremy “Chris” Adams • Edward L. Andrews, IV • Leonard R. “Lenny” Bailey, Jr. • Todd Whitney Hage • Sidney A. Hall • Stephen M. Harbison • Michael Paul • Rodney Bradford Baity • Paul D. Baker • Robert C. Beddia • Peter Beebe-Lawson • Theodore Michael Benke • Jon Mark Bingham • Paul Ryan Brady • John W. Broom-Smith, Jr. • Frederick Allen Burroughs • Matthew C. Burton • Mark Stevens Carter • Anthony T. Catania • Melvin Edward Champaign • Heuer • William H. Hutchinson, III • Eddy G. Ivers • Joe E. Ivy • Christopher Michael Jaros • Jeffrey Jeans • Austin Hague Cheek • Dennis Cheshire • William D. Church, Sr. • Adam E. “Coley” Cole • Gary Cook • Anthony P. Cox • John Jacob “JJ” Curry • Brandon Lee Daley • Shane M. Daughetee • Dennis L. Davis • Stephen R. Dembski • Scott Peter Desmond • Gerald “Jerry” Donley, Jr. • Craig L. Dorsey, II • Mark W. Kelsey • John F. Keane • Samuel W. Downing • James “Earl” Drayton • Carl S. Engdahl • Walter C. Fagan, Jr. • Michael Lee Fox • Michael “Frenchie” French • Shane T. King • Jeremy C. LaBella • Billy A. Gafford, Jr. • Chelsea Lyn Garvin • Alphonse “Vincent” Germano, Jr. • Joseph P. Graffagnino • William F. Grant • Bradley Wm. “Wally” Green • Todd Whitney Hage • Sidney A. Hall • Stephen M. Harbison • Michael Paul Heuer • William H. Hutchinson, III • Eddy G. Ivers • Joe E. Ivy • Christopher Michael Jaros • Jeffrey Jeans • Bryon Wayne Johnson • John F. Keane • Mark W. Kelsey • Shane T. King • Jeremy C. LaBella • Dennise M. Leslie • John Eastman “Dawg” Lietzke • Theresa Maria Kauffman Lynn • William “Billy” Stautamoyer • O. Earl Stephenson, Jr. • Jerry W. Stucker • John A. Stura • McDaniels, Sr. • Vernon R. McKenzie • James • Jeffrey D. Swartz • Brandon Kenyon Thompson • Michael J. Thompson • Michael J. Tluscik, Sr. • Joseph Torkos • Jon C. Trainer • Steven Eric Vanderpool, Jr. • Greg Vieth • Jeremy W. Wach • Brandon Michael Whimple • Matthew Richard Will • Billy H. Williams • Kevin Glenn Williams • Kyle Robert Wilson • Middleton • Glenn W. Miller • K. Michael • David A. Racheal Michelle Wilson • Jared W. Zimmerly • Bruce J. Zumwalt • James “Shib” Miller • Louis M. Mulkey • Scott A. Mumm • Jeffrey M. Murray • Daryl W. Mutton • Peter G. “Pete” Neilson • Steve Olinik, Jr. • Kelly L. Page • Robert W. “Bob” Phillips • Joseph E. Piazza • Henry Lawrence “Hank” Pitts, Jr. • Daniel F. Pujdak • Michael D. Reagan, Jr. • Kevin C. Reed • Paul T. Reynolds, Sr. • William “Bill” Riley • Felix M. Roberts • Benjamin Craig Rouchon • David A. Rufer • Timothy L. Sanborn • Nemeth F. Sanders • Edgar H. Scott • Raymond Charles Simonis, III • Michael D. Stanfield • David W. Stautamoyer • O. Earl Stephenson, Jr. • Jerry W. Stucker • John A. Stura • Jeffrey D. Swartz • Brandon Kenyon Thompson • Michael J. Tluscik, Sr. • Joseph Torkos • Jon C. Trainer • Steven Eric Vanderpool, Jr. • Greg Vieth • Jeremy W. Wach • Brandon Michael Whimple • Matthew Richard Will • Billy H. Williams • Kevin Glenn Williams • Kyle Robert Wilson • Racheal Michelle Wilson • Jared W. Zimmerly • Bruce J. Zumwalt

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

— BILL MANNING



Dedicated on the 13th Day of October 1990, to the  
Memory of the Members of the Fire Service  
who have made the ultimate sacrifice



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



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



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





# Remembering



## Dennis Cheshire

### Red Oak Area Volunteer Fire Department — Alabama

Classification: Volunteer  
Rank: Firefighter  
Date of Death: May 20, 2007  
Age: 48

Dennis Cheshire died en route to a house fire in his community. He was driving the fire department's 18-wheeler water tanker truck, when the large volume of water in the tanker became unbalanced. The truck rolled down an embankment, killing Dennis instantly.

Dennis was devoted to his family and to the community. He enjoyed lending a hand to anyone in need and always found pride in making someone else have a better day.

A member of the fire department for five years, Dennis was always willing to participate in any fire department activities. His mechanical skills came in handy with the upkeep of the department vehicles. He was a member of the Board of Directors. He had been asked to be fire chief, but declined the position to allow an older gentleman to receive the honor. That was just his way. All he wanted to do was to help others and take no credit for a job well done. Our community misses his kind and devoted heart.

Dennis was very proud of his family. He was raised a country boy and never went far from those values and traditions. He did not complain about having to work hard to achieve his dreams. Dennis and Kay were childhood sweethearts and had been married 29 years.



Our children were the "spotlight" of his world. Jeremiah and Jessica were living proof that all of his dreams had come true. He enjoyed playing with them and watching them grow into outstanding people. Dennis would often say with pride, "We must have done something right in raising them; look how great they turned out!" As a family, we enjoyed family days out, grilling hamburgers, and camping. We enjoyed riding bikes together and have shared so many laughs on family vacations.

When Jessica met Steven, Dennis found a new friend, and we were blessed with grandbabies. Beau, Xander and Bella were absolutely his pride and joy. Dennis spoiled them beyond all standards. As they grow older, we will tell them just how much he loved them. Jeremiah loves to play the guitar. We always supported him with his love of music and often visited him as he performed. Jeremiah sang a song for his Daddy at his funeral. Jeremiah also wrote a song as a tribute to his father called "My Father's Son." If you were a member of Dennis's family or a friend, you always knew how much he cared for you.

Dennis died a hero, doing what he loved best—helping others. His family and friends miss him greatly, and we will carry him in our hearts forever.



# Remembering



## Samuel W. Downing

### Mobile Fire-Rescue Department — Alabama

Classification: Career

Rank: Captain

Date of Death: June 30, 2007

Age: 45

Sam Downing died after responding to multiple calls during a work shift.

Sam was a firefighter's firefighter. He started hanging out at the Wilmer Volunteer Fire Department when he was just 14 years old. He washed trucks, stretched hose, and was eventually allowed to drive the truck around the fire station. He was in Heaven!

He joined the Mobile Fire Department on October 8, 1985. His excitement never diminished. He was just as excited when his last alarm sounded as he was when his first alarm sounded. He eventually decided to climb the "ladder" and made driver. He loved driving the truck, but hated pumping it, because he wanted to go in and "tame the beast." He made captain as soon as he was eligible. He was back in Heaven.

He was devoted to his career. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Award, the Meritorious Operations Award, and the Firefighters Creed Award. He was an EMT and HAZMAT Tech. He received recognition for his efforts with the MDA Boot Drive, one of his personal favorites. He received the Medal of Honor, of which I am most proud.

His greatest legacy is his creation and performance of The Captain Sam Show, a one-man fire safety show. He would begin wearing Dalmatian slippers and housecoat,

asleep, sucking his thumb! He would awaken to smoke in his room and would jump up and run wildly about the fire truck, flapping and flailing his arms, whooping and hollering, hunting a place to hide. He'd jump in the toy box and ask the kids if he was safe and wait for them to yell, "NOOO!" and so on. He'd dress in full turnout gear and pretend to be Darth Vader so the kids wouldn't be afraid of a firefighter attempting to rescue them. The showstopper was almost always squirting the teacher with the fire hose.

Sam loved God, family, and life. He lived every moment to the fullest. He was a lay speaker and sang tenor in the choir. He played the piano, banjo, and the "jug" as a member of the Jericho Five Gospel Group.

His greatest enjoyment was our three wonderful children, Cody, Victoria, and Colton. He loved every waking minute with them, whether watching them play soccer, baseball, in beauty pageants, or simply roasting marshmallows over a campfire in the backyard. He made memories that will last a lifetime. He will live forever in our hearts and minds. We look forward to the day we're all reunited.

I'll never forget the first time I saw him. He had me *before* Hello, sitting there in his choir robe with that angelic tenor voice and flaxen-gold hair. He was truly a vision from Heaven.





# Remembering



## Billy A. Gafford, Jr.

### Birmingham Fire & Rescue Services — Alabama

Classification: Career

Rank: Captain

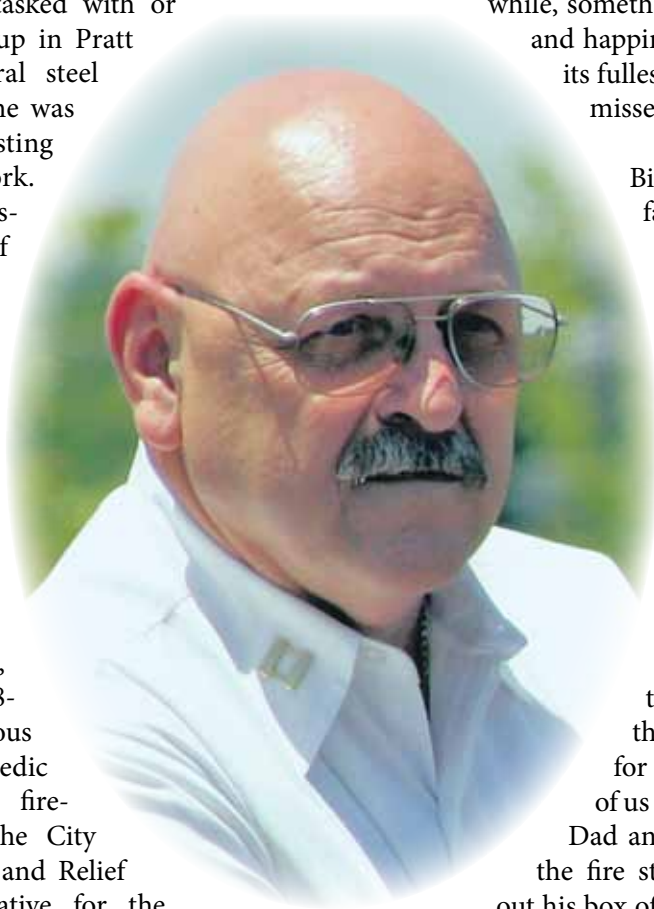
Date of Death: April 25, 2007

Age: 56

Bill was a great man who dedicated himself to any project he was tasked with or set his goals on. He grew up in Pratt City, Alabama. A structural steel detailer for over 30 years, he was well respected and left a lasting impression of excellent work. During his years as a draftsman, Bill dedicated himself to becoming a firefighter and EMT/paramedic. He graduated from Birmingham's Firefighter Rookie School in June 1984 and eventually served as captain of Station 16.

In addition to full-time firefighting duties, he volunteered with the Shady Grove Volunteer Fire Department, serving as chief from 1988-1991. He had Hazardous Material, EMT and Paramedic certifications. He was the firefighter representative for the City of Birmingham Retirement and Relief System and the representative for the Fireman and Policeman Supplemental Pension System. He was known to tell it like it was.

He graduated the Magic City Clown School, where "Grampy" earned his clown certification so he could volunteer his time to make others laugh at local hospitals. No matter what kind of mood you were in, he would always bring out a smile. There was gentleness in his spirit, a thoughtfulness that went into everything he did and every word he spoke.



Captain Gafford was always doing something worthwhile, something that would bring pleasure and happiness to others. He lived life to its fullest. He was a true leader who is missed tremendously.

Bill was a wonderful husband, father and grandfather. He enjoyed taking trips to Florida throughout the year to spend quality time with the family. He adored spending time with the grandkids, making sure to put a smile on their face as soon as they entered the room. He set the example for his sons to follow by always lending a helping hand when needed and instilling a strong family bond among us all. What he treasured the most was when the whole family got together for special events or holidays. All of us have great memories with Bill, Dad and Grandpa. When we visited the fire station, Grandpa would bring out his box of silly toys that he kept for our visit. When Dad had to work at the station on a holiday, the whole family would go to the fire station to celebrate the holiday with all the firefighters.

Captain Gafford died in the line of duty on April 25, 2007, when he suffered a heart attack while performing an annual fitness training exercise at the University of Alabama-Birmingham. He is survived by his wife, Cheryl Gafford; sons, Billy Gafford, III, and Jonathan Gafford; and grandchildren, Cordelia, Everette, Zachary, Joshua and Alicea.



# Remembering

## Stephen M. Harbison

### Pleasant Grove Fire Department — Alabama

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter/Medic

Date of Death: June 10, 2007

Age: 49

Stephen Harbison died from complications of chronic reactive airway disease, which he had suffered since being exposed to chemicals while fighting a structure fire in 1994. He served with the department for thirteen years. His brother is also a fireman and paramedic.

He is survived by his wife of 25 years, Wava Harbison; a son, Stephen Blake Harbison; and a daughter, Bethany Harbison. He left behind a very close-knit family, including parents, Clindel and Betty Harbison; sisters, Sharron Harbison, Suzanne Hutchinson, and Shawnda Swearengin; and his brother, Scott T. Harbison.



*Firefighters have a very simple job description—they're expected to be at the wrong place, at the wrong time, with the 'right stuff.' Firefighters aren't heroes because of what they do...they're heroes because each of them knows full well what they might have to do; and despite that, they carry that badge and that responsibility every day.*

— Dr. Denis Onieal, *Superintendent, National Fire Academy*



# Remembering



## Mark Stevens Carter

### Phoenix Fire Department — Arizona

Classification: Career

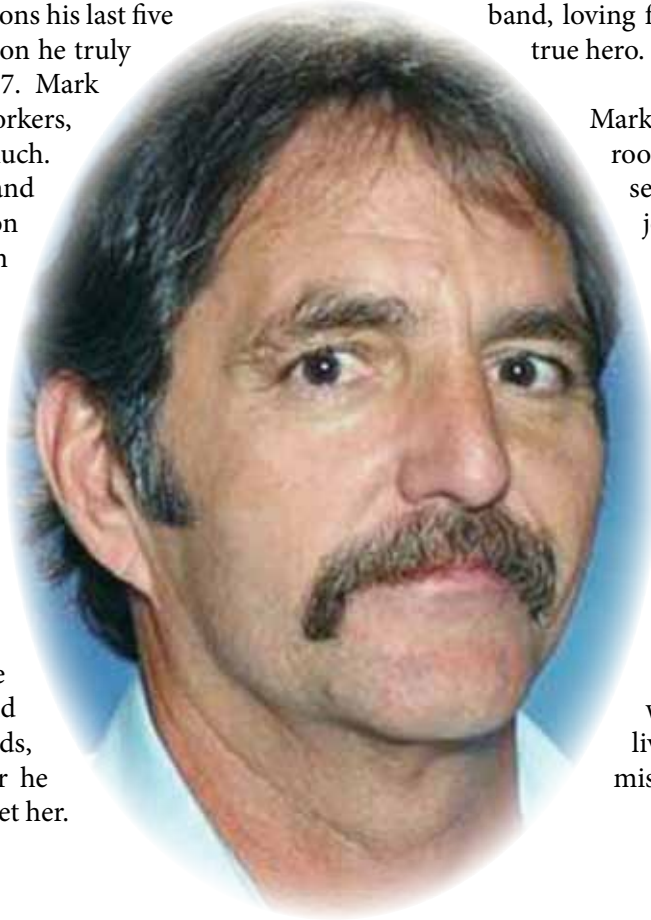
Rank: Engineer/Paramedic

Date of Death: June 4, 2007

Age: 53

*M*ark worked for Phoenix Fire for 18 years. He roved the city stations his last five years until he found the station he truly loved to work at: Station 37. Mark loved his job and his coworkers, and they all loved him so much. He suffered a heart attack and passed away on the job on June 4, 2007. He had gone on quite a few calls that day, and his crew did everything they could to try to save him. He was only 53.

Mark was a wonderful man. He was the best husband a woman could have. All of my friends thought I was sooooo lucky, and I was. He loved all four of our daughters so much. He has three granddaughters. The second one, Maddie Carter O'Shields, was born just a month after he passed, so he never got to meet her.



We will always remember Mark as a devoted husband, loving father, proud grandfather, and true hero.

Mark could light up the whole room with his smile, had a great sense of humor, always had a joke or story to tell. He was a huge animal lover, and I now have a bunch of animals here in Nevada with me because of him. He loved to golf, the mountains, and football. Holidays used to be very big at our house. We liked to invite firefighters who couldn't be with their families.

We all have so many wonderful memories of Mark that we will cherish for the rest of our lives. He was one of a kind. He is missed by so many.

*We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.*

— Winston Churchill





# Remembering



## Paul D. Baker

### Turtle Creek Volunteer Fire Department — Arkansas

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Lieutenant

Date of Death: August 10, 2007

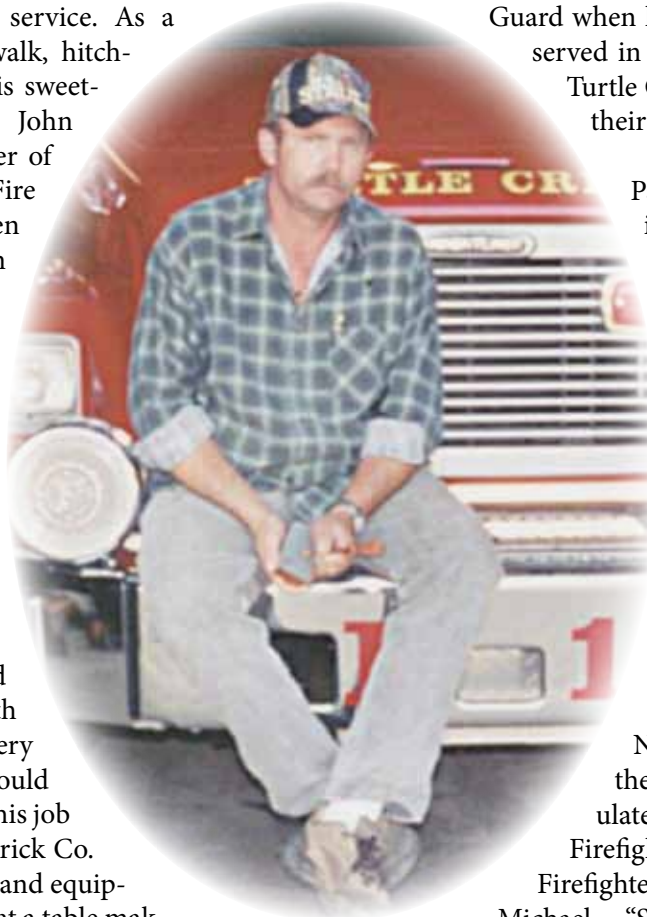
Age: 39

Firefighters have always been a family. Paul married into the fire service. As a young man, Paul used to walk, hitch-hike or ride a bike to see his sweetheart, Arla. Arla's father, John Pierce, is a longtime member of the Turtle Creek Volunteer Fire Department, so Arla had been hanging out at the station for years. Paul started coming around and found he liked the fire service almost as much as he liked Arla, so he became a brother to all of Arla's other brothers there at the fire station.

Paul was an avid outdoorsman and loved adventure. He found great enjoyment working with his hands and was a skilled craftsman with wood and leather. He was very mechanically inclined and could be found most days off from his job as a truck driver for Acme Brick Co. either working on the trucks and equipment at the station or sitting at a table making something with his hands out of leather or wood for one of his many friends.

Paul loved children and was always at the station on Halloween night with the trucks pulled out and a bowl of candy.

Paul was serving in the Arkansas Army National Guard when he met his wife to be. He later served in the U.S. Army and joined the Turtle Creek Fire Department, before their marriage on May 19, 1986.



Paul fell to his death while working an automobile accident on the Saline River Bridge on Interstate 30. After the driver had been cared for and placed in an ambulance, Paul was working to help make the vehicle safe and clear the roadway. He fell to his death over the bridge railing. He leaves behind not only his loving wife and family, but all of his brother and sister firefighters, who miss him.

Not only did Paul marry into the fire service, he helped to populate it. He leaves behind his wife, Firefighter/EMT Arla Baker; son, Firefighter Andy Baker; son, Firefighter Michael "Squeak" Mobley; daughter, Firefighter Stephanie Baker-Fagan; and son-in-law, Firefighter Roger Fagan. His daughter Gena Baker is not yet old enough to be a firefighter. Neither are his grandchildren, Katelyn, Kimberly, Anthony and Darrin, but they probably will end up helping others just like Paul did.



# Remembering



## Daryl W. Mutton

### North Pulaski Fire Protection District #15 — Arkansas

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Captain

Date of Death: January 19, 2007

Age: 47

Daryl Mutton suffered a fatal heart attack after responding to a call in a department vehicle.

Daryl had 20 years with the North Pulaski Fire Department, and the department was his first love. Daryl was always one of the first ones to respond to an emergency call. It was very hard, as Captain John Dobbins knows well, to beat Daryl to the driver's seat. All the guys thought that Daryl slept with his clothes on and radio tucked under his pillow, but I assured them he did not.

Daryl was a unique person. His laughter was very distinctive, and there was no doubt that he was present when you heard it. He loved a good joke, especially when it was on one of his fellow firefighters. Over the last year of his life, after he became medically retired from work, Daryl wanted to stay active in some capacity and continue to contribute to the department and his community. Their ISO evaluation would not have gone as smoothly or been as successful if not for Daryl's many hours of help.

Daryl left behind a wife, Lynn Mutton; two sons, Russell and Kenneth; and two daughters, Crystal and Michelle.



Even though Daryl loved his fire department and was proud to serve his community, he would want to be remembered as a devoted son, husband and father. When I married Daryl in 1981, he also got three bonus children, whom he loved and accepted as his own. I think his proudest moments were when his daughter Michelle was born and when Russell graduated from high school. Even though Russell's last name was not Mutton, Russell had his name listed as Russell Craig Taylor Mutton. It was one of Daryl's greatest moments as Russell's dad.

This is from a letter Michelle wrote to her dad: *There are so many words that could express how I feel about my father. In a way it's like he never left my side.*

*I know I have to let him go, but all the love I have for him will stay with me forever. I could never forget the wonderful things he did for me in my 17 years of life. He was always there for me when I needed him most. He was the man who could do anything. I think of my dad like superman, a man who could never get sick or hurt. I never got the chance to tell him how much I loved him. I could never forget the man I called my hero and my father, no matter what happens over the years.*





# Remembering



## Edward L. Andrews, IV Redding Fire Department — California

Classification: Career

Rank: Captain

Date of Death: May 14, 2007

Age: 53

Edward Andrews collapsed while participating in physical fitness training while on duty at the fire department. A 33-year veteran of the fire service, he had served with the Redding department since 1984 and been a captain since 1994. Passionate about training, he taught classes at Shasta College and College of the Siskiyous and inspired many young firefighters to pursue that career.

Other occupations during his lifetime included EMT for Mercy Medical Center, helitack foreman for the Bureau of Land Management, operations manager for the former Lassen Park Ski Area, law enforcement officer for the Whiskeytown National Parks Service, fire apparatus engineer for the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection, firefighter for the City of Red Bluff, and firefighter for the Shasta-Trinity National Forest.



A hard worker on and off the job, he was always doing something. He was active with the West Redding Little League program and spent hours maintaining and building baseball fields in the area. The West Redding Little League, in conjunction with the Redding School District, dedicated “Andrews Field” in his honor in May 2008.

He loved the outdoors, working on his property, skiing Mt. Shasta, boating, coaching, and being with people. Coworkers described him as optimistic, happy, and caring.

He is survived by his daughter, son, mother, and extended family.

He loved being a fireman.



# Remembering



## Matthew C. Burton

### Contra Costa County Fire Protection District — California

Classification: Career

Rank: Captain

Date of Death: July 21, 2007

Age: 34

*M*att Burton was a man who was dedicated to everything that is important in life: family, friends, and his work. He was a boy who idolized his father, a son who brought joy to his mother, and a loving brother. He was a friend who was always there when you needed someone and would go to battle for you without hesitation. He was genuine to every person he met and had a smile that was contagious.

Born in 1972 in Prince George's County, Maryland, Matt grew up in the suburbs of Concord, California. As a teenager, he was curious about the world and wanted to experience all it had to offer. He would try anything once, even when it was a noticeably bad idea on the surface.

Matt met his future wife, Chantel, in 1989, and they married in 1998. Two beautiful children followed – Megan and Josh. Matt loved his kids with all of his heart and would brag about their accomplishments. He described Megan and Josh as the most precious gifts he had ever been given.

In 1997, he started his career with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, spending almost all ten of his years at Station 81. He was promoted to engineer in 2002 and became a captain in February 2007.

Matt never brought the serious part of work home, instead telling stories to make you laugh. Matt's daughter Megan said it best: "Matt was a father who was always smiling and loved you no matter what you did. He was always cracking jokes so you would never frown. He didn't care about risking his own life to make sure people had one."

Matt and another firefighter were trapped while performing search and rescue at a residential structure fire. Matt is survived by his wife, Chantel; daughter, Megan; son, Josh; parents, Chuck and Suzanne; his sister Sherry; many nieces, nephews and broad extended family.

Matt will be remembered as a compassionate husband and loving father who cherished his family with every ounce of his being. He lived with purpose, playfulness and a smile that will never be forgotten. May he smile upon us, watch over us and feel our love from above.







# Remembering



## Scott Peter Desmond

### Contra Costa County Fire Protection District — California

Classification: Career

Rank: Fire Engineer

Date of Death: July 21, 2007

Age: 37

Scott Desmond and another firefighter were trapped while fighting a house fire that also claimed the lives of two residents.

From his earliest days, Scott Desmond liked to say that he wanted to be “just like my dad.” Throughout his life, he valued the closeness of family...his own and his extended fire service family.

Born in New Rochelle, New York, Scott’s fire service career began with the Orange County Fire Authority. In 1999, he joined the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. He was promoted to fire engineer in 2002 and had finished in the top third of the most recent captain’s testing. Scott worked at Antioch Fire Station 88 and was remembered by coworkers as intelligent, fun-loving, and a good friend.

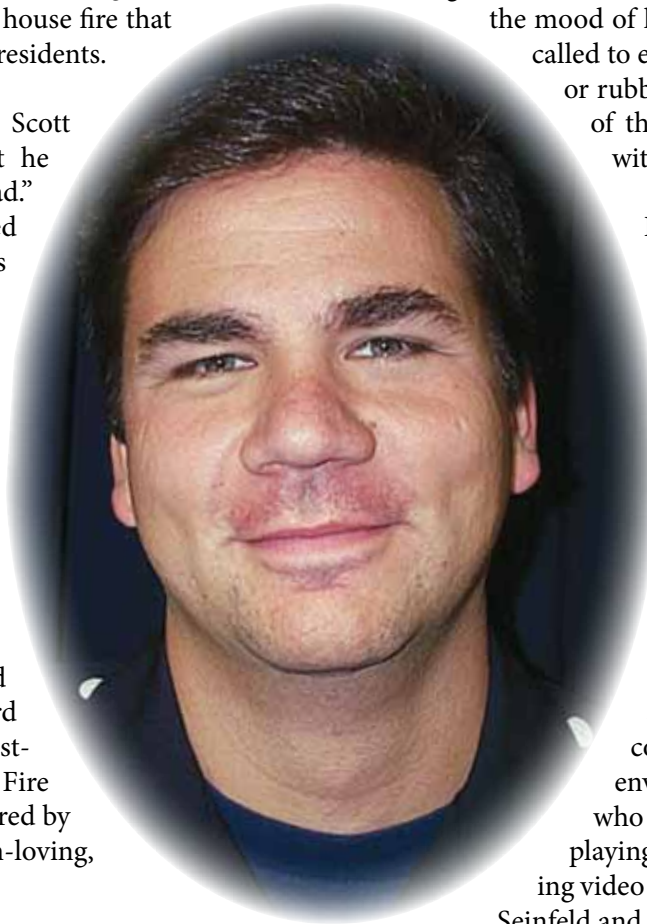
Scott was a true professional. He gave back to the fire service by helping in fire academies to train recruits on self-contained breathing apparatus and hose handling skills. He took his job seriously when it was needed. It was said of Scott, “He managed to make light of those calls that are a necessary but uninspir-

ing and labor intensive part of the job, lightening the mood of his crewmates when they were called to extinguish burning bales of hay or rubbish fires. Scott never lost sight of the importance of relationships with his friends.”

Fellow firefighters said, “To describe Scott is to say he was integrity, commitment and courage. Those were values he lived with each day on and off the job. He was a tremendous individual with solid values. Everybody liked him. He was the kind of man you could trust your family with.”

At home, Scott cherished his family life with wife, Carolyn, and son, Tyler. His humor, compassion and sense of fun enveloped and enriched anyone who met him. He loved baseball, playing guitar, music trivia, and playing video games. He was also a big fan of Seinfeld and Star Wars.

In addition to Carolyn and Tyler, Scott is survived by his parents, Robert and Linda Desmond; siblings, Robert Jr., Chris, and Tiffany Desmond; and a large group of family and friends that love him and miss him dearly.





# Remembering



## Michael Paul Heuer

### Sierra City Fire Department — California

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Chief

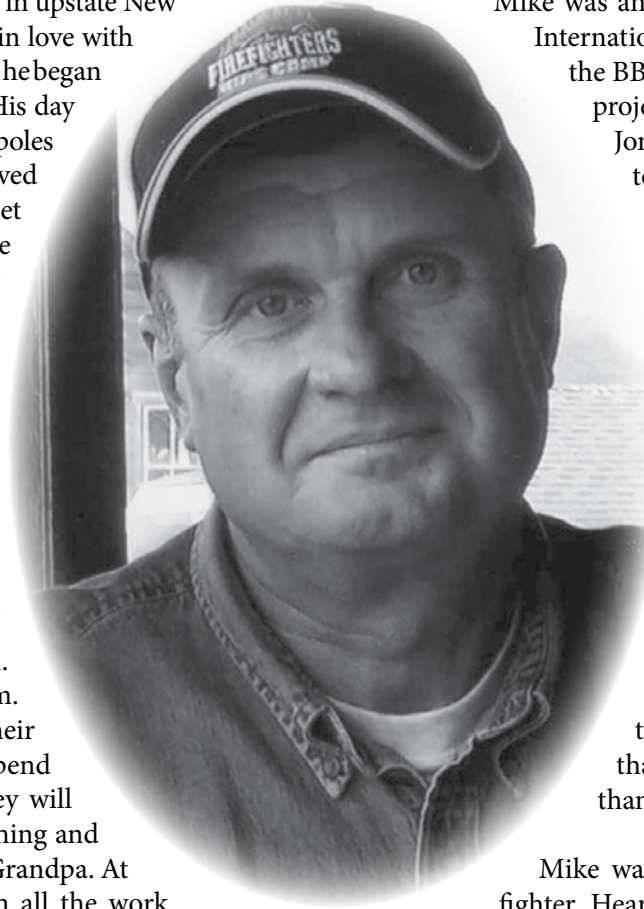
Date of Death: August 15, 2007

Age: 55

Mike was born on May 7, 1952, in New Jersey. Spending time in upstate New York as a young man, he fell in love with the mountains. In his twenties, he began to volunteer as a firefighter. His day job was climbing telephone poles for AT&T. When Mike moved to California in 1976, he met and married his wife, Lila. He joined the Bullion Volunteer Fire Department in Nevada County and worked his way up to become assistant chief and training officer.

They wanted to live in a smaller community, higher up in altitude, so they moved to Sierra City, California, a small town of 225 people at 4,500' elevation. Mike was living his dream. Every summer and winter, their four grandchildren would spend vacations in Sierra City. They will always remember hiking, fishing and swimming in the river with Grandpa. At the end of a long day, when all the work was done, he would gather everyone around the backyard campfire.

When Mike joined the Sierra City Fire Department, he took the job of assistant chief and training officer. The volunteer firefighters later took a vote to make Mike the new chief. Mike worked tirelessly for new trucks and equipment. His dream was to build a new firehouse, and he worked 19 years to make it happen. Two weeks after his death, the new firehouse was completed and dedicated in his honor.



Mike was an active member of Lions Club International. He was the guy behind the BBQ grill, raising money for local projects. He received the Melvin Jones Award, which is awarded to members for their humanitarian service. He received the award in honor of his community service and leadership. His service didn't end at the firehouse door or the club meeting. It extended to anyone who needed help.

Every August, Mike would leave everything and head off to volunteer as a counselor at the Firefighters Burn Camp at Lake Tahoe. At 6' 7", Mike was the tallest guy at camp, but he was in charge of the littlest guys. He always said that he came home with more than he gave.

Mike was born to be a volunteer firefighter. Hearing the siren echoing through the canyon, racing out the door and down the driveway, leaving his family behind, his turnouts in his truck, "Chief 79, responding."

The rescue call came over the radio in the evening; a fisherman was injured in a river canyon. They worked into the early morning. After a successful rescue, Mike collapsed and died at the scene, surrounded by the volunteer firefighters and EMTs of Sierra County.



# Remembering

## Kevin C. Reed

### Oakland Fire Department — California

Classification: Career

Rank: Lieutenant

Date of Death: January 20, 2007

Age: 47

Kevin Reed suffered a fatal heart attack while working out at the gym, several hours after responding to a residential structure fire during a work shift. A 16-year veteran firefighter, he was much loved within the department and known for his dedication, work ethic, and concern for people. He worked at Station 8 in North Oakland and was on the executive board of firefighters' union Local 55.

Kevin played on the department's softball team, refereed high school football games, and coached his daughter's softball team. He volunteered with the Oakland Firefighters Random Acts pro-

gram, handing out toys to children who were hospitalized and participating in other charitable work.

A dedicated husband and father, he is survived by his wife, daughter, parents, nine siblings, a loving extended family, brothers and sisters of the Oakland Fire Department, and many friends.

The department remembered him this way: "His sense of humor was infectious, and his caring, gregarious nature made him an extremely likeable member of the Oakland Fire Department."



*There is no greater calling than to serve your fellow men. There is no greater contribution than to help the weak. There is no greater satisfaction than to have done it well.*

— Walter Reuther



# Remembering



## Matthew Richard Will

### CAL-Fire — California

Classification: Career

Rank: Heavy Fire Equipment Operator

Date of Death: October 9, 2007

Age: 30

On October 8, 2007, Matt Will was called to a fire in Monterey, California. When Matt's bulldozer rolled, he sustained head injuries and died the next day.

Matt was born in El Cajon and graduated from Mountain Empire High School in San Diego County. A third-generation firefighter, he moved to Hollister in 2003 and became part of the CAL-Fire family. He was assigned to the Hollister Air Attack Base in CAL-Fire's San Benito-Monterey Unit. Matt worked as a heavy fire equipment operator and was dedicated to safety, working on and maintaining equipment in the air base's shop.

He graduated from the department's fire academy and had also completed the officer academy, which made him eligible to become a captain. Matt was a respected member of the California Professional Firefighters Union, CDF Firefighters Local 2881. An outdoorsman and adventurer, Matt's many interests included jeeping, hunting, remote control cars, football,

NASCAR, and working on equipment. He loved country music and dancing.

Coworkers remember Matt's strong work ethic, big heart, and jovial nature. His humor was contagious—no one was spared. At six feet tall, 240 pounds, Matt often mentioned his "girlish figure."

Matt married Diana in 1997. They had two children, Trysten and Elsie. In addition to his wife and children, he is survived by his parents, Gary and Debbie Will; his brothers, Brandon and Justin; grandparents; extended family; and his brothers and sisters in the firefighting community.

Matt's family is proud that many of his organs were donated. On the job, he saved property and lives; later, he gave new life to five others.

Matt is missed every minute of every day by his wife, children, family, friends, co-workers, and a world that needs laughter and heroics.





# Remembering



## John F. Keane

### Waterbury Fire Department — Connecticut

Classification: Career

Rank: Captain

Date of Death: May 22, 2007

Age: 37

John's interest in the fire service began at an early age. His grandfather, a Waterbury firefighter and captain, was a great influence on John's decision to join the department.

John was hired by the Waterbury Fire Department on September 12, 1994, as part of the largest recruit class in department history. John's attention to detail and work ethic made him a shining star, destined for greatness. Quickly promoted to the rank of lieutenant in 2001, then to captain in 2007, his last assignment was as company commander of Engine Company 8, in the Bunker Hill section of Waterbury.

Born and raised in Waterbury, John graduated from Sacred Heart High School and attended Central Connecticut State University, earning his Bachelor of Science in history.

John loved and believed in the city. He gave back to the city he loved, becoming active in the East Mountain Community Club, East Mountain Sports Association, and other benevolent organizations. Upon assignment to a district outside of his normal involvement, his first duty was to contact the neighborhood association and offer his services and those of the fire department. An instrumental part of Waterbury neighborhoods, John never shied away from a controversial subject and was always on the side of those he felt needed his help the most.

A statesman in every sense of the word, John lobbied for firefighters across Connecticut and across the country. On any given day off, John could be found meeting with a local legislator, state official, or even members of Congress.

John served as secretary of IAFF Local 1339 and participated in numerous activities to better the union local and department. John was instrumental in the passage of legislation to protect the rights and safety of all municipal workers. We will always remember John's willingness to campaign the plight of the downtrodden with respect, dignity and courtesy. Even John's staunchest critics have eulogized him as a consummate gentleman.

John's true passion was his family. He married his high school sweetheart, Monica, and had two wonderful children, Erica (11) and John (9). By example, John taught his children the basics of civic responsibility and the importance of being involved. John was devoted to his family and worked tirelessly to ensure their future.

On May 19, 2007, Captain John Keane was responding to a kitchen fire, when his engine was involved in a collision with another responding apparatus. Captain Keane succumbed to his injuries on May 22, 2007. He will be greatly missed by a saddened, yet grateful family, department and city.







# Remembering



## James McRae, III

**District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services — District of Columbia**

Classification: Career  
Rank: Firefighter Technician  
Date of Death: July 7, 2007  
Age: 34

District of Columbia firefighter James McRae, III died in the line of duty from a massive heart attack on Saturday, July 7, 2007. “Mac,” as he was called by his brothers and sisters of the DCFD, was the tillerman and a 17-year veteran of the department and was assigned to Engine #20, Truck 12, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon.

James started his career with the DCFD straight out of high school and quickly excelled in his new career. I remember saying one day that he must really be proud to be a fireman; he told me, “No, I am proud to be a DC fireman.” That is when I knew he had found his true calling.

“Jamie,” as he was affectionately called by his mother and wife, was the only son born to James and Mary McRae, on October 4, 1972, in Washington, DC. Jamie had the greatest sense of humor and a wonderful personality. He had the type of personality that you just either loved him or hated him, and most people adored him. Jamie danced to his own beat and never cared what anyone thought of him. I admired that about him.



Jamie was a HUGE sports fan, and there wasn’t a time or place that he would not discuss his beloved Washington Redskins or Washington Wizards. I could not believe at first how he would plan the family schedule around the Skins schedule, and we would just laugh at him. Jamie was an avid bowler and bowled several nights a week.

Jamie’s love for his family could not be measured; there was not anything he wouldn’t do for them. Jamie was married to Yolanda, and they have two children: his son, Anthony, and his beloved baby girl, Jami-Cierra. He also has one sister, Sherri. Jamie had such a special effect on everyone he met, with his beautiful smile and loud laugh. If you heard that laugh, you knew he was in the house/firehouse.

Special people in Jamie’s life included: Paul S., Jacques Y., C-Diddy, Kim S., Silas S., Jermaine K., Ty, Gary H., Tim B., Mel B., Leo W., Mike S., Derek P., Aaron B., Pastor Shawn McBride, Dana P., Levi E., and Corinne M.

# Remembering

## Jeremy “Chris” Adams Springfield Fire Department — Florida

Classification: Career

Rank: Chief

Date of Death: January 16, 2007

Age: 40

Springfield Fire Chief Chris Adams died January 16, 2007, after responding to an EMS call. Born in Panama City, Florida, Chris was a second-generation firefighter. He volunteered with Springfield until he received his certification and began serving the city full-time. In 2004, after working his way up through the ranks, he was selected by the mayor to be the fire chief.

A proven leader, Chris worked diligently to upgrade every aspect of the department. He applied for and received grants to upgrade the equipment, vehicles and training for firefighters. He worked with local, state and federal agencies to obtain training in the latest safety techniques. Chris created a team that worked together like a family. Every member of the fire department, police department and City Hall knew Chris. He welcomed them into his home anytime. Chris loved his job, his team and the community he served so well.

Chris was a devoted husband to Darline for 21 years. Their two daughters, Heather (17) and Hollie (13), were the light of his life. Chris dedicated his life to providing the best of everything for Darline and the girls. He loved them more than anything else and was always there to take care of every little need. He was also there to provide support for his mother, brothers and sister, nieces

and nephews, “Bootman the Cat,” and every friend who asked. Chris was an example of how to provide for your family and the guy everyone went to when they needed a favor.



Chris had many interests and provided many memories for his family and friends. If he was not in uniform, he was wearing a Jeff Gordon or Jimmy Johnson t-shirt and hat. Chris loved to sit on his back porch or in the swimming pool and watch NASCAR. Nobody loved NASCAR more. Chances are, if you went to Wal-Mart, you would see Chris there. He went almost every day, even when he and his family were on vacation. More than anywhere else, Chris loved to go to Disney World (Mickey’s house) with Darline and the girls.

Even if they wanted to go somewhere else, Chris still managed to talk them into Disney World.

In addition to his wife and daughters, survivors include his mother, Doris; two brothers, Will Adams and Steven Lott; and his sister, Sharon Merchant. Chris was preceded in death by his father, William Jackson Adams. Chris will be deeply missed by his family and friends. He touched so many people in the time God let us have him here on earth. Chris was the kind of man we name streets and buildings after. He was truly a great American!



# Remembering



## John Jacob "JJ" Curry

### Volusia County Department of Fire Services — Florida

Classification: Career

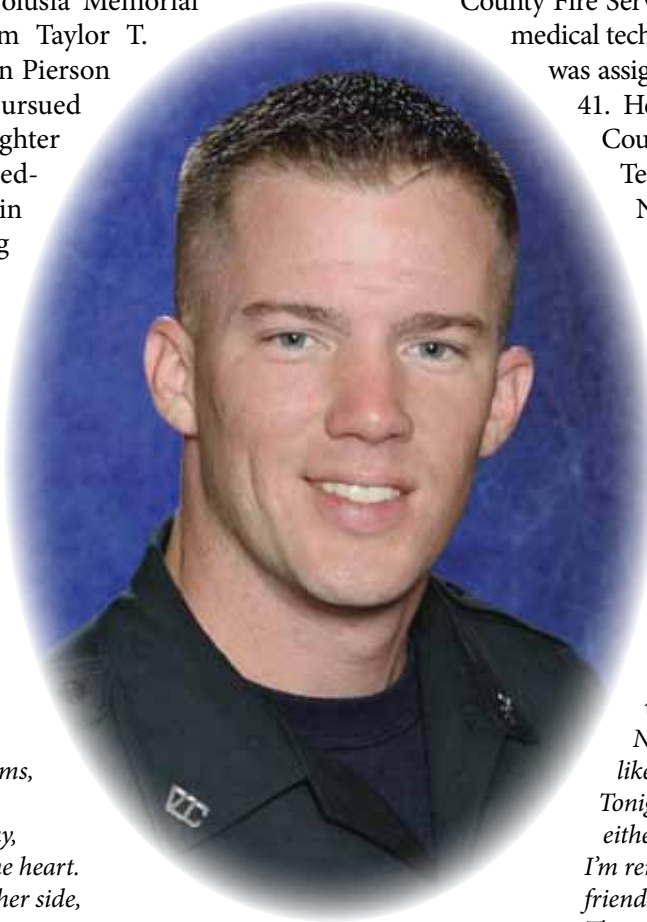
Rank: Firefighter/EMT

Date of Death: November 27, 2007

Age: 30

John Jacob Curry was born in DeLand on December 22, 1976, at West Volusia Memorial Hospital. He graduated from Taylor T. Dewitt Middle High School in Pierson in 1995. Firefighter Curry pursued his goal of becoming a firefighter by receiving his emergency medical technician certification in March 2006 and completing his certificate of compliance in fire standards and training in September 2006.

Firefighter Curry began his employment with Volusia County Fire Services as a firefighter/emergency medical technician on January 6, 2007, and was assigned to DeLeon Springs Station 41. He was accepted to the Volusia County Wildland Fire Response Team, the Firewalkers, on November 13, 2007. Firefighter Curry was involved in a fatal accident during a training exercise at the Volusia County Fire Services Training Facility and passed away on November 27, 2007.



**J.J.**

*Tonight two candles flicker on  
either side,  
I'm reminded of my friend.  
A friend that had no enemies,  
no.....  
not even one.  
Everyone loved and respected my  
friend,  
and knew no others like him.  
A friend that always had open arms,  
and a shoulder to cry on.  
He didn't always know what to say,  
but what he did say came from the heart.  
Tonight two candles flicker on either side,  
I'm reminded of my husband.  
He had a warm smile  
and a gentle touch.  
He lit two candles every night  
to remind me of his love.  
There's not a night that goes by,  
I don't hear the whispers, "I Love You"  
Tonight two candles flicker on either side,  
I'm reminded of a father.  
In a hospital room three years ago.  
I could see a man,  
holding his newborn son.  
As he stared into the baby's eyes,*

*I could see his world was  
standing still.  
I knew he would be world's  
greatest Dad,  
and he was ...  
He looked up  
and gave me a smile.  
We knew we were blessed.  
Tonight two candles flicker on  
either side,  
I glance to the left,  
to see a closet full of clothes.*

*I glance to the right,  
to see a book half read.  
A pair of shorts lay at my feet,  
with a belt still intertwined.  
Above,  
I see a wedding picture  
with an unfinished story.  
Next to me an empty space  
like the one in my heart.  
Tonight two candles flicker on  
either side,  
I'm reminded of my son,  
friends, and family.  
The empty space will never be filled,  
but a new space has been made  
and is beginning to fill.*

I can't tell you all the people I've met in the past few months, but I know there are so many people that love and care about my family. I'm so grateful. Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, and God Bless.

Love,  
*Kristen and Owen Curry*





# Remembering



## Paul T. Reynolds, Sr.

### Estero Fire Rescue — Florida

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter/EMT

Date of Death: February 27, 2007

Age: 41

Paul's fire service career began at age 17, as a volunteer for the Estero Fire Service.

He had a passion for the fire service, and his ultimate goal was to become a full-time paid firefighter. At age 22, that dream became reality, and Paul worked for the same department with which he had volunteered.

Firefighting and rescue were his passion. It was in his blood. He was one of the "old school" firefighters. He believed in brotherhood and all for one and one for all, a cause he tried to instill in all the rookies as they began their career in the fire service. Known to many on his department as "Pauly," he was also called "Rain Man" by a few in the department due to his natural knack for numbers. He was a caring, respected, straight shooter. He called it as he saw it and never tried to act or become anyone other than his true self for social or professional advancement.

Over the course of his career, Paul obtained many awards, and numerous course certifications. If there was a class that could better his service to the department or community, he completed the training. He was always one to help a neighbor, friend or stranger in need. He was the true core of what the public expects from their local firefighters. Yes, he also loved the home baked

cookies, cakes and pies brought in from the citizens of the community to thank him and the other firefighters.

However, the biggest impact Paul had was on his family and friends. He was an honorable and respectful son, brother, uncle, cousin—the list goes on and on. His mom and dad were always very proud of the man he had become, no doubt about that.

As Paul's wife, I was so very fortunate to have had almost 16 years with my husband. While those years were cut short, I am grateful for the time that I had with him. He was a loving husband, and we had three wonderful children together, Samantha (13), Paul, Jr. (12) and Erin (8). He was the absolute best dad they could have had, hands down. Not just a father, but a true daddy, who always made the time to spend quality time with our kids.

On February 27, 2007, Paul suffered a fatal heart attack after running several calls. I lost my husband, best friend and confidant; Estero Fire Department lost one of its most loyal, knowledgeable and hardworking firefighters; and the community lost a friend. However, most saddening is that his kids lost their daddy, best friend and teacher. He was and always will be their HERO!!!!





# Remembering



## Henry Lawrence “Hank” Pitts, Jr.

### Douglas County Fire/EMS — Georgia

Classification: Career

Rank: Lieutenant

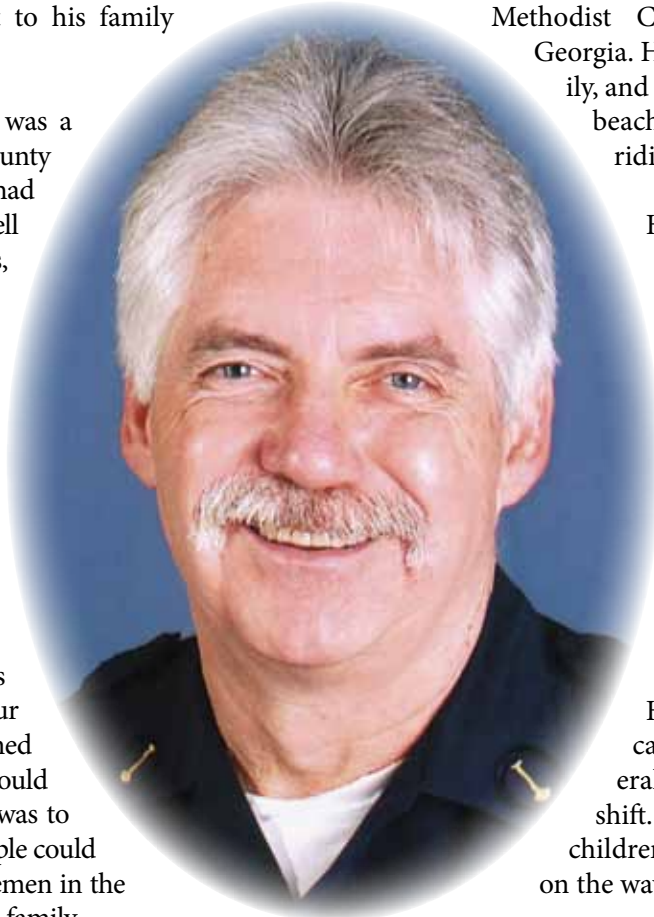
Date of Death: June 1, 2007

Age: 56

*M*y husband was a true hero, not only to the fire department, but to his family and friends.

Hank was 56 years old and was a lieutenant in the Douglas County Fire Department, where he had worked for 29 years. He was well respected by all his coworkers, and he respected them. Hank would never ask anyone to do anything that he wouldn't do himself. He was always the first to go out and get the job done. I don't think there is one fireman that would say they were afraid to go into a fire with him. I remember when he first joined the department and how he loved it from the first day. He always said that it "just got in your blood." He never complained about going to work and would always say how wonderful it was to enjoy your job. Not many people could say that. Hank felt like the firemen in the department were his extended family.

He was the recipient of the Star of Life Award in 2002. This is an award given when a person is down, with no signs of life, and is resuscitated. In order to get the award, the person has to leave the hospital alive.



Hank was a very active member of the First United Methodist Church in Powder Springs, Georgia. He loved to travel with his family, and his favorite place to go was the beach. He played golf and enjoyed riding his bicycle.

Hank was a great husband, father, son and friend. You always knew where you stood with him. He was always the same, and if he was your friend, he was a true friend. He never took friendships lightly. His family meant everything to him. When he wasn't at the fire department, he was with his family or friends. He never took life for granted.

Hank died from cardiovascular causes after responding to several calls while working a double shift. He is survived by his wife, two children, six grandchildren (and one on the way), and his parents.

I am sure that Hank is in a better place, but as his wife, I miss him so much. I have heard many times from several firemen that they lost not a coworker, but their best friend. He is missed by all.

# Remembering

## Felix M. Roberts

### Fulton County Fire Department — Georgia

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter II

Date of Death: May 28, 2007

Age: 41

Felix Maurice Roberts was born on August 21, 1965, at Womack Army Hospital in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The son of Cleveland and Charlie Mae Roberts, Felix grew up in Tampa, Florida, where he enjoyed playing high school sports.

Shortly after his graduation from Hillsborough High School in Tampa, Felix enlisted in the United States Army, serving during Operation Desert Storm. While in the military, Felix attained the rank of Specialist E-4 and earned a number of medals, including one for good conduct and three Bronze Stars.

On February 17, 1999, Felix fulfilled a long-time ambition of becoming a firefighter and joined the Fulton County Fire Department in Atlanta, Georgia. From that moment on, his commitment to the fire service and that as a public servant never wavered. In May 2002, Felix was promoted to the rank of Firefighter II. He worked hard and he trained hard, receiving certifications as a Hazardous Materials Technician, Rope Rescue Technician, Wildland Firefighter, Airport Firefighter, Driver/Operator, and Emergency Medical Technician.



On May 28, 2007 (Memorial Day), Firefighter Roberts lost his life while engaged in the search and rescue of a trapped victim in a heavily involved structure fire. If there was any consolation to this tragedy, it was in knowing that at the time of his death, Felix was doing exactly what he truly loved. He was determined, loyal, kind, compassionate and very giving of himself.

A co-worker said, "Felix was the type of person that always wore a smile and never talked down to anyone. When somebody dies, some nice things said about them might not always be true, but any nice thing said about Felix would be true."

Like so many others, Felix unselfishly placed his own life at risk for the benefit of others. He is survived by his loving mother, one sister, four brothers, a host of relatives, and his Fulton County Fire Department family.

Felix will forever be in the hearts and memories of all those he has touched. Good-bye, our brother.





# Remembering



## Dennis L. Davis

### Idaho Helicopters, USDA Forest Service Contractor — Idaho

Classification: Career

Rank: Pilot

Date of Death: July 23, 2007

Age: 60

Dennis L. Davis, died on July 23, 2007, due to a helicopter accident in Happy Camp just north of Yreka, California. He was a helicopter pilot fighting fires. Dennis was born August 2, 1946, in Palm Spring, California, to Sally and Ben Davis, Sr. He was born with a passion for humans and animals alike and would give the shirt off his back or food from his hand to any person or animal in need.

He had a zest for life and all that it offered. He received a bachelor's degree in business administration in 1978 and a Master of Science degree, becoming a naturopathic physician, in 2004. When he wasn't fighting fires, he specialized in nutrition and iridology, being a devoted healer who worked closely with me in my store, The Herb Pantry, in Boise, Idaho. Dennis was a master of every trade he endeavored, and he had a passion for a variety of things.

Dennis joined his local fire department as a volunteer when he was a teenager. He joined the military in 1965, starting out in firefighting, but then decided to go to Warrant Officer School to become a helicopter pilot. He flew for more than 40 years, including 2½ tours in Vietnam, most of his time there flying medevac. During his time in Vietnam, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Bronze Star Medal.

He flew helicopters for the police department in Pomona, California; tours over and around the red rocks of Sedona, Arizona; Life Flight for St. Alphonsus Hospital in Boise, Idaho; and finally fighting forest fires nationally.

He was a proud father of his two daughters, Tracie and Stacie, and a proud "Papa" of his three granddaughters, Ashley, Megan & Amanda. In his life, he dabbled in many things—beauty school, locksmith, gunsmith, painting & wallpapering, private investigator—but he always came back to his helicopters.

In 1994, we met and married. We had a whirlwind courtship and a fairytale marriage for 13 magical years. Together, he and I shared a love of life and activities like kayaking, camping, bike riding and snowshoeing. Dennis was a member of Idaho Masonic Lodge #1 and was a Shriner, active in the Players Unit.

Dennis had planned to make this his last fire season, in order to be home full time with me and fully concentrate on our business. We had a "thing" that we did every night on the phone when he was in the field. He would say, "I love you. I'll see you soon," and I would say, "Be safe, my honey. I love you."



# Remembering

## Vernon R. McKenzie

### Gem County Fire Protection District #2 — Idaho

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: April 28, 2007

Age: 66

Vernon Robert “Bob” McKenzie was a retired assistant ranger with the U.S. Forest Service and a 25-year veteran firefighter. He suffered a fatal heart attack after participating in a Wildland Pack Test. He was preparing to join his older son, also a wildland firefighter, on the firelines.

Born in Ohio, Bob enlisted in the Air Force after high school graduation and served for four years, mostly in Germany. After completing his service, he moved to Idaho to pursue a career in the forest service. Bob graduated with honors from the University of Idaho, with a degree in forestry.

Bob is remembered for his sense of humor, generous spirit and welcoming nature. He enjoyed karaoke and dancing. An avid hunter and fisherman, he shared these pastimes with his children and grandchildren.

Bob’s wife died in 1998. He is survived by two sons, two daughters, his mother, brothers and sisters, and his grandchildren. Bob will be deeply missed.

In Bob’s own words, written in the event of his death: “Don’t cry for me. I’ve had a good life, had lots of fun, and met lots of good people. We’ll see each other again someday.”



*Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.*

— Herman Cain



# Remembering



## Michael Lee Fox

### Vergennes Fire Department — Illinois

Classification: Volunteer  
Rank: Firefighter  
Date of Death: February 2, 2007  
Age: 37

At age 18, Mike sparked an interest in joining his town's volunteer fire department; he served for 20 years. As the years passed, he became more involved with the whole aspect of helping others. He took classes to become a first responder, and every time those tones dropped, he never missed a call. Usually the first one at the firehouse, Mike was always ready to answer his call of duty. His love of children always prompted him to volunteer at the Vergennes grade school's Fire Safety Week to help educate the

kids on what to do, when to do it, and how to do it.



When the tones dropped on the night of February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007, as usual Mike was the first to the firehouse. In all the rush of adrenaline on the way to that call to help a person in need, Mike had a fatal heart attack. The "heart" of our small town volunteer fire department is missed in a way no words could possibly describe!

Mike's cousin wrote this poem in his honor for his memorial service.

#### **"For Mike - Our Hero"**

*For all emergencies he's right  
there to bring hope and save  
the day.*

*The first responder to the weak,  
when an ambulance is on the way.  
A fireman to shield our home when we  
thought all was lost.*

*His arms open to welcome the children and  
to be their Santa Claus.*

*Service is what we know of him and how he's touched  
our lives.*

*When someone needed him, there was Michael, no surprise.  
Amazed at his love for children, they're so perfect in their  
playing,*

*With a small one in his arms, "There goes Michael with his  
babies."*

*Before we came to Earth, we made the choice to be right here,  
We have no choice when we leave, but that's not something we  
should fear.*

*Sometimes we pass before we're  
born, or after a hundred and  
five.*

*Either way, it seems not long  
enough or fair that we survive.  
There is more to life than just this  
world; there is hope beyond the veil;  
Where eternity is our bliss and our bod-  
ies are not so frail.*

*Our spirits live on to learn and grow, almost  
the same way,*

*Then we'll reunite with our bodies, just before our judgment  
day.*

*Service is what they'll know of him on the other side,  
And when someone needs him, there'll be Michael, no surprise.  
Millions of children for him to hold, a phrase to come just  
maybe,*

*When a child laughs out loud, they'll say, "There goes Michael  
with his babies!"*



# Remembering

## William F. Grant

### Chicago Fire Department — Illinois

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: March 23, 2007

Age: 44

Bill Grant died in an apparatus accident while responding to the scene of a structure fire. and community organizations. A very creative and imaginative person, he was recognized with a U.S. Patent for one of his lifesaving ideas.

Bill was a unique person who managed to combine intense kindness with bravery, love with passion, intelligence with action, and loyalty with friendship. Bill was a devoted husband to Sharon; a loving father to Kristin, Caroline, and Danny; a devoted son to John and Elizabeth; a caring brother, a welcome in-law, and a truly loyal friend. "Billy" lived his life to the fullest and invested all of his energy into his family, his career, and his friends. He managed to get so many things right in his life and to leave so many good things behind; he has created a legacy that is truly remarkable.

In 1985, Bill applied to the Chicago Fire Academy and ranked 19<sup>th</sup> among the 3,000 applicants that year. Bill joined the Chicago Fire Department at the age of 23 and served proudly for 21 years. He brought more than his energy and true dedication to his lifelong pursuit as a firefighter. Bill was honored for his valor, including a City Council citation for helping rescue a bedridden woman from a fully engaged building. Bill was recognized for his bravery by the Chicago City Council, the Chicago Fire Department,



A few years ago, the City built a new firehouse for Truck 51/Engine 84, and they installed a series of small dining tables. Bill believed in the old firehouse tradition "One Table, One Family." On his own, Bill constructed a single table for the firehouse that everyone could sit around. That table is a bit worse-for-wear, but it is still in use today. Bill would have been honored to hear his brothers at the firehouse call him "the best of the best" and to say, "If there was anyone you wanted to cover your back, you'd want Billy."

As Bill's wife, I can tell you that he was an amazing man. He was filled with such exuberance for life! There was never a dull moment when Bill was around, and the house was filled with laughter. A very hands-on dad, he loved to play with our three children and to tickle and cuddle with his family. He is deeply missed. Bill was selfless, constantly the giver and helper. He brought humor, optimism and his beautiful spirit to all of our lives. I feel very blessed to have had him in my life for 17 years. Billy truly was the best of the best.



# Remembering



## James “Shib” Miller

### Sesser Fire Protection District — Illinois

Classification: Volunteer  
Rank: Firefighter  
Date of Death: July 27, 2007  
Age: 43

James “Shib” Miller was struck and killed by a bus while working at the scene of a vehicle fire.

Shib was a volunteer firefighter for 22 years. He was awarded Fire Fighter of the Year for the Sesser Fire Protection District in 1992 and 2007. He assisted with department boot drives and helped in any way he could to better his community. He was posthumously awarded the duty death Gold Badge Award.

In addition to his service with the department, he volunteered with Vacation Bible School and with food basket delivery. In 1993, he went to Prairie Du Rocher, Illinois, to aid in the sandbagging for the flood. In 2005, he responded with First Baptist Church to aid the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Shib enjoyed watching the St. Louis Cardinals; he was a loyal and enduring fan. He collected baseball cards and anything and everything that had to do with being a fireman. He especially enjoyed being with his family and spent any free time he could with them.

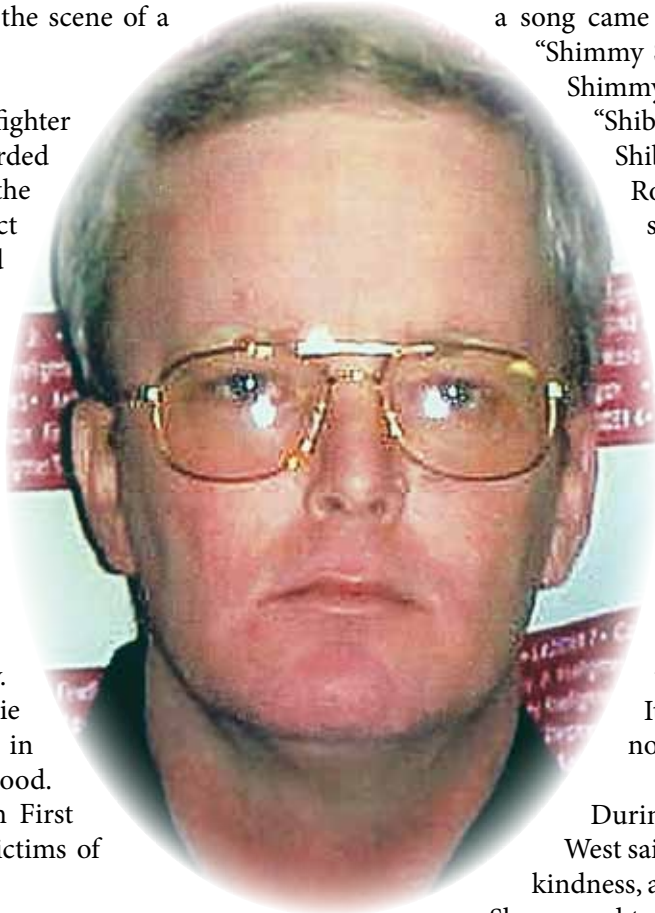
Here is the story of how “Shib” got his nickname. In junior high, he always wore a hat with a Chevrolet emblem on

it. That led to him being called “Chevy.” Later, a song came out that included the words “Shimmy Shimmy Cocoa Bop, Shimmy Shimmy Rock,” and “Chevy” turned to “Shibby” by friends singing, “Shibby Shibby Cocoa Bop, Shibby Shibby Rock.” Then “Shibby” was later shortened to “Shib.” He even put ‘Shib 82’ on his license plate. His nickname meant a lot to him, mainly because it came from friends.

The Illinois General Assembly has passed a law called “SHIB’S LAW” that gives fire departments authority to close highways to traffic in instances where police officers or transportation officials are not present. It is now waiting on the governor’s signature.

During Shib’s funeral, Brother John West said, “Miller was a man of honor, kindness, and integrity. He loved his wife, Sherry, and two daughters, Misty and Jenny. He was a Christian, and he loved his church.” One man came up to me and said, “Jimmy Miller might just be the best Christian at the First Baptist Church.”

Jimmy wanted to be a fireman since he was a little boy. He always watched his Uncle Cecil “Butch” Eubanks put on his fire gear to go fight fires, and he knew he wanted to do that too!!!!



# Remembering

## Scott A. Mumm

### Mendota Fire Department — Illinois

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Lieutenant

Date of Death: October 29, 2007

Age: 34

Scott "Mummer" Mumm, was a 13-year veteran with the Mendota Fire Department. He held the following certifications: Firefighter II and III, Technical Rescue Awareness, HAZMAT Tech B, HAZMAT Incident Command, Vehicle Machinery Ops, NIMS-I.S.-700, Unified Command, and EMT/Paramedic. He was a member of the MABAS Division 25 HAZMAT Team.

Scott coached girls' softball, boys' junior tackle, and men's summer league baseball. His personal interests included skeet shooting and hunting, and he spent time fishing in Canada every year.

I can't really put into words what Scott meant to me, the kids, and our whole family. He was such a wonderful, loving, caring man. We were high school sweethearts, together for six years before we were married. We had our 10-year anniversary in July 2007. I am very blessed to have had those years with him. We have three wonderful children who talk and think about their dad on a daily basis.

Scott was always the first one to lend a hand and never wanted anyone's help in return. He touched so many

lives, both on duty and off. He was always smiling, and he could always make you smile. He always had some kind of witty comment.



I gotta tell you, Scott could also be very hard headed. I remember one year we went and got a Christmas tree. He put it in the back of the truck without tying it down and took off down the road. I told him to slow down. You could hear the tree moving around, and I told him it was going to fly out. He looked at me like I was crazy. Well, needless to say, about two minutes later, the tree went flying out of the truck and skidded across the road. I'm glad we were putting the tree in a corner, because after it kissed the pavement, we basically had half a tree left. We laughed about that for years.

I could go on and tell you all the wonderful memories we had, but for now I will keep them in my heart. He was one of those men nobody will ever forget.

Scott died after responding to a fire call earlier in the day. He is survived by his wife, Melissa, and his children, Morgan, Brett, and Abby. We will miss him forever.



# Remembering

## Bruce J. Zumwalt

### Sheldon District Fire Department — Illinois

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: May 6, 2007

Age: 54

Bruce Joseph “Joe” Zumwalt suffered a fatal heart attack at the scene of a fire. He was a 22-year veteran firefighter with the Sheldon District Fire Department.

A lifelong resident of Sheldon, Illinois, Joe worked as a farmer and crop duster for 32 years. He held a Bachelor of Science degree from Parks School of Aeronautics and was a member of the Illinois Aerial Applicators Association, the EAAV, and the Antique Airplane

Association. He was a licensed air frame and power plant mechanic with inspector authorization. He loved flying and taking children flying with him.

Joe was a member of Sheldon United Methodist Church.

He is survived by his wife of 31 years, his son, his daughter, siblings, and extended family.

He was a good friend. He was always there to help out.



*True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost.*

— Arthur Ashe



# Remembering



## Bradley Wm. "Wally" Green

**Monroe Township/Cowan Volunteer Fire Department — Indiana**

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: May 25, 2007

Age: 53

Wally spent his life helping people and making them laugh. He did not hesitate to jump in and help family, friends, and coworkers. Most were unaware of how much Wally enjoyed helping and how it was a major part of his life. Everyone remembers the stories Wally told and the funny things he did to this day.

During his career with United Parcel Service, Wally often assisted customers, police, and strangers on his route. Wally is remembered because he cared and was involved in their neighborhood. After driving for 25 years, Wally served three years on the Comprehensive Health & Safety Process Team.

Wally enjoyed many hobbies and interests: scuba diving, hunting, photography, trap shooting, white water rafting, cooking on the grill, and horseback riding. He was an active 30-year member of the Monroe Township Conservation Club.

Upon his retirement from UPS in 2003, Wally became more involved with the Cowan Fire Department and Monroe Conservation Club, actively participating in fundraising and increasing community awareness. He offered his time and equipment helping neighbors, friends, and organizations to "do what needed to be done." Wally and his wife, Salli, raised horses and grew hay and crops on their farm.



Becoming a Cowan volunteer fireman ten years ago was a "life dream" for him. Wally received NIMS First Responder Operations and Awareness certifications. He submitted grant requests, wrote FEMA grant requests, collected donations, participated in training sessions, and attended Board meetings. Wally was instrumental in obtaining a thermal imaging scanner and the specification development for the new 2007 Ferrara fire truck. Wally was named "Fireman of the Year" in 2005 and 2006.

Three hours after attending a highway accident involving rescue/extrication of an overturned semi-tractor truck, Wally suffered a fatal cardiac arrest on May 25, 2007.

After Wally's death, the Monroe Township Volunteer Fire Department received the 2007 AFG Award from FEMA for \$151,715, on February 15, 2008. Memorial donations provided the department dress uniforms. Fire Chief Jay Carter often reflects that Wally's humor is missed, and his efforts continue helping the department. Wally was an organ, tissue, and bone marrow donor. His pledge was fulfilled; bone and tissue donations gave "the gift of life" to many recipients.

Wally, who had a laugh that warmed your heart, is survived by his wife, Salli. He also leaves behind many family members and friends.



# Remembering



## Sidney A. Hall

### Upland Volunteer Fire Department — Indiana

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: January 5, 2007

Age: 52

On January 3, 2007, Sid responded to a residence fire with the department. He was the first to enter a smoke filled house, and he fell through a hole in the floor. He was rescued and airlifted to Parkview Hospital, in Fort Wayne, but he passed away on January 5, as a result of asphyxiation.

A devoted husband, father, son, brother, uncle, friend, and community member, Sid first lived in Upland as a student at Taylor University. He remained there after graduation in 1977, taking his first job at the university's Buildings and Grounds Department. In 1983, Sid married Bonnie, and they are the proud parents of two sons, Christopher and Matt. Sid took a job with Building Control Systems of Fort Wayne in 1997.

A 15-year veteran firefighter, he was an Indiana First Class Firefighter with an Indiana Master in Arson Investigation, and a certified NFPA Fire Instructor. During his career, he held the positions of department training coordinator and department secretary. Every October, Sid went to talk to elementary school children about fire safety. He is a recipient of the Medal of Valor and the Distinguished Hoosier Award.

Sid shared his love for the fire service with his sons. You could always find them cleaning a fire truck, check-

ing gear, or fixing something around the fire station. The whole family joined Sid in riding a fire truck at parades. Sid and the boys turned the garage at home into a pit garage, for the boys participated in the department's Apple Crate Derby. Matt is planning to follow his dad by majoring in fire science.



Sid was active in the Taylor University Accutrack and trained both his sons, who joined him at many track meets. Sid and his wife participated in handbell choirs and played piano duets together. Sid also played his trumpet in the Mississinewa Valley Band and the Salvation Army Band, alongside his son Christopher.

Always ready to help anyone in need, Sid never thought of himself as a hero; helping people and making sure they were safe was just part of life to him. Being on the fire department was not a job; it was a calling of his heart. It is fitting that Sid has been honored for being a "gift of life" donor, for that is just the kind of man he was – he gave his life for others.

Sid was a loving husband and father. He and his family enjoyed playing games, watching videos, making ice cream sundaes, making snowmen, or just taking a drive together. These memories now comfort us. Sid will always remain in our hearts.



# Remembering

## Dennise M. Leslie

### Coal City Community Volunteer Fire Department — Indiana

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: July 2, 2007

Age: 40

Dennise Leslie died in a motor vehicle accident while responding to the fire station for a call.

Dennise was a loving mother of two boys, Jeffery and Christopher, ages 22 and 15, as well as a loving wife to Robert Leslie.

Dennise joined the fire service in 2005. She was very active in our volunteer fire department and with the county rescue team. She was the acting president and the secretary of the fire department. She wrote as many grants as she could for the fire department. In the short time she was in the fire service, she received her NIMS training, as well as Emergency Vehicle Operators Course, auto extrication training and mandatory training. Dennise had to overcome a lot just to get her training; she was extremely claustro-

phobic, and putting on a SCBA was a challenge for her.



She loved children of all ages and went out of her way to do what she could for a child in need. We were married for ten-and-a-half years, and we did everything together as one or as a family. She made every run with me, even before she joined the fire service.

Dennise lived her life for her family and her friends, not for herself. She was very unselfish about things. She always had a smile on her face and had a way about her that would and could make you smile, even on your worst day.

Dennise was a cancer survivor. She also was an active foster parent and had volunteered to take terminally ill children.

# Remembering

## Anthony P. Cox

### Topeka Fire Department — Kansas

Classification: Career

Rank: Captain

Date of Death: August 13, 2007

Age: 44

Captain Anthony Phillip “Tony” Cox, 44, of Topeka, a 21-year veteran of the Topeka Fire Department, died August 13, 2007, after battling a fire in an apartment complex in southwest Topeka. He was born January 2, 1963, in Mobile, Alabama, the son of SFC Walter Phillip Cox, Jr., and Iva Lou Morgan Cox. He graduated from Topeka West High School and attended Washburn University.

Tony began his career with Mission Township Fire Department. He was a member of International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 83, and was assigned to Fire Station Number 8, at 2700 SW Fairlawn Road. He was instrumental in starting the HAZMAT program for the Topeka Fire Department and was a HAZMAT Tech instructor for the state fire marshal’s office. Tony also worked for American Medical Response ambulance service as an EMT I/D to continue to provide for the public on his off days.

Tony was devoted to his family. He married his soul mate, Karrie Youngbear, on September 17, 2006, in Galveston, Texas. Their precious daughter, Hannah, was born on December 19, 2007. Other relationships in Tony’s life blessed him with three children, Derek Cox, serving in the U.S. Marine Corps; and Morgan Cox and Baylee Cox, both in Topeka. He is also survived by his mother, Iva Lou Cox, and two sisters, Kelly Drummond and Dotty Karnowski, all of Topeka. He was preceded

in death by his father, SFC Walter Cox, Jr.; his youngest sister, Shelby Cox-Scott; and his younger brother, Daniel Cox.



Tony was a people person and was always willing to give a helping hand to anyone in need. He would help family and friends fix their computers, pick up shifts, and lend an ear or shoulder to cry on. Tony gave of himself willingly to help others, always putting his needs last. That dedication to others held true in all aspects of his life, including the fire department.

Evidence of Tony’s love and dedication to the HAZMAT team can be seen in the new command trailer, the grants written to purchase equipment, and the HAZMAT duty shirts.

About three or four years ago, Tony, Ron Rutherford, and Kevin Howbert designed the first HAZMAT duty shirt, which had been used until recently. Just before his death, Tony, with the help of his cousin-in-law, Ken, finished the new team logo, which had been approved by the Topeka Fire Department. This shirt became a memorial shirt to Tony, and the money raised is being used to purchase HAZMAT equipment.

Tony’s crooked smile will always be remembered by those who loved him—his family, his friends, and his firefighter brothers and sisters.

# Remembering

## Brandon Lee Daley

### Butler County Fire District #3 — Kansas

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: May 11, 2007

Age: 19

Brandon Lee Daley passed away May 11, 2007, while responding to a fire in his home community.

Brandon graduated from Rose Hill High School in May 2005. During high school, he was president of Students Against Destructive Decisions. He was presented with a certificate of recognition as a great representative of his school and community, where his passion as a community servant thrived.

In 2002, Brandon became a member of the EMS Explorer Post. In 2003, he was asked to help recruit young teens to become part of the Rose Hill Police Department Explorers Post. Brandon became president and lieutenant of Explorer Post 2627. Brandon joined Butler County Fire District #3 in December 2006, as a volunteer. He was excited to become a full-time firefighter and a part of the Rose Hill team. He was participating in Firefighter I classes and was an EMT student at Butler County Community College. He was looking forward to joining the police academy as well. He worked full-time as a bank teller while fulfilling his public service and college commitments.

Brandon's dreams were limitless when it came to public service. His care and compassion for helping others was amazing, and he was always putting others first.

Brandon had other dedications as well. He was a member of the Sons of the American Legion. He donated blood regularly with the American Red Cross and became an organ donor.



Brandon's hobbies were many. He enjoyed life and loved spending time with family and friends and hanging out with his big sis, Candice. He had a passion for miniature dachshunds and adopted a silver dapple named Darla, short for Darling. He loved to go hunting with his best bud, Jim, and his god brother, Greg, whom Brandon adopted. He loved to go rock climbing in his Jeep that he and his father spent time rebuilding. He enjoyed going to the lake and riding his personal watercraft. Movies, ice cream, and trips to Wal-Mart were his favorite late night adventures with friends.

Brandon Lee inspired many friends and family who have now become great assets to themselves and others around them. We lost Brandon at such a young age; he was just becoming the grown man and public servant that he wanted so badly to be. Brandon is survived by his father, Lawrence; mother, Christina; and sister, Candice. Brandon will be missed and truly loved forever. He is our hero! His beautiful face, his wonderful smile, and compassion for others will always remain deep in our hearts.





# Remembering



## Carl S. Engdahl

### McPherson County Rural Fire Department #2 — Kansas

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Chief

Date of Death: November 12, 2007

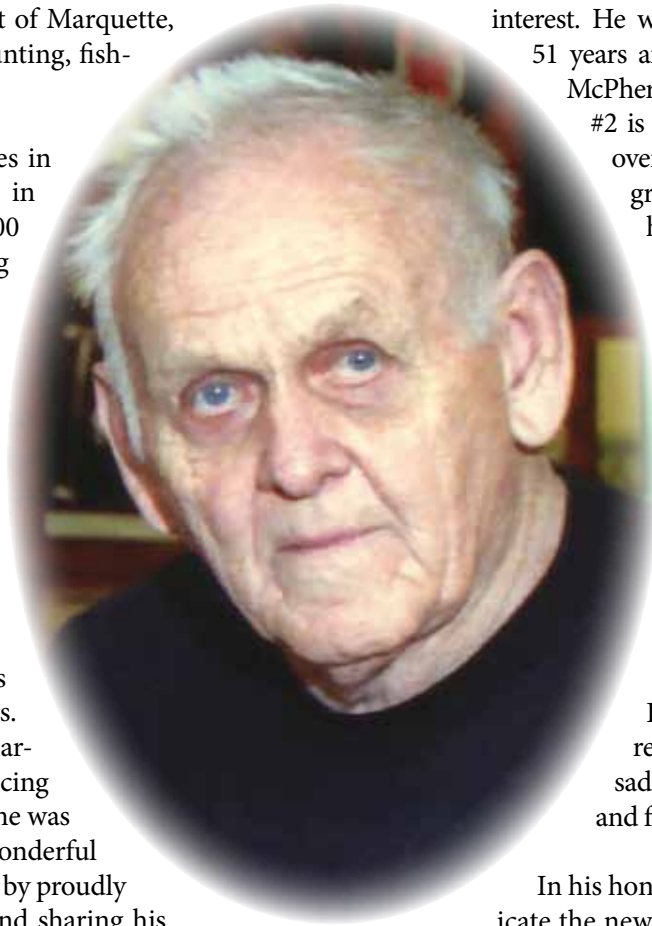
Age: 78

Carl S. Engdahl, “Stan,” as he was known, grew up on a farm west of Marquette, Kansas, where he enjoyed hunting, fishing and trapping.

He started racing motorcycles in 1946 and retired from that in 1993. Stanley won over 600 awards in that time, including five times national scrambles and 16 state championships!! After serving two years in the U.S. Army, Stan returned to Marquette and opened a radio and television shop. He retired from this in 1999, after 45 years.

In 2003, the Kansas Motorcycle Museum was built in Marquette, and Stan and his wife, LaVona, were co-curators. Stanley and LaVona were married for 55 years. Between racing and firefighting, not much time was ever spent at home! His wonderful wife now continues his legacy by proudly opening the museum daily and sharing his stories. Stanley sure had the gift of storytelling!

Stanley was an American Legion member. He also served on the city council for several terms. He was a charter life member of the American Motorcycle Association and many other grand deeds.



However, it was the fire department that held his interest. He was on the fire department for 51 years and was fire chief for 36 years! McPherson County Rural Fire District #2 is a volunteer district that covers over 219 square miles of mostly grasslands. Kansas winds blow hard most of the time, making it difficult to contain a fire. Stanley spent many hours repairing and building trucks. For a small, rural fire department, Marquette has very unique firefighting capabilities, due to Stanley’s abilities to repair and rebuild.

On November 12, 2007, Stanley responded to a fire where he tragically suffered a massive heart attack and died. His fellow firefighters and first responders were on the scene, but sadly could not save their mentor and friend.

In his honor, the town now plans to dedicate the new firehouse to their hero. Town folk knew they could always rely on Stanley for a helping hand and solid advice. As the mayor stated in his eulogy, “The town has lost a friend and protector.” Stanley is missed by all who knew and loved him.

# Remembering

## Bryon Wayne Johnson

### Sedgwick County Fire District #1 — Kansas

Classification: Career

Rank: Deputy Lieutenant

Date of Death: September 24, 2007

Age: 32

Bryon Johnson was electrocuted by a downed power line while operating at the scene of a grass fire.

Even at a young age, Bryon was a firefighter at heart, from wearing toy fire helmets with his Papaw to his favorite trucks being fire trucks.

Bryon started his firefighting career in the United States Air Force in the spring of 1994. In the five years that Bryon spent in the Air Force, he received three awards: a Unit Citation for a water rescue, the Robert H. Curtain Award and the Air Force Achievement Medal.

After the Air Force, firefighting took Bryon to Garden City, Kansas, where he was quickly promoted to engineer. Deciding he wanted to be closer to family and friends, Bryon set his sights on the Sedgwick County Fire Department. In October 1999, Bryon was hired on. During his nearly eight years with the department, he accomplished much. He received his associate's degree in fire science and his bachelor's in criminal justice. Bryon received certificates for Fire Instructor, Hazardous Materials Technician, Kansas Fire Officer and Kansas State Fire Marshal Fire Investigator. Bryon also did many things while not on duty related to firefighting, including fire code review, being a field instructor for University of Kansas and coordinating countless projects for the

department. In July 2006, Bryon was promoted to lieutenant after only 6½ years with the department.



Bryon was considered a rising star with the department and was always striving toward his goal of being fire marshal. His greatest accomplishment in firefighting was to be accepted to the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. Unfortunately, he received his letter of acceptance the day after he passed away. In January 2008, he was posthumously awarded Executive Fire Officer and honored with his class.

While Bryon was a driven firefighter, his first priority was his family. He opted not to take extra shifts so that he wouldn't miss time with his family. Bryon adored his two sons, Aeron and Jacob. He enjoyed spending time with his family.

While God didn't bless him with biological brothers, Bryon was blessed with the best friends a guy could have. Friends since high school, they spent time fishing, hunting, cheating at cards and hanging out.

Bryon's family and friends miss him terribly. While his death was a tragedy, we are honored that he was part of our lives. Bryon taught us to never give up, even when you are considered the underdog. He taught us to live life to its fullest and enjoy every single minute with a giggle and maybe some Cheez-Its and tomato soup.



# Remembering



## Michael J. Tluscik, Sr.

### Kansas City Fire Department — Kansas

Classification: Career

Rank: Senior Firefighter

Date of Death: November 21, 2007

Age: 48

Michael J. Tluscik, Sr., of Kansas City, Kansas, passed away on November 21, 2007, after responding to two calls. Michael was born June 9, 1959. He joined the Kansas City Fire Department in 1992 and served most of his career at Station 14. The fire department was a big part of his life, and he was proud to have been a part of the “brotherhood.” He was a member of Local 64.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration report, Firefighter Tluscik reported for duty and was assigned as the driver of Pumper 9. During the morning, Pumper 9 responded to a carbon monoxide alarm and a structure fire. During the response to the structure fire, Pumper 9 lost traction momentarily, and Firefighter Tluscik was able to gain control. He commented that this occurrence had shaken him. The pumper was cancelled prior to their arrival at the scene of the structure fire.

Firefighters returned to the station to eat their morning meal. Firefighter Tluscik sat on the couch and talked with other firefighters. They noticed that Firefighter Tluscik was making snoring noises and that he was unresponsive. The firefighters lowered Firefighter Tluscik to the floor and assessed him. CPR was initiated immediately, and paramedic-level EMS procedures were provided.



Firefighter Tluscik was defibrillated at least three times prior to transport by ambulance to the hospital. He was pronounced dead at 1200 hours. He died of a cardiac condition known as mitral valve redundancy.

Michael Tluscik was a loving and devoted father to four wonderful children, Stephanie (22), Michael, Jr. (21), Kinsley (21), and Holly (19). He adored his girls and wanted them to grow up to be strong, independent women. He loved his son and prayed he would find within himself the power to be his own man, to work for what he wants to achieve, and to surpass all of his father’s successes. Michael is also survived by his mother, Janet, and many beloved family members and friends.

One of Michael’s passions was spending time at Lake of the Ozarks. He never let an opportunity to go to the lake pass him by. He was also a skilled carpenter and an amazing cook. Michael was very proud to be a fireman and valued the many friendships he made while serving as a firefighter. His beaming personality was enjoyed by all who knew him. He would often come home with stories of the outrageous pranks he and the others had conducted at the station. He was very playful, fun-loving, and free spirited. He will be missed by all.



# Remembering

## Shane T. King

### Danville Fire Department — Kentucky

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: February 3, 2007

Age: 29

Shane joined the Boyle County Fire Department at age 17. After ten years of service, he got on part-time with Danville City Fire Department. His lifelong dream was to become a career firefighter. He accomplished this dream one month before his death. He loved the fire department and serving others. He devoted his life to this mission.

Shane was killed in a truck accident returning from an EMT class on February 3, 2007. While he was working as a part-time firefighter at Danville, he also worked a full-time job. He worked a lot of hours with Danville, but he wanted to get on full-time.

During his part-time service, he received the "Part-Time Firefighter of the Year" award for

his service and dependability. He was very proud and honored to receive this award.



He enjoyed NASCAR and was an avid Dale Jr. fan. He also enjoyed football and Kentucky basketball. Most importantly, he also loved serving God and in our church. He was a great testimony to those around him. He has gone to be with the Lord in his eternal home.

Shane had strong family values and was very close to his parents, Dorse and Barbara King. He is survived also by his wife, Debbie. He also leaves behind two stepchildren, three step-grandchildren, three brothers, and many friends. He was a loving husband, friend, son, brother, stepfather and step-grandfather. He is greatly missed and will live forever in our hearts.

*I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.*

— Albert Schweitzer



# Remembering



## Jerry W. Stucker

### Dow Corning Fire Department — Kentucky

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter/EMT

Date of Death: September 14, 2007

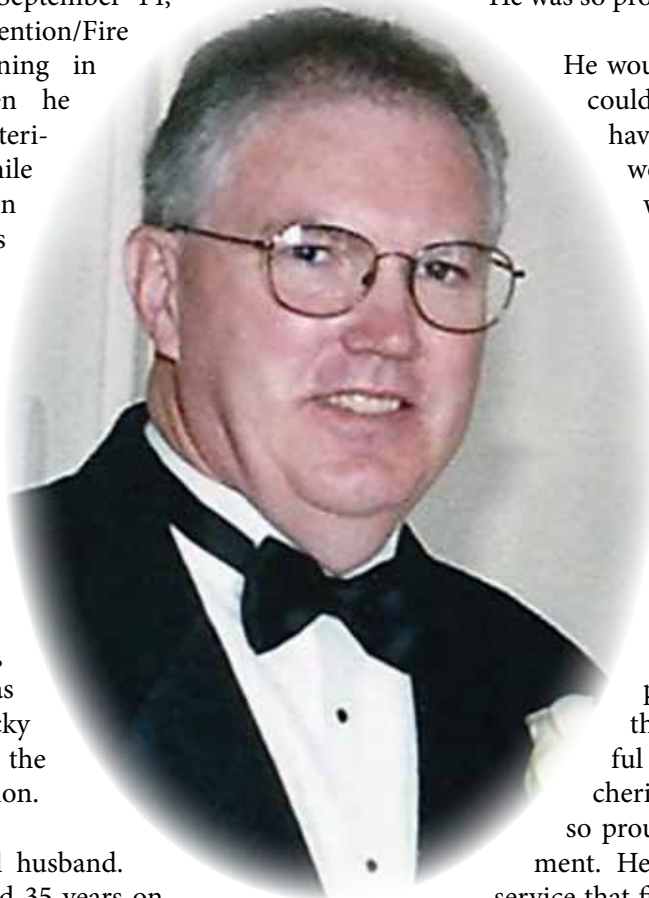
Age: 53

Jerry Stucker was respected by all who knew him. He was on duty September 14, 2007, with the Loss Prevention/Fire Department at Dow Corning in Carrollton, Kentucky, when he responded to a hazardous materials incident at the plant. While on scene, he died of sudden cardiac arrest. His brothers treated him, but to no avail. He was 53 when he passed.

He had served as firefighter/EMT at Dow Corning for the past eleven years, Jefferson Proving Ground Fire Department for nine years, and was a volunteer firefighter for the past 27 years at Clifty 6 Fire Company in Madison, Indiana, where he lived. He was also a member of the Kentucky Firefighters Association and the Indiana Firefighters Association.

Jerry was such a wonderful husband. We would have been married 35 years on April 14, 2008. He had already said he wanted to go somewhere nice for our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but that didn't get to happen. We have two sons and their wives. The reason I don't say 'daughters-in-law' is because Jerry always thought of them as his daughters. Jerry became a proud grandfather for the first time on May 16, 2006, and his grandson was 16 months old at the time of his passing. Since Jerry passed, our other son and his wife

had a little girl. We know he is watching over us. He was so proud of his family.



He would save up all year just so we could have family vacations and have fun together as a family. We would go to Florida and take walks along the beach together looking for interesting seashells. Usually those walks included long talks about life. My sons also treasure memories of days spent with their dad, and the times that their dad took them camping and fishing.

Jerry was a very quiet man who would never brag or boast about himself. He had the nicest way of telling people what he thought; at the same time, he was respectful of other people's feelings. He cherished his friendships and was so proud to be a part of the department. He thrived under the spirit of service that firefighting promotes. My sons said that if just 10% of their dad has rubbed off on them, then they consider themselves to be the luckiest sons in the world.

Jerry is sadly missed by his wife and best friend, Teresa; sons and daughters, Brent, Lynn, Chris, and Dara; grandchildren, Treyton and Ella; his father, Bill; and many family and friends. He will be forever in our hearts!



# Remembering



## Steven Eric Vanderpool, Jr.

### White Oak Volunteer Fire Department — Kentucky

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Engineer

Date of Death: February 24, 2007

Age: 28

Eric was extremely dedicated! The fire department was his life. He made sure they were ready for the next call and was always the last to leave. They never had to ask for a volunteer, because he was always there, ready to do anything. It gave him a purpose in life and made him feel proud. He would swell with pride every time he put on his uniform. He was on top of the world when he was on the job.

In addition to his service with White Oak, he was also involved with the West Liberty Volunteer Fire Department, the Caney Valley Volunteer Fire Department, and the Morgan County Volunteer Rescue Squad. West Liberty Chief John Conley said, "Eric was always willing and ready to do anything. He was glad to be in the background. He didn't need to be in the spotlight."

At home, Eric, as he was always called, was a dedicated husband to his wife, Misty, and a beloved son to his mom and dad. Although they were his grandparents, he loved them as much as anyone ever could.

Having been married for three years, he and Misty were trying to have a family. They were foster parents who were waiting on a child they could love as their own and for whom they could provide a forever home.



Eric was just as dedicated to his family as he was to his fire department. He helped his mother-in-law build a home from the ground up, inside and out. He was a gifted handyman. Being a jack of all trades, he was always helping his extended family with plumbing, electrical, or building. He enjoyed building computers and was a Ham radio operator. He was very passionate about carpentry and electrical work. Most of all, he was a proud firefighter; firefighting was his passion.

The day that he wrecked changed his family forever. It is like the heart had been taken out and misplaced. He was in a coma for 14 days before he passed away. He was surrounded by family and friends, with his wife at his bedside and members of the fire department there. You could tell he was a vital part of his community and family.





# Remembering



## Peter Beebe-Lawson

### Springfield Fire Department — Maine

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: May 7, 2007

Age: 50

Peter Beebe-Lawson, 50, volunteer firefighter from Springfield, Maine, answered a call responding to a fire at a cedar mill in neighboring Prentiss Plantation on May 7, 2007. He arrived at the scene, spoke with the owner of the mill, took photos of the fire on his cell phone, promised a reporter he would e-mail him the photos, returned to the fire house in Springfield to get the tanker truck, and called home to let his wife, Selby, know which of the two cedar mills on Mud Pond Road was burning. "It's Jim's. Gotta go." Those were the last words she heard from Peter.

On the way back to the fire, Peter lost control of the tanker truck and was killed in the crash. He was buried with full honors following a funeral Mass at St. James Catholic Church in Kingman, Maine.

Peter was a friendly and outgoing person who could remember the name of every person he had met since moving to Springfield with his wife and stepchildren in 2005. Together, Peter and Selby administered Mary's School, a tuition-free, private school for special needs children K-12. They also founded a religious community called Mary's Ward, whose aim is the adoption and education of special needs children and sibling groups.

Peter was well known throughout southern Maine for his involvement in musical theater. Frequently appear-

ing in leading roles opposite Selby, Peter was a community theater favorite for Portland area audiences, appearing with Portland Lyric Theater, Embassy Players, and others. In the Springfield area, Peter was in demand as a soloist at funerals.

His community involvement did not end with theater and fire service. Peter was on the Board of Directors of the Hank Beebe Music Library and SonLight Incorporated. He volunteered regularly at St. Mary's Food Cupboard in Lincoln and was a member of the Knights of Columbus, John Paul II Council, in Portland.

His favorite activities at home were being a stepfather, raising goats and chickens and living out his Catholic faith with his family. He was most proud of learning to cut wood for building animal pens and for heating the house. He also loved being a firefighter.

Peter is survived by his wife, Selby; stepchildren, John, David and Christa; father, Albert Milo Lawson; six siblings; in-laws, Hank and Nancy Beebe; and the Springfield Fire Department. He is buried on land owned by SonLight Inc., called Mary's Wood.

He was always my hero, but now he's a lot of people's hero.



# Remembering

## Racheal Michelle Wilson

### Baltimore City Fire Department — Maryland

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter/Paramedic Apprentice

Date of Death: February 9, 2007

Age: 29

Racheal Wilson was a beautiful woman who was loved and respected by all. Tragically, she lost her life in the line of duty on February 9, 2007, while in training at the Baltimore Fire Academy in Baltimore, Maryland, at the age of 29.

Racheal was born on December 27, 1977, in Pineville, Louisiana, to Virginia Wilson. She attended public school in Jena, Louisiana. Always smiling, her cheerful attitude and outgoing personality made many, many friends for Racheal. Everyone knew and enjoyed her smiling friendliness.

Racheal had a wonderful “I can do this” attitude. She loved a challenge and was involved in many different activities throughout her childhood and school years. With a strong determination, she pursued many interests. She moved to Baltimore, Maryland, in 1997, after graduating from high school.

Racheal was interested in becoming a firefighter or policewoman at a very early age, and began nurturing herself by working in administration with many departments in the City of Baltimore and the Vulcan Blazers, Inc. From there, her love for being a firefighter took off.

During her tenure at the academy in 2007, Racheal became well known with her peers and was always the one to try to assist anyone to do what needs to be done. Her motto was, “If I can do it, you can do it, too.” She wanted to make it safe for everyone. It was her passion to make sure her colleagues understood the risks that were associated with the jobs. Racheal said, “One day, I am going to be the fire marshal of the fire department.”

Racheal was a caring, friendly, reliable person, always smiling, and was full of fun. She was a very active member of the House of Judah and served in mission during her tenure there. She was a Christian woman who loved God, her family, and her community. Racheal had a beautiful voice, loved to sing, and was committed to helping others. She had a talent to help others and gave her life in the line of duty. We applaud her courage and dedication. We are assured that this loss will be felt by all of those who had the privilege of knowing Racheal during her earthly journey.

Racheal is survived by her son, Cameron Wilson; her daughter, Princess “PJ” Davis; her mother and stepfather, Virginia and Ambrose Slaughter; her brother, Broaderick Slaughter; her loving fiancé and best friend, Larry C. Davis, Jr.; and many loving friends.





# Remembering



## David A. Middleton

### Boston Fire Department — Massachusetts

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter

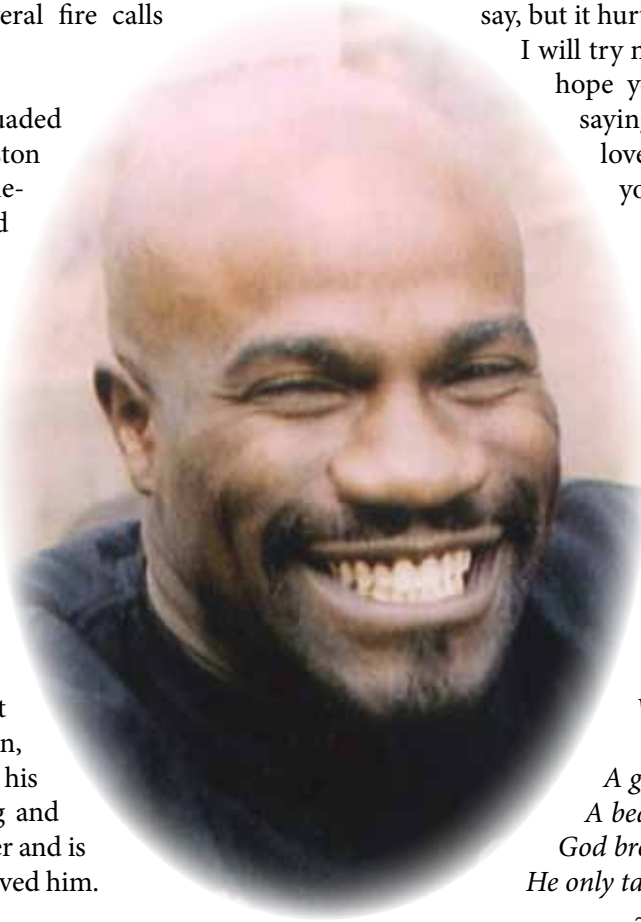
Date of Death: May 29, 2007

Age: 39

David Middleton suffered a fatal heart attack after responding to several fire calls during a 24-hour shift.

Nothing would have dissuaded David from joining the Boston Fire Department; it was something he had become obsessed with as a toddler. After high school, David attended Howard University before enlisting with the Army Reserve. In 1998, he realized his childhood dream and became a member of the Boston Fire Department, assigned to Engine 51 in Brighton. He was a member of Local 718.

David was a talented artist and was quite passionate about his art. He was a spirited man, full of life, and never without his big smile. David was a loving and devoted son, brother, and father and is missed by all who knew and loved him.



I don't know how to say all the things I want to say, but it hurts to think about him this way.

I will try my best in everything I do and hope you're looking down and still saying, "That's my boy." I'll always love you. As you would say, "See you later."

Your son,  
Amon

*The Lord saw you getting tired  
And a cure was not to be,  
So He put his arms around you  
And whispered,  
"Come with me"*

*With tearful eyes, we  
watched you suffer  
And saw you fade away,  
Although we loved you dearly,  
We could not make you stay.*

*A golden heart stopped beating,  
A beautiful smile at rest,  
God broke our hearts to prove  
He only takes the best.*

~Author unknown

Love always,  
Your big sister, Bridgetta Curry Ward



# Remembering

## Kelly L. Page

### City of Lowell Fire Department — Massachusetts

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: September 14, 2007

Age: 38

Kelly Page suffered a fatal heart attack after responding to numerous calls during a work shift.

Kelly loved three things: his family, friends, and the fire department. After a 13-year career in the Navy, Kelly joined the Lowell Fire Department in March 2002. Although only a firefighter for a short time, he had achieved a life long dream.

Kelly loved his wife, Katie, and three young daughters, Kyleigh, Kaelin, and Keara. He was a great supporter of all their endeavors. In addition, he coached all their sports, most importantly basketball and softball. He was a role model to many youth. Even though he had no sons, he found the time to coach in the Lowell Junior High Football program. Fitness was something he believed in

strongly. This was witnessed by his part-time job at Powerhouse Gym.

After joining the department, Kelly was honored with the recognition of 2003 Firefighter of the Year, for the attempted rescue of trapped victim, along with other firefighters. In addition, he was awarded 2003 Massachusetts Medal of Valor for that same rescue. Kelly was posthumously named the 2007 Lowell Firefighter of the Year.

Kelly was originally from Dalton, Georgia, but moved to Massachusetts in 1998 to raise his family. He was a big, strong guy with a gentle demeanor. He was a friend to all, and he knew everyone. Kelly genuinely loved children and was a fixture around the school where his wife, Katie, taught.

Kelly is survived by his wife, Katie, and daughters, Kyleigh, Kaelin, and Keara.





# Remembering



## John Eastman “Dawg” Lietzke

### Olivet Fire Department — Michigan

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: September 25, 2007

Age: 47

*M*y husband, John, was a wonderfully complex man. He was a loving husband; a wonderful father, stepfather and grandfather; a much loved son, brother, and uncle; and a truly loyal friend.

From all outward appearances, he was big, strong, and athletic: a man's man. But he was also gentle, loving, caring, and considerate. He was fun-loving, with a loud, infectious laugh. A big kid at heart, at times he could be downright goofy.

“His girls” were the center of John's world. When it came to family, he was a big softy. No matter how busy he was, he would always make time for his daughters' field-trips, concerts, athletic events, or coaching their softball team, and quality time with me.

Inside, “Dawg” was an adventurous spirit, willing to try just about anything. On his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, he learned to skydive. Together, we traveled extensively in and out of the country. His love for working out was apparent from his strength; he could bench press 280 pounds. An avid bowler, he had several 300 games, but was an even better golfer, consistently scoring in the mid to high 30s.



Working hard was a way of life for John. For 26 years, he was a plumber/pipefitter/welder, but his passion was firefighting. Originally, he joined the Olivet Volunteer Fire Department as a younger man, but was forced to quit when he moved out of the area. However, his desire to return to firefighting never diminished, and he often spoke of those experiences. Several years later, after returning to the area, he once again became a proud member of the OVFD.

On the night of September 25, 2007, John was responding to one of those emergency calls during a severe thunderstorm. Just after cresting a hill, on a dark country road, John struck a large tree spanning the road that had been knocked down by torrential rains and extremely high winds. He was killed instantly.

The world has lost a truly remarkable man. The men and women of Olivet Fire Department, John's family and his many, many friends were indeed fortunate to have known this man. The world is a much poorer place without him. John, we will always love and miss you.



# Remembering



## Peter G. "Pete" Neilson

### Kenockee Township Fire Department — Michigan

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter/Medical First Responder

Date of Death: December 17, 2007

Age: 74

When Pete was in high school his family moved to a farm in Columbia County, New York. Pete served on the Spencertown (NY) Fire Department until he left for college.

Pete studied agricultural engineering at Cornell University, where he and his wife met. He was side-tracked from that career by an ROTC commitment and served 21 years in the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps in Maryland, Alabama, Germany, Korea, Vietnam, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His last military assignment brought us, with our two sons, to Michigan, where he worked in research and development.

After retiring from the military in 1976, Pete returned to agricultural engineering. He worked five years for Massey Ferguson and bought a farm in St. Clair County, Michigan. There he joined the Kenockee Township Fire Department and began another career of 25 years. Pete loved the fire department, and I learned to sleep through all the machines "talking" and toning out just outside the bedroom door. Whenever the tones went off, he would respond. Over the years, Pete served in various ranks, including chief for six years. He was president of the St. Clair County Firefighters Association in 1992.

Pete was instrumental in the development of HAZMAT classes, in conjunction with the Department of Natural

Resources, to instruct firefighters in safety. He organized presentations during Fire Safety Week for the local school. For several years, Pete was the number one run maker of the department. In spite of health problems in 2007, he still made 75% of the department's 200 runs.

Pete received many department and county honors, as well as being awarded Fire Officer of the Year by the State of Michigan in 2001. When he was 65, he tried resigning from the fire department. He wasn't happy and soon was back making runs at all hours. From the time that he was first on the scene and saved the life of a premature infant who had stopped breathing, he never talked of resigning again.

Pete enjoyed using the military surplus systems to obtain furniture and equipment to outfit the fire hall and community center. His last acquisition was put into service after he had passed on: a surplus Air Force refueling tanker, which has been fitted out to the fire department's needs as a water tanker.

On December 17, 2007, Pete responded to a medical emergency. While counseling the family of the victim, he sat down and stopped breathing. His brother firefighters and the ambulance crew worked on him, but to no avail. He will long be missed by his family and friends and the fire service.







# Remembering



## Timothy L. Sanborn

### Clinton Area Fire and Rescue — Michigan

Classification: Volunteer  
Rank: Firefighter  
Date of Death: June 22, 2007  
Age: 56

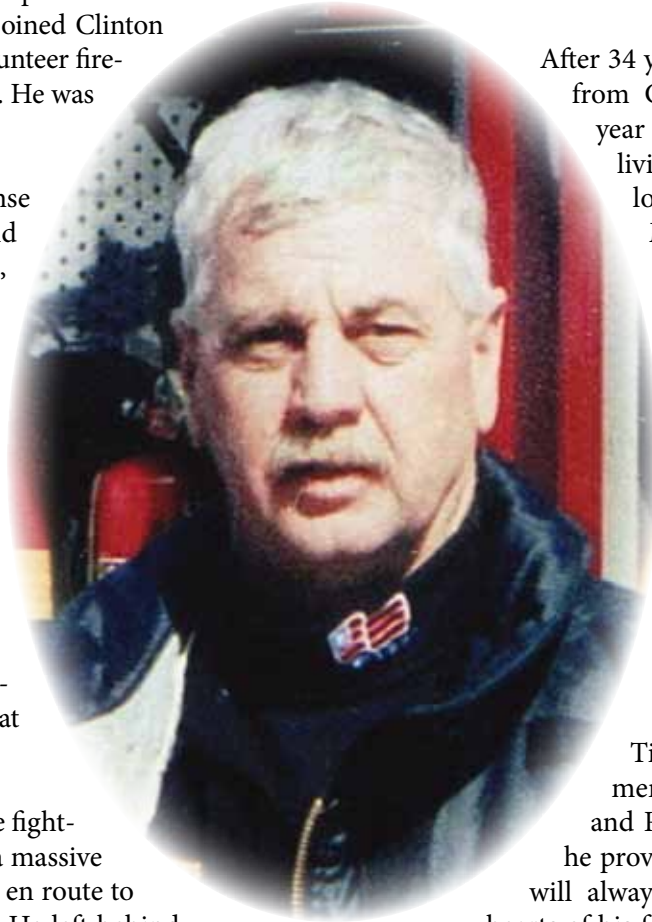
Tim's firefighting career started in the early 1980s with the Birch Run Fire Department in Birch Run, Michigan. In 2002, he joined Clinton Area Fire and Rescue as a volunteer firefighter in St. John's, Michigan. He was a third generation firefighter.

Tim was known for his sense of humor, hard work, and dedication to his department, job, and his family. He was the kind of person that you could never forget, always made you smile, and was never at a loss for words.

When he was going through his pre-certification classes, his firefighting brothers and sisters dubbed him "Grandpa," because of his gray hair and being the oldest in the class. He took great pride in his new name.

Sadly, on June 22, 2007, while fighting a house fire, he suffered a massive heart attack. He passed away en route to the hospital at the age of 56. He left behind his wife of 31 years, Marie; and three daughters,

Shannon (Tim) Freeland, Lisa (Derek) Smith, and Amy Sanborn.



After 34 years of service, he had retired from General Motors the previous year and was looking forward to living the "retired life," playing lots of golf, hunting, traveling to Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and spending time with his wife, who had also just recently retired.

In July 2007, at the annual Clinton Area Fire and Rescue Steak Fry, Tim was named Firefighter of the Year for 2006-2007 by his fellow firefighters, for his outstanding courage, bravery, and dedication to serve and protect.

Tim was very proud to be a member of the Clinton Area Fire and Rescue and of the service that he provided to his community. There will always be an empty place in the hearts of his family, friends, and fellow firefighters. Tim was and will always be our hero.



# Remembering



## Joseph Torkos

### Detroit Fire Department — Michigan

Classification: Career

Rank: Fire Engine Operator

Date of death: February 7, 2007

Age: 47

On February 7, 2007, Engine 17, responding to an arson fire with its lights and sirens on, was struck by a speeding SUV. Joe was ejected from the cab and pinned underneath the rear dual tires of the fire engine and died a couple minutes later. Joe's last words were, "Tell my wife and daughter I love them."

Joe was a man of honor and great morals, a great husband, and an even greater father to two beautiful and lively girls, today one and three years old. What a privilege to be able to spend 14 years with this man!

Joe loved to travel to new places. He loved to be around people and have people around him. He had the greatest smile. He loved the rush of adrenaline but, at the same time, he was the most cautious man. Joe had high work ethics. His parents emigrated from Slovakia when Joe was about six. Even as a little boy, he would help his parents to make it in the new land. He loaded his sleds with newspapers and distributed them early in the morning before he headed for school.

But firefighting was his calling. Before making it a career, Joe volunteered in the city of Taylor, Michigan, while completing a degree in engineering. I never had a doubt about his decision to be a firefighter.

A quote from a special tribute by Michigan's Governor describes Joe very well:

*Edward F. Croker, the legendary chief of the NYFD in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, once said, "When a man becomes a fireman, his greatest act of bravery has been accomplished. What he does after that is all in the line of work."*



*Joseph Torkos was one of those firefighters. And he was in that line of work - responding to a fire - when he was taken from us. At six-foot five, Torkos was seen as a gentle giant, with a great disposition. He was described as a quiet, kind and beautiful person. He was known as much for being a gentleman as for his love of fighting fires. The fact that he was brave goes almost without saying. After all, Joseph Torkos chose to be a fireman. The next twelve years were all in the line of work.*

*Someone once said, "All men are created equal, then a few become firemen." Joseph Torkos was one of those few. Now Joseph Torkos has moved on to join a new fraternity, the ranks of the Fallen Brothers.*

*We call them heroes. They call it just doing their jobs. They chose to be firefighters... Bless them all.*

# Remembering

## Jeffrey Jeans

### Eudora Fire Department — Mississippi

Classification: Volunteer  
Rank: Firefighter/EMT  
Date of Death: May 11, 2007  
Age: 46

Jeffrey “JJ” Jeans suffered a fatal heart attack while preparing for a training class at the fire department. He had participated in strenuous physical training and work at the station shortly before his death.

A 25-year veteran volunteer firefighter, he was DeSoto County’s first African American paramedic and had also worked as a paid ambulance driver for the county since 1996. Coworkers said JJ touched countless lives in his years of service with the county.

His fellow firefighters remembered JJ’s strong work ethic and his history of playing firehouse pranks. His fire chief

described JJ as his “right hand” and said he could count on him to do whatever was needed. He was always building something, repairing something, or cleaning something.

He was working on a degree in medical law and would have graduated in July 2007.

Jeffrey Jeans is survived by his young son, his mother, his brother, and his grandmother.

He was just a good guy. He cared about people. He never knew a stranger. He could make you laugh even when you didn’t feel like laughing.



*Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.*

— Robert F. Kennedy



# Remembering

## Jeremy W. Wach

### Wymore Fire & Rescue Department — Nebraska

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: November 5, 2007

Age: 31

Jeremy Wayne Wach was killed in the early morning hours of November 5, 2007. He and other members of the Wymore and Blue Springs Volunteer Fire Departments responded to a call for a house fire. Shortly after Jeremy and two other firemen entered the house, the roof collapsed, trapping him.

Jeremy joined the Wymore Department in the spring of 2003. He was so excited to become a member, as it was a lifelong dream of his. He loved the thought of being able to help others and the community. He responded to every fire and rescue call that he could. He took every call very seriously, and he loved the adrenaline rush. More than once, our plans were changed when a call came out; that's how dedicated he was.

Jeremy was a big man with an even bigger heart. He felt his duty was to help serve and protect all others. His full-time job was as a Gage County sheriff's deputy and jail director. He graduated from the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center as a certified law enforcement officer in April 2005. He had wanted to be a law enforcement officer his entire life and was so proud to get the opportunity. He was dedicated to his job, which included unpredictable hours and being on call 24/7.

Jeremy loved people and being able to help people. He considered all the members of the fire department and the sheriff's office to be his extended family. He would do anything and everything for his friends and family. He was willing to help others in any way possible.

Jeremy enjoyed hunting, fishing, watching NASCAR and football, cooking and baking, and spending time with his family and friends, most importantly with his two young sons, Joseph and Matthew. He loved teaching them new things and helping them experience the world. Jeremy and I got to spend five wonderful years together, and he made every moment absolutely memorable.

Throughout Jeremy's life and career, he encountered numerous people and touched the lives of so many of them. His family still hears stories or receives notes about the wonderful things he did for others. He truly lived every moment of his life as though it could be his last, and he lived his life for others.

Jeremy is survived by his wife, Melissa; sons, Joseph and Matthew; his mother, Debbie; brother, Jake; stepbrothers, Ron and Rick; as well as a large extended family and many friends. We all feel so blessed to have had him in our lives. We miss him greatly and love him deeply. He has always been our hero!





# Remembering



## John W. Broom-Smith, Jr.

### Seaside Heights Fire Department — New Jersey

Classification: Volunteer  
Rank: Probationary Firefighter  
Date of Death: February 4, 2007  
Age: 44

John Broom-Smith suffered a fatal heart attack after responding to a fire call earlier in the day. A member of the Seaside Heights Ocean Rescue Team, he graduated from the Ocean County Fire Academy just two nights before his death. He served with the department for less than a year.

A lifelong resident of the South Seaside Park area, John was a legend in the local surfer community.

Known to friends as “JB,” he graduated from Central Regional High School and worked as a self-employed auto technician in Toms River.

He is survived by his wife and daughter.

John knew how to make people laugh. He excelled at what he did and had a blast while he did it. He lived every moment to the fullest.



*Don't waste life in doubts and fears; spend yourself on the work before you, well assured that the right performance of this hour's duties will be the best preparation for the hours and ages that will follow it.*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

# Remembering

## Stephen R. Dembski

### Fire Department of Ridgefield Park — New Jersey

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: July 15, 2007

Age: 41

Steve Dembski died of a massive heart attack following a structure fire in the neighboring town of Bogota.

Steve joined the Ridgefield Park Volunteer Fire Department as a junior firefighter in 1983 while in high school. Following graduation, Steve attended and graduated from Jersey City State University, majoring in fine art photography while continuing his active membership in the fire department.

As a firefighter, Steve took the lead in completing required and optional training courses, including: Firefighter I, II, III, Company and Department Officer Training, and NIMS. In the six-company department, Steve established a department Air-Pak inventory, maintenance, and evaluation program which served as a model for other departments in the area seeking compliance with NFPA and OSHA regulations. He also developed a flow chart to enable officers to track equipment and keep in compliance with equipment testing requirements. When his fire company was authorized to develop specifications for the purchase of a new aerial ladder truck and equipment, Steve was actively involved in the process.

Steve served many years as a company line officer prior to being elected assistant department chief in 2001. He was elected chief of department in 2005 and again in 2006 and declined to seek re-election for 2007 in order to spend more time with his growing family and recently purchased home.

Steve and his wife, Nancy, were married in 1990. They have two sons, Raymond, age 12, and Kyle, age 2. Raymond is active in local youth sports programs, and Steve was a Little League baseball coach. Steve attended all his son's school and community activity programs.

Steve was employed by Hoffmann-LaRoche, where he was a manager and directed a 20-person department with responsibility for developing the company's public outreach programs. Utilizing his artistic and photography talents, Steve traveled to many places to photograph world and national figures. Among his prized possessions are signed photos to him from Presidents Ford and Bush, Sr. Steve's artistic talents are also in evidence with the design of his fire company logo, which appears on the apparatus, letterhead, and clothing.

Highly respected by his fellow firefighters and his community, Steve had a well earned reputation as one who could offer keen insight into whatever situation was at hand. His comments were thoughtful and incisive. He understood the dynamics of a situation and respected and appreciated the differing viewpoints, as he skillfully advocated the agenda of the fire department or organization he represented.

Words cannot fully describe this valiant young man, whose character, leadership, and integrity were recognized by all. His impact is lasting, and his spirit remains with us.













# Remembering



## Walter C. Fagan, Jr.

### East Greenwich Township Fire/Rescue — New Jersey

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: December 29, 2007

Age: 48

Walt was born and raised in New Jersey. As a teenager, while living in Forked River, he began his service to the community by joining the Lacey Township Ambulance Squad. His family later moved to Mt. Royal, where he joined the East Greenwich Ambulance Squad.

In 2000, he joined the Mt. Royal Volunteer Fire Company. He took part in as many aspects of firehouse business and answered every call that he possibly could. Being a firefighter was becoming a passion. Walt was elected as a trustee and also the chief engineer, jobs he took very seriously.

As the chief engineer, he had the task of overseeing the maintenance of the trucks. He kept the equipment in good working order. Walt knew how important it was to have everything ready to go when the pager went off. He couldn't get out of the house fast enough to get to the station. He was usually the one driving to the scene, and he stayed with the engine, checking the gauges and dials to be sure that all ran smoothly. His brothers could count on him to do his job.

Along with his responsibilities as chief engineer, Walt became the station's "go to" guy. Any time, night or day, you could call him, and he would be at the firehouse,

taking care of business. He would drop whatever he was doing to lend a hand. Walt loved being a firefighter.



Walt's first love was family. He enjoyed outings and get-togethers with all of us, spending as much time as possible with those he cared for most. He also had a lot of friends, folks who liked and respected him and whom he felt the same about. His second love was riding his motorcycle. Whenever the weather was favorable, he would be out on the road. He belonged to a local chapter of the Red Knights Motorcycle Club, and he rode in some charitable events.

Walt was always doing something for someone else. In the winter, he would be out in the snow, plowing people's driveways or parking lots, day or night. He made repairs to people's cars and houses, or did just about anything to help someone in need. Usually he asked for nothing in return.

In December 2007, Walt suffered a fatal heart attack while en route to a call. His brothers did what they could to help him until he was taken to the hospital by EMS. He passed away in the emergency room surrounded by family and friends. His absence is deeply felt by all, and his shoes will be difficult to fill.



# Remembering

## Theodore J. Abriel Sr.

### Albany Fire Department — New York

Classification: Career

Rank: Acting Lieutenant

Date of Death: February 19, 2007

Age: 44

Theodore J. Abriel, 44, died in the line of duty on Monday, February 19, 2007. Ted spent twenty years with the Albany Fire Department and last served as acting lieutenant of the rescue squad. He was a dedicated public servant and had tremendous passion for being a firefighter and member of the Albany Fire Department family.

Ted comes from several generations of Albany firefighters, spanning over two hundred years. His father, Battalion Chief Warren Abriel, and his brothers, Deputy Chief Warren Abriel Jr. and retired Captain Henry Abriel, are also part of this proud tradition of fire service.

More than just a firefighter, Ted had a passion for his family and

friends. He is survived by his wife, Linda; three sons, Christopher, Matthew, and Theodore Jr.; and his beloved daughter, Erin. He spent countless weekends coaching baseball and watching his three boys play in football games.

Ted was an avid New York Giants football fan, known to travel to as many games as he could. He was known as the “party” of his neighborhood, always including everyone for weekend barbecues. Hundreds came at Christmas time to view his holiday light display.

Ted will be forever in our hearts and prayers. His memory will never be forgotten. We will always remember to follow the rainbow; he will be waiting on the other side.



*I have no ambition in this world but one, and that is to be a firefighter. The position may, in the eyes of some, appear to be a lowly one; but we who know the work which the firefighter has to do believe that his is a noble calling.*

— Edward F. Croker

# Remembering

## Robert C. Beddia

### Fire Department of New York — New York

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: August 18, 2007

Age: 53

Robert Beddia was born September 7, 1953. As Bobby would say, he was “in the year of his birth” when he died on August 18, 2007, at the age of 53, in the line of duty, fighting a fire at the Deutsche Bank Building, a building that remained as part of the aftermath of 9/11.

A lifelong Staten Islander, he spent his personal and professional life in service to the citizens of New York City. Bobby was known for his smile, his spirit and kind, easygoing, “nothing is that big a deal” attitude. He made friends easily and never turned away a person in need. His generosity is legendary and lives on in the stories told by those who knew him.

As the senior man at his house, he was a mentor to the new hires, as well as the “go-to” guy for guidance. His easygoing personality, flashing smile, and generous nature made him the person that all people easily gravitated towards.



As a travel enthusiast, he often served as a goodwill ambassador for the FDNY. In the spring of 2007, he traveled to Australia to participate in the World Police and Fire Games. Bobby enjoyed life—the outdoors, the people, the celebrations. His heroism in battling the Deutsche Bank fire was emblematic of his bold spirit; for his steadfast commitment to his job, and to his mission to preserve the safety of New Yorkers and his colleagues.

Although Bobby never had children of his own, he was the uncle, godfather, and friend that all the family children wanted to be with. He was always a kid at heart.

Bobby’s career as a New York City firefighter began in October 1983, and he loved it. Bobby never considered retiring; he never wanted to be away from the neighborhood that he had become an integral part of—his second home: Engine 24/Ladder 5, New York City.

# Remembering

## Anthony T. Catania

### Middle Island Fire Department — New York

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Fire Commissioner and Safety Officer

Date of Death: February 2, 2007

Age: 76

Safety Officer, Ex-Chief, and Commissioner Anthony Catania suffered a cerebral vascular incident while responding to an EMS alarm.

Anthony was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, friend, community member, and member of the Middle Island Volunteer Fire Department on Long Island. He also served with the American Red Cross Meals on Wheels program. After serving in the Marines, he had a prestigious career at the State Bank of Long Island, where he climbed the corporate ladder to become the vice president before he retired.

Anthony transferred from North Massapequa Volunteer Fire Department to Middle Island Volunteer Fire Department in 1997, when he and his wife, Dorothy, moved to the Middle Island Fire District. Since joining the department, he held such positions as fund drive chairman, blood drive chairman, scholarship committee chairman, Eagle Company 1 secretary and treasurer, Class A Firefighter, safety officer, department trustee (1998-2000), and fire district commissioner (2001-2007).

Anthony served in the North Massapequa Volunteer Fire Department from 1969 to 1997. During his tenure, he became deputy chief in 1981 and chief of the depart-

ment in 1988. Anthony was also an EMT for the department.

Anthony's compassion for helping others is a gift that will always keep on giving. He would always be the first person on all lists to sign up when any department company or committee needed help. He would assist any member in need with personal or fire department issues. His kind and generous personality would lift spirits throughout the department and the community.

Not only was Anthony an exemplary fireman, but he served as an example to us all when it came to his family. He always spoke wonderful of his loving wife, Dorothy; his three children, Lisa, Donna, and Luke; and his four grandchildren, Marissa, Christopher, Luke Anthony, and Aidan. There was nothing that Anthony would not do for them, and they always came first. He also had a great passion for animals. He was kind and gentle to every creature. He would loyally feed the local cats at his back door and, during the winter months, shovel a path out from his back door for the cats.

Anthony's unselfish and enthusiastic attitude was one that inspired everyone around him. His kind heart and loving personality will forever be in our hearts.







# Remembering



## Joseph P. Graffagnino

### Fire Department of New York — New York

Classification: Career

Rank: Lieutenant

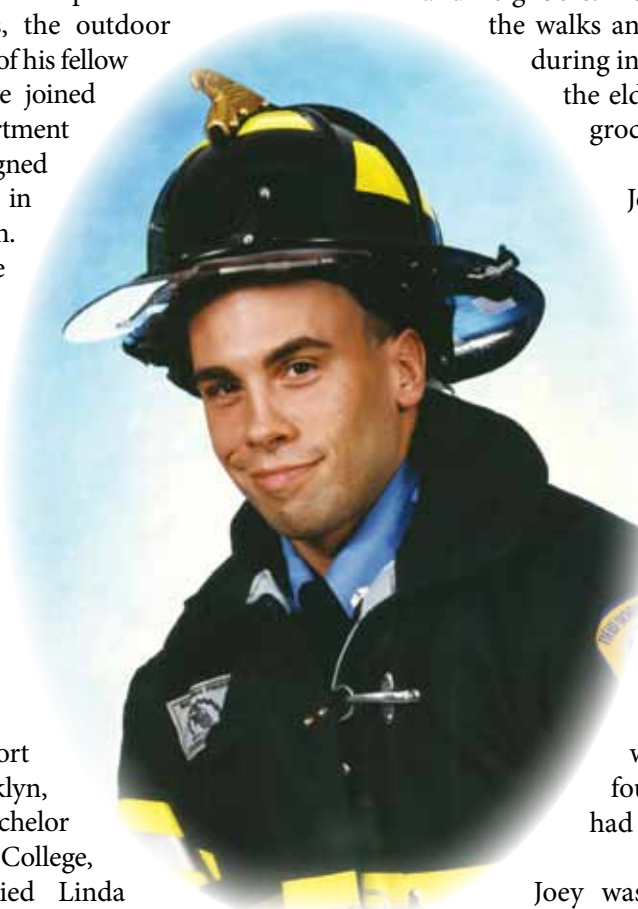
Date of Death: August 18, 2007

Age: 33

Joey always loved the fire department. He enjoyed the friendships, the outdoor type of work, the camaraderie of his fellow firefighters, and the food. Joe joined the New York City Fire Department on May 9, 1999. He was assigned to Ladder 5/Engine 24 in Greenwich Village, Manhattan. During September 11, 2001, he was assigned to Ladder 149/Engine 284 in Brooklyn. His engine arrived at the World Trade Center shortly after the collapse of the second tower. He lost 11 brothers from his original fire house. Most of his off time was spent at Ground Zero searching for survivors and later for remains. He was awarded the 9/11 Survivors Medal.

Joey graduated from Fort Hamilton High School, Brooklyn, New York, and later with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hunter College, Manhattan, NY. Joe married Linda Tronolone on November 15, 2002. Their daughter, Mia Rose, was born on July 24, 2003, and their son, Joseph, on November 30, 2006. Joey passed the lieutenant's test and was waiting to be appointed.

Joey enjoyed fishing, painting, drawing, and body building. He was Mr. Fort Hamilton High School 'Light Weight,' Class of 1991. He tended bar at the Salty Dog Bar & Restaurant, a local tavern that fostered a fire department theme. Joey always had a warm smile, a great sense of humor, and was always helping friends



and neighbors. He thought nothing of shoveling the walks and driveways of neighbors, and during inclement weather he often asked the elderly in the area if they needed groceries.

Joey died on August 18, 2007, while battling a seven-alarm fire at the Deutsche Bank building in lower Manhattan. The building was under demolition and asbestos removal. The stairwells and windows were covered with heavy wood planking, and were wrapped in plastic. Unknown at the time was an operational internal fan that drew the fire and smoke downward. Joe and a fellow fireman from the same house died, and another was wounded. Over 235 firemen fought that blaze, and the FDNY had 27 "maydays."

Joey was promoted posthumously to the rank of lieutenant. He was "Principal for a Day" at Public School 164. He was named Fireman of the Year 2007 by the local Community Board 10 and was the recipient of the New York City Council Proclamation Italian American Heritage and Culture in October 2007.

Joe was a loving father to his children, Mia Rose and Joseph, a devoted husband to Linda, and a dedicated friend to anyone he met. Joey was loved and admired by everyone, and he will be sorely missed.

# Remembering

## Joseph E. Piazzzi

### Briarcliff Manor Fire Department — New York

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Deputy Chief

Date of Death: May 16, 2007

Age: 76

Joseph E. Piazzzi was a beloved father, grandfather, brother, uncle and friend.

A 36-year member of the Briarcliff Manor Fire Department, Joe was a deputy chief and fire police captain. He served with distinction as an active member of the Westchester County Parade Judges Association.

Before joining Briarcliff Manor, Joe was a member for 23 years of Truck 1 of the Mount Vernon Fire Department, which he joined in 1948 at age 18. Joe held all the line offices at Truck 1, serving as captain and later as president of the company. In 1967, he received the Arthur T. Woods Memorial Award for outstanding and unselfish service.

In 1971, Joe joined the Briarcliff Manor Fire Department. He was chief of the department from 1983 to 1985. Joe served continuously as a volunteer fireman for almost 60 years.

As an officer, Joe earned special praise for leadership in firematic training. He expanded training and drill programs, and many members of the company credited his training program as the basis for the company's consistently fine work. Joe believed that effective firefighting should never result in an injury, and he promoted this belief by using his long experience to better train firefighters.

For many years, Joe served as a delegate to the Firemen's Association of the State of New York and a director of the Westchester County Volunteer Firefighters Association. He honed his own skills by attending numerous firematic seminars and conferences. He advocated for, and took great satisfaction in, the establishment of a county-wide firefighter training center.

Joe was a devoted husband to Catherine, who passed away in 1994. He was the proud father of Debra Ann and the doting grandfather of Cassidy and Adam. He retired after many years with Con Edison. He was a naval reservist for over a decade. He was a skilled auto mechanic and handyman, a master gardener and a great chef.

Joe died as he lived. He suffered a fatal heart attack after serving his neighbors and his community during a long day of fire calls due to severe storms. His friend and fellow firefighter Henry Campbell wrote, "For the young people in the fire service today looking for someone to emulate, Joe Piazzzi is that person. Don't be afraid to join fire service organizations and get involved. The fire service will always need more Joe Piazzzis to sustain itself, so go ahead and follow in his footsteps and continue the good work that he accomplished. You will feel good about yourself, your department, and the fire service while making your community a better place."





# Remembering



## Daniel F. Pujdak

### Fire Department of New York — New York

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: June 21, 2007

Age: 23

Daniel Francis Pujdak came into the world on September 6, 1983. He attended St. Cecilia's School in Brooklyn, where he played basketball. However, Daniel's true sports passion could clearly be seen on the pitcher's mound, from Little League on through to his high school team at St. Francis Prep. It was team experiences that influenced his desire to be a member of his dream team: the FDNY.

Fitness was a constant for Daniel, not only for his own health and wellbeing, but also to prepare him for his goal to be a firefighter. He attended SUNY Cortland and majored in fitness science with a concentration in kinesiology. Daniel loved to help people; his ideal was to be both a firefighter and a personal trainer during his free time.

He graduated from college in May 2005 and entered the Fire Academy that September. Daniel was assigned to Ladder 146 in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. He loved his job. Daniel would often arrive for his tour up to two hours early in order to relieve his fellow firefighters.

In his spare time, Daniel was a personal trainer at the Greenpoint YMCA. After suffering a devastating car accident, Rene B., a colleague at the "Y," trained under Daniel, hoping to get back what she had lost before the

injury. "Danny understood better than any physical therapist I had worked with after my accident. He understood it was about more than my hip and my back and my leg. He knew it was about my spirit, mind and body, and he coached me and pushed me on all those levels," recalls Rene.

The spirit of adventure was an integral part of Daniel's lifestyle. He took up rock climbing, accompanying his older brother David, a seasoned climber. The triathlon was his next target as he seriously trained for a race to be held at the end of that summer with a planned marathon for the following year.

On June 21, 2007, Daniel's life came to a sudden halt at the mere age of 23, when he fell from a four-story building while battling a blaze not far from his firehouse. The entire city mourned the loss of such a wonderful young man.

Daniel's younger brother Matthew, a recent addition to the FDNY, now proudly bears Daniel's #8655 on his helmet as his own.

We will miss Daniel's infectious smile, his irrepressible laugh, his good natured antics, his genuine care for people, and his endless devotion to his love, Vanessa; his family at home; and his brothers at the firehouse.





# Remembering

## Edgar H. Scott

### Menands Fire Company #1 — New York

Classification: Volunteer  
Rank: Fire Police Captain  
Date of Death: April 3, 2007  
Age: 75

Edgar Scott was born October 11, 1931, in Albany, New York, to Gordon E. and Pearl H. Scott. He married Beverly Ball on August 7, 1954, and had two sons, Craig H. and Douglas D. Scott. He is also survived by grandsons Kyle M. and Evan E. Scott.

He was a Navy veteran of the Korean War, a 49-year member of the American Legion, and a 37-year member of the Colonie, New York, Elks Lodge.

“Scotty” was a life member and past secretary and president of the Menands Fire Company #1. He was a warden and then chief fire inspector for the village

of Menands for 16 years. He was also a founding member and president of the former Riverside Volunteer Ambulance. He received two “Fireman of the Year” awards and one President’s Award.

He worked as an insurance agent for more than 40 years and was president of E.B. Cantine, Inc., when he retired in 1996. He was on committees for the 50<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations for the Village of Menands.

He was killed in an accident while responding to a call as captain of the Menands Fire Company fire police, on April 3, 2007. Scotty is missed by many.



*I provide a faceless, nameless service to a community that rarely knows how much they need me. If I am called from a sound sleep to sacrifice my life attempting to save the life or property of someone I do not know, I will do so without regret.*

— Jon McDuffie



# Remembering



## Gerald "Jerry" Donley, Jr.

**Swepsonville Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. — North Carolina**

Classification: Career

Rank: Deputy Chief

Date of Death: August 8, 2007

Age: 45

Jerry was voted in for full membership on March 12, 1979, as a volunteer and eventually became a full-time paid firefighter at Swepsonville Fire Department. The go-to man and highly respected at the department, firefighters came to him for advice, both fire related and personal. He was known for speaking his mind. That's just the way he was. Either you liked him or you didn't, but most did. He knew his stuff when it came to a fire scene, and firefighters trusted to the fullest that he would not get them hurt.

He worked part-time at Newton's Fire & Safety for several years, traveling to fire departments across North and South Carolina doing repairs, upgrades, and yearly testing on Air Packs. He left Newton's to start a poultry operation with his son. He enjoyed this work and was able to be with his family more often.

Fitness was a big deal to him, and he worked out in the gym every day. A charter member of the Red Knights Firefighters Motorcycle Club, any day he was not working and it was warm enough, he was out riding.

He enjoyed downtime at home, watching NASCAR, the Atlanta Braves, or the UNC Tarheels. He loved to be outside, and there was "always something to do" out there. He tried his hand at riding and showing horses,

his way of connecting with our daughter. He liked to have a party, spending time with our friends and coworkers outside of work. Being the life of the party was always his goal, and he usually accomplished it.

He put up a big "Mr. Tough Guy" front, but underneath it all was a generous man with a heart of gold. He rarely let anyone other than me see that side. He loved his family, especially the grandkids, both under a year old when he died. He was my best friend, my whole world, and my biggest fan. He kept me going and made me believe in myself again. We could talk for hours, tell the same stories over and over, but it never got old.

Jerry is survived by his wife, Traci; children, Christina and Justin Sr.; grandchildren, Justin Jr. and Lydia; parents, Gerald Sr. & Sylvia; sister, Debbie Kerley (Leon); brother, Russell (Lisa); nieces and nephews; members of the Swepsonville Fire Department; and a multitude of friends and coworkers.

On August 7, 2007, he was on shift at Swepsonville, and I visited him before I had to go to work. He ran an EMT call late that night. After returning to the station, he went to sleep and never woke up. His cause of death was ischemic heart disease.





# Remembering



## Todd Whitney Hage

### Wesley Chapel Volunteer Fire Department — North Carolina

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: August 11, 2007

Age: 42

Todd lost his life last summer in the line of duty with the Wesley Chapel Volunteer Fire Department, near Charlotte, North Carolina. Responding to a fire alarm, the pumper he was driving left the country road and overturned, hitting a tree. He left a wife and two young daughters.

Todd was “born to serve,” according to one of his former Navy captains. He added, “If it wasn’t his country and his government and his Navy, it was his community — and he died serving his community.” While serving on the USS Conyngham and USS Yorktown, his commanding officers said Todd was one of the most professional officers serving under their command. It was on his deployment on the Conyngham in 1990 that a disastrous fuel fire at sea resulted in the fatality of one of his best friends. The ship was saved at sea but scuttled later. At the age of 25, Todd supervised the arrangements for a military funeral for his buddy.

After serving his country for thirteen years as a Lt. Commander in the Navy, Todd and his family moved to Weddington, North Carolina, where he worked as a financial analyst in the banking industry. Being one



of the first residences in their new community, it didn’t take long for Todd to begin organizing the neighborhood and serve on the many neighborhood committees. Those who spent time with Todd knew him as a great father, friend and patriot — one who was always giving of himself to others. Todd was a role model and an inspiration to many of them. His neighbors acknowledged that Todd was a man who cared so much about others and who both served his country and his neighborhood. As a symbol of his philosophy, the neighborhood recently has erected a tall flagpole in front of the clubhouse with a huge American flag in honor of Todd, and a plaque with one of his favorite sayings: “If Not Us, Then Who?”

“If Not Us, Then Who?” When asked why he served as a volunteer firefighter at Wesley Chapel, Todd responded, “If not us, then who?” This motto now appears on all fire apparatus, t-shirts etc. in the department. He joined the WCVFD in 2006 and became Rookie of the Year eighteen months later. He was SO proud of this award. Yes indeed, Todd loved the fire department but, more importantly, loved the firefighters who give so much of themselves. We are proud of our hero son, brother, husband, and father. We all miss him dearly!





# Remembering



## Glenn W. Miller

### Whispering Pines Fire Department — North Carolina

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: August 17, 2007

Age: 34

Glenn Williams Miller of Sterling Heights, Michigan, and Aberdeen, Wilmington, and Whispering Pines, North Carolina, was born February 17, 1973, in Mt. Clemens, Michigan. He is the beloved son of Debby and Jerry Miller of Whispering Pines. He passed away August 17, 2007, following a massive heart attack.

As a youngster, Glenn was a Boy Scout and a local baseball team member. Baseball was his favorite sport, and he loved to watch and play even as an adult. Glenn was always faithful to his favorite team, the Detroit Tigers. Upon graduation from high school, he entered the U.S. Marine Corps in 1991. He was very proud to wear the uniform and truly had a warrior's heart to help others. Glenn was stationed at bases throughout the U.S. and was also deployed overseas to Cuba and Okinawa, Japan.

After an honorable discharge from the military at Camp LeJeune, Glenn decided to remain in North Carolina. He attended community college before transferring to the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Glenn was very intelligent, a quick learner, deep thinker, and an avid reader. He studied business management, psychology, philosophy, and comparative religions. He earned a college degree in psychology.

While in North Carolina, Glenn was the assistant manager for Pizza Hut in Aberdeen and Wilmington, head

of security at Plantation Golf Course in Pinehurst, and a Level 2 Asphalt Quality Control Lab Tech for APAC Company in Wilmington. His great work ethic, honesty, sense of humor, likeable personality, and integrity were apparent to his employers and coworkers.

True to his nature of being a faithful member of a brotherhood, Glenn was inducted into St. John's #1 Masonic Blue Lodge, York Rite, Scottish Rite, Sudan Shriners, and the Knight Masons. He successfully completed the 32<sup>nd</sup> degree. Glenn actively supported the Masonic Children's Home and the Marine's "Toys for Tots."

Glenn's most recent desire was to become a firefighter and a paramedic to be able to help save people's lives. He had already earned his CDL license to be able to drive emergency vehicles. He was a volunteer firefighter with the Whispering Pines Fire Department and was a graduate of the Regional Fire Training Academy in Fayetteville, NC. Glenn's sincere determination and perseverance helped him achieve his goals in life.

Glenn was a very special, humble, loyal, loving man. Our hearts are truly breaking in his absence. We will never, ever be the same without his sparkling blue eyes smiling at us and him giving us big hugs!!! As Glenn would say: "Semper Fi" = "Always Faithful."





# Remembering



## Nemeth F. Sanders

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

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter/Fire Equipment Operator

Date of Death: July 27, 2007

Age: 43

Nemeth Fitzhugh Lee Sanders died on Friday, July 27, 2007, in a motor vehicle accident, returning home from pump training school in the North Carolina mountains with the North Carolina Forestry Service.

Nemeth always excelled at whatever he set out to accomplish. He earned the highest honor in the Boy Scouts of America by achieving the Eagle Scout Award. He was a certified crane operator with designations in TSS and TLL. He also had his CDLs, of which he obtained the highest grade point average the school had ever recorded in the course. This is not surprising, because he had been driving large trucks his entire life. He was an all around “jack of all trades.”

Nemeth believed in living each day to the fullest. He was devoted to his family and friends. He loved spending time with his children. He enjoyed being outside and expressed that we should not live in such a hurry that we overlook the beauty that surrounds us. He chose careers that would keep him caring for the land. He farmed for over 20 years before joining the North Carolina Forestry Service as an equipment operator.

Nemeth was truly an outdoorsman. He enjoyed everything that would keep him outside. He was a member of

several hunting clubs. He loved the sportsmanship in hunting and fishing. He often would take his son, Matthew, along with him. He enjoyed going on canoe trips, weekend camping trips, riding horses on trails (sharing this love with his daughter, Amanda), riding four-wheelers, and cooking (especially on the grill). He liked to look through cookbooks and watch cooking shows to get new ideas to try, as well as coming up with his own creations. Still today, people are requesting his “secret recipe” for potatoes.

Nemeth had a heart of gold. He had a sense of humor that could make you laugh and bring a smile to your face regardless of the circumstance.

He could take any negative situation, turn it around and have you laughing before it was over. Nemeth fell off his horse during a trail ride in May 2007 and fractured his right wrist.

During the time he wore the cast, he would refer to his arm as a “broken wing.” He was always willing to help, offering advice or just being supportive.

Nemeth will be forever missed by his children, Amanda and Matthew Sanders; his mother, Della Sanders; his sister, Lori Sanders; fiancée, Gwen P. Rigsby; co-workers and friends. Oh, that we would be able to look into his beautiful, penetrating blue eyes just one more time!



# Remembering

## Michael D. Stanfield

### Anderson Township Volunteer Fire Department — North Carolina

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Captain

Date of Death: September 9, 2007

Age: 30

Michael “Dean” Stanfield was killed in a motorcycle accident after responding to a previous motor vehicle accident. He served with the Anderson Township Volunteer Fire Department for twelve years.

Raised on a tobacco farm, he worked as an HVAC technician for the Carrboro-Chapel Hill School System. He was a member of Kerr’s Chapel Baptist Church and an avid hunter and wildlife enthusiast.

He is survived by his parents, a brother, his fiancée, grandparents, and extended family.

A friend remembered him this way: “He was the kind of boy you couldn’t help but like and the kind of man you couldn’t help but respect. He lived a simple life—devoted to God, family, church, and the community.”



*We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.*

— Marian Wright Edelman



# Remembering

## O. Earl Stephenson, Jr.

### Angier & Black River Fire Department — North Carolina

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: May 9, 2007

Age: 61

Earl, better known as “Big Earl” to all of his friends, was with the Angier-Black River Fire Department for 21 years as a volunteer firefighter. The fire department was a big part of his life, and he loved it.

He was born on April 17, 1946, in Harnett County, North Carolina, to Ottis E. Stephenson, Sr. and Leona Ferrell Stephenson. Earl grew up learning the auto mechanic trade from his father and worked for Sherrill’s Wrecker Service for 20 years. He was employed with the North Carolina Museum of Natural Science when he passed away unexpectedly from a heart attack.

Earl was a gentle, loving man with a big heart and a big smile, who loved his family. He was a devoted son and wonderful brother to his sisters, Ann, Molly and Becky, and a loving uncle to his nieces and nephews. He was always there, ready to talk, ready to listen, seemingly with all the time in the world. He kept promises and made time for other people. He was a true friend.

He was a big NASCAR fan and enjoyed going to the races with friends. He loved to cook, especially on the grill; he was famous for his pork barbecue, ribs, and chicken. He loved having family functions and especially his family beach trips. Holidays were always very special to him.



At the museum where he worked, they set up a scholarship in his name for a deserving student to attend their summer camp, and his name is listed in the memory wall just outside the museum. There is also a scholarship set up in his name for a high school graduate who has an interest in becoming a firefighter.

We never knew how much of an impact Earl made on the lives of others. He was never one to brag or boast about himself. He always stood to the side and watched.

“Big Earl” is going to be missed by all that knew and loved him. We love you and know that you are sitting with our mother and the angels.



# Remembering



## Brandon Michael Whimple

**Rhodestown Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. — North Carolina**

Classification: Volunteer  
Rank: Firefighter  
Date of Death: March 24, 2007  
Age: 19

Brandon Whimple, a 19-year-old full of life and energy, died on Saturday, March 24, 2007, when the tanker truck he was a passenger in lost control and flipped, killing both Brandon and the driver, as they were responding to the second of two structure fires that day.

Brandon was born in Jacksonville, North Carolina, on November 30, 1987, to Richard K. Whimple and Lisa M. Whimple. An auto mechanic and a volunteer fireman, Brandon spent most of his time working on cars with his family, and volunteering as much time as he could at the fire station.

Curiosity for the fire service came partly because he constantly saw his dad and brother rush out of the house and respond to the station for call after call. His curiosity got the best of him, and he eventually joined Rhodestown Volunteer Fire Department on April 18, 2005. Then Brandon had the ability to experience what it meant to be a fireman.

March 24, 2007, was a day of accomplishment for Brandon. That morning proved rewarding for Brandon, as he got to enter his first structure fire as a firefighter. Other firefighters on scene that day rated his perfor-

mance as “admirable,” and some say he looked as if he was on “cloud 9” and that his movements looked almost “angelic” while taking off his pack after coming out of the structure. That same morning, he was requested to drive for the first time during training. This was a goal he had wanted to reach for some time. Brent, his brother, described Brandon’s reaction as, “beaming and bragging that he was able to do it first, and he couldn’t wait to tell Dad what he had done.”

As we remember Brandon stumbling out the door, falling down the stairs, finally rolling out into the yard to go to a call all battered and bruised, we are reminded of the dedication, passion and love that Brandon had for the fire service.

As his family, some of our fondest memories will be those of watching him play soccer, taking his brothers mudding in his truck, and riding his brothers on the go-cart while they were desperately hanging on. As Brandon’s parents, our fondest memories will be the first day of school, the first step, and many other firsts until he finally grew into a young man seeking his own path in life. The one thing that will be remembered the most by family and friends will be Brandon’s amazing smile



# Remembering

## Billy H. Williams

**Rhodestown Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. — North Carolina**

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: March 24, 2007

Age: 45

*B*illy Harold Williams and another firefighter died in a tanker accident while responding to the scene of a mobile home fire. Billy served with the department for five years and was also a volunteer with Jacksonville EMS.

He is survived by his mother, stepmother, and five siblings.

Billy just loved firefighting.



*Take heart in knowing that they were engaged in an endeavor that is a measure of human greatness and that they will always be remembered for their courage, honor, and selfless dedication.*

— Alfred K. Whitehead





# Remembering



## Eddy G. Ivers

### Concord-Greene Township Volunteer Fire Department — Ohio

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Chief

Date of Death: March 13, 2007

Age: 59

Ed Ivers, chief of the Concord-Greene Township Volunteer Fire Department, died March 13, 2007, while returning from a call for a reported structure fire.

Ed was born and raised in the community he served in Fayette County, Ohio. A farmer most of his life, he also served as an ag-mechanic for many years. Ed was very proud of the fire department and the many wonderful changes and upgrades that had taken place in his years of service. He began his service with Concord-Greene Township in 1968, serving as a volunteer firefighter. After serving only two years with the department, he was promoted to the rank of chief, a position he would hold for the next 37 years.



While Ed was a devoted fire chief, he was an even more devoted husband to Nancy Ivers, his wife of more than 35 years. He was also a loving father to Owen (Carrie) and Gene (Tara), both of whom currently serve on the fire department.

Ed's hobbies included fishing whenever he could find the time, and antique John Deere tractors. Of all the hobbies and interests Ed had, I think that his favorite thing to do was to be with his four grandchildren, Gretchen, Jack, Reagan and Nolan.

The fire department, the community and, most of all, Ed's family, will miss him greatly. While he leaves behind many friends and his family, his memories and spirit will live within us forever.

*A hero is a man who does what he can.*

— Romain Rolland



# Remembering



## Jeffrey M. Murray

### Sharon Township Fire Department — Ohio

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: February 13, 2007

Age: 40

Jeffrey Matthew Murray was a loving husband and father. He was also a friend to everyone he met and was known for helping anyone who asked.

Jeff graduated from Norwalk High School in 1984. He married his high school sweetheart, Chery, in the fall of that year. Together, they had two children, Joshua and Abbey. Jeff served for four years in the United States Navy. He worked on a nuclear submarine, the USS Alabama, and served as a chaplain's assistant. Jeff began his career with the electrical power industry in 1988 with Ohio Edison. Through hard work and dedication, he climbed the ranks and eventually became a systems operator with First Energy.



Jeff's passion was firefighting. He became a volunteer fireman with the Medina Township Fire Department in 1998. He served with them until he moved for work to Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 2001.

Jeff and his family came back to Ohio in 2006. He immediately went back to firefighting with the Sharon Township Fire Department. Jeff died unexpectedly of a massive heart attack while serving on February 13, 2007. He was 40 years old.

Jeff will always be remembered as a hard working, fun-loving, caring man. If you were ever in need, Jeff would have been the first one there. He loved and cared about his family deeply. Although he was taken from us unexpectedly, he will always be loved and remembered.

*Act well your part, there all the honour lies.*

— Alexander Pope



# Remembering



## Steve Olinik, Jr.

### Rome Volunteer Fire Department — Ohio

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: March 30, 2007

Age: 65

Steve began his career as a firefighter with the Saybrook Township Fire Department in the 1960s and volunteered with the Dorset Township Fire Department before joining the Rome Volunteer Fire Department in 1989. A proud member of the department, he was very active in training drills and fire education programs in the schools. He was also very supportive of the junior firefighter program.

Steve was employed as a roadman for New Lyme Township for 15 years before retiring in 2004.

Steve Olinik was a loving father who loved to fish and feed his hummingbirds. He always put his



son and community first. Steve always helped out at fire department and community fundraisers for Rome Township. His son, Douglas, was always at his side during these events. Steve loved the fire service. If he was not on the incident, he covered the fire station. There was always a hot cup of coffee waiting for the crews when they returned.

Steve Olinik suffered a heart attack on March 29, 2007, after responding to the station for a mutual aid response; he died at the hospital the following day. He is survived by his son, Douglas, also a member of the Rome Volunteer Fire Department; two stepsons, two stepdaughters; seven step-grandchildren; and his brother, David Olinik.

*If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.*

— John Quincy Adams



# Remembering

## Jon C. Trainer

### Mechanicsburg Fire Department—Ohio

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: July 24, 2007

Age: 38

Jon Trainer found family wherever he traveled, loved deeply and gave unselfishly.

Jon died after responding to a fire with the Mechanicsburg Fire Department.

He was born December 10, 1968, to Jim and Judi Trainer of Mechanicsburg, Ohio. He grew up with his brothers, Jay and Jeff.

What made my brother Jon special was that he loved his “families.” He didn’t care about appearance or material things. He pretty much gave everything he had to his family. He would leave work at Honda of America and drive through the night to visit his nieces and nephew. He worked alongside our father on whatever job Dad decided needed to be done that day. He made his mother proud. He was a good big brother. Jon and his twin brother, Jay, had a bond that was unbreakable in life and undeniable after Jon’s death. He was a great cousin, nephew, and grandson.

When Jon talked of family, he didn’t just mean his blood relatives. Jon had a way of creating family wherever he went. He had his 4-H family, all the campers and counselors from throughout the years. He had his school family, the Mechanicsburg Class of 1987. Attending a small, rural school with the same people for thirteen

years allows you to grow close. After high school, Jon went to OSU, where he became involved in catering. Whether it was the Cleveland Grand Prix or the U.S. Open, Jon worked long, stressful hours to pull off the impossible and make it look easy. Hard work was a constant theme in his life. After moving back to Mechanicsburg, Jon found his Honda (Adecco) family. Many people have spoken of his kindness and understanding. It is easy to recognize how many lives Jon touched.

Jon also dearly loved his newest family, the Mechanicsburg Fire Department. It is a brotherhood that no one in my family truly understood until his death. He loved the work and wanted to learn as much as he could about firefighting. He analyzed being a fireman for Mechanicsburg, and he worked every day to do his job better. He put hours of thought into it and worked hard to improve the productivity and efficiency of the department. Firefighting was what Jon loved and what he did best. He had found that thing we all look for our whole lives: a job where he could combine his generosity, courage, faith, compassion, creativity, work ethic and sense of community. He found a way to put all of these things together in a perfect way. He became a fireman. Jon loved being a fireman.



# Remembering

## Jared W. Zimmerly

### Prairie Township Fire Department — Ohio

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: September 9, 2007

Age: 20

Jared Zimmerly died in a motor vehicle accident while responding to a call for a residential structure fire.

A 2005 graduate of Hiland High School, Jared worked as a truck driver for Mineral Trucking. He was also a reserve deputy for the Holmes County Sheriff's Department, where his father is the sheriff. Jared especially enjoyed the time he was able to spend on the job with his father.

A Harley-Davidson rider who lived life to the fullest, Jared's coworkers and friends remembered his ever-present smile and his enthusiasm for helping others.

He is survived by his young daughter, who was the love of his life; his parents; his brother and sister; extended family; and many friends.

He enjoyed life.



*When a man becomes a fireman his greatest act of bravery has been accomplished. What he does after that is all in the line of work.*

— Edward F. Croker

# Remembering

## Jon Mark Bingham

### Geary Fire Department — Oklahoma

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Assistant Chief

Date of Death: November 30, 2007

Age: 48

Jon joined the Geary Volunteer Fire Department in December 1988. Along with his eventual firefighter training, he had background in electrical and construction and was, as one might put it, “a jack of all trades.” He had a way of looking at a problem and figuring it out.

Jon was a substitute rural mail carrier for a few years on both routes in the Geary and Greenfield area, later becoming a full-time carrier. This gave the department some extra eyes in the rural area, plus the knowledge of how to get there.

He was the youngest boy among five and was wedged in between two older and four



younger sisters. Jon was always curious. While trying to figure out how a cap gun worked, he got his lip caught in the hammer of it; he got his finger stuck in a mouth piece hole of a horn case; and he stuck his finger in a bulb-less lamp that was still plugged in.

Jon also quizzed the structural engineers from Edmond, Oklahoma, on building supports to remove a victim from a burned out lower apartment. Unfortunately for family, friends, and the Geary community, Jon became the second victim of that fire. He suffered a fatal heart attack at home after the call.

*What we once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose, for all that we love deeply becomes part of us.*

— Helen Keller





# Remembering



## Leonard R. "Lenny" Bailey, Jr.

### Elizabeth Volunteer Fire Department — Pennsylvania

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Chief

Date of Death: September 12, 2007

Age: 56

Born on December 30, 1950, to Leonard R. Sr. and Margaret Bailey, "Lenny" was raised his whole life in Elizabeth, Pennsylvania.

He graduated from Elizabeth High School and worked for 15 years at Consolidated Coal, into his 20s or 30s. It was around this time in his life he felt drawn to open a Volkswagen repair shop, "Lenny's VW," and became widely known for his knowledge and expertise of these vehicles. While running this shop that he loved so much, he helped many people with repairs on their vehicles they may never have been able to afford at a different repair shop.

On May 11, 1979, Lenny married his wife, Linda. Between them, they raised daughters Cher Moser, Rena Stirling and LeeAnn Bailey, and son Lenny R. Bailey III. There are two grandchildren, Derek Dichiera and Lenny R. Bailey IV.

Lenny joined the Elizabeth Volunteer Fire Company on December 30, 1971, his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. He was also, throughout his life, active with Blaine Hill, West Elizabeth and Bunola Volunteer Fire Companies. He became chief of Elizabeth Volunteer Fire Company in 1998 and held that position multiple times. He passed away on September 12, 2007,

of a heart attack, while responding to a fire call. Lenny was in his second term serving on the Elizabeth Borough Council, following in his father's footsteps.



Lenny was known to many in the following ways: a pillar of his community, Mr. Elizabeth Borough, top shelf, mentor, extremely dedicated to his profession and a mainstay in this community. The Lily Pad diner, a place where Lenny spent quite a lot of time, has permanently reserved Lenny's seat in his honor. The diner used to seat 28 people; now it is 27. They have pushed the table against the wall. They are planning a wall of pictures and possibly a placard on "his" seat.

Lenny's daughter LeeAnn sums it up the easiest: "I'm actually glad he went that way. He didn't get to say goodbye, but he didn't suffer."

The Mon Yough Fire Defense Council posthumously presented a plaque to Lenny's family, thanking them for allowing Lenny to give of himself so many times throughout his life in so many different ways and for making the ultimate sacrifice. He spent his life doing what he knew best--fighting fires, helping people, and saving lives.

# Remembering

## William D. Church, Sr.

### Columbus Volunteer Fire Department — Pennsylvania

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Fire Police Captain/Apparatus Driver

Date of Death: May 3, 2007

Age: 63

William Church suffered a fatal heart attack after preparing to leave the station to respond to a fire call. A 30-year veteran firefighter, he was a past president of the department and the emergency management liaison between the department and the local township.

He had extensive training and knowledge and was a very involved member of the department.

He is survived by his son and a brother.

He will definitely be missed.



*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

— Margaret Mead



# Remembering



## Adam E. "Coley" Cole

### Buchanan Valley Volunteer Fire Department — Pennsylvania

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter/EMT

Date of Death: October 4, 2007

Age: 24

Adam was born on May 25, 1983, to Gary and Annette Cole. He was a big brother to Meagan and Brock. Adam also left behind his soul mate, Mandey, and his beloved Dalmatian, Birky. Many friends and extended family miss him greatly. Adam took pride in every endeavor he took on. In high school, his passion was the FFA, where he earned numerous awards. Even after high school, he continued with his pride in FFA by earning the highest award possible, the American Degree.

Adam did not come from a firefighter family. His passion began three years prior to his death. With encouragement from firefighter friends, he joined our local volunteer fire company. His love for helping others grew stronger with every call he answered. He helped with the junior firefighters, feeds and anywhere else he was needed. In 2006, his passion grew into a career choice for him. He took his test to get into the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Academy. When it didn't happen in 2006, he did not give up. Adam signed up for EMT classes, and after several months of training, taking the practicum with a broken foot, he passed and became a licensed EMT for Pennsylvania.

In the summer of 2007, Adam received notice that his

name came up, and he had a chance to enter the D.C. Academy. Adam worked hard to finalize his chances of getting in. The morning of Adam's death, he got word that, after his physical exam the following week, he was to enter the academy at the end of October.



Adam still had numerous papers to fill out for the following week and was planning to work on them the evening of his death. The call came in, and his pager went off. A neighboring county needed help with a forest fire. Without hesitation, he responded to his fire station. Adam always put the safety of others above his own, and this day was no different. He jumped in his car and left his house, forgetting one important thing: buckling his seatbelt. He knew someone needed his help, and he needed to get there.

While responding, he was involved in a fatal auto accident.

Adam's family received the Firefighter of the Year award in his memory for 2007. Also, in his memory, the Adam Cole National Fire Service Seat Belt Pledge was put into place. To all firefighters: please take the time to sign the pledge, and remember to wear your seatbelt while responding to a call. To all others, please support your local volunteer fire company; they cannot survive without our help.





# Remembering



## Alphonse “Vincent” Germano, Jr.

### Derry Volunteer Fire Department — Pennsylvania

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Assistant Chief

Date of Death: December 15, 2007

Age: 60

Vince Germano, a 40-year veteran firefighter and firefighting educator, died of a massive heart attack at his Derry station on December 15, 2007. It is fitting that his spirit forever embosses Engine 41, for it was his second home, his love, his passion and his final resting place. Although the fireman, mentor and friend is no longer with them in body, his spirit lives on in the knowledge of firefighting and safety he passed on to the young Derry volunteers that he passionately took under his wing. In time, those firemen will pass on his teachings and so forth and so forth.

Vince was born May 5, 1947, to Rose M. and Alphonse V. “Harpo” Germano, in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, and was a lifelong society member of the Hill Top Club. He grew up hunting and fishing. He was an avid fly fisherman and tyer with many trips logged to his favorite place in the world, Yellowstone National Park, where he wet many flies on the Madison River in search of large brown and rainbow trout.

He proudly served his country and was a Vietnam veteran in the United States Air Force. His entire life was dedicated to the fire service. He began as a junior fireman with Greensburg Hose #7 and then with Blairsville and Bolivar Volunteer Fire Departments, before joining Derry in 1989. He was days from retiring as fire marshal for Torrance State Hospital, where he worked for 24 years.



Vince’s real passion was for instructing and teaching young firemen. He was certified to instruct in many areas, including: Structure Fire Rescue, Advanced Fire Fighting, Flammable Liquid Fire Fighting, Liquefied Petroleum Gas/Natural Gas Emergencies, Rural Fire Ground Water Movement, Engine Company Operations, Introduction to Fire Officership, Rapid Intervention Teams, Ventilation Practices, Industrial Fire Brigade Basic, and Dynamics of Emergency Vehicle Response.

Vince’s achievements, knowledge and relationships established during his fire service career will be remembered for many years. His family and friends never realized the influence he had on so many lives. He unassumingly went about his service, never one to boast of or make conversation about his accomplishments. Always an observer and never desiring any accolades, he was a gentle giant with a heart as big as his stature. He was highly regarded and trusted by colleagues when tough decisions had to be made.

Vince is survived by his loving wife, Carol; sons, Scott and Brian; and grandchildren, Conner, Emma and Caleb. His passion for firefighting was only rivaled by the love for his family. Our lives were changed on that cold December afternoon. They will never be the same, and he will be forever missed.



# Remembering



## Jeremy C. LaBella

### Washington Fire Department — Pennsylvania

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: February 4, 2007

Age: 27

Jeremy died when an outside roof collapsed on him while fighting a structure fire.

Jeremy was a Firefighter I at the time of his death in October 2007 and had just passed his Emergency Medical Technician a few weeks before his death.

Jeremy joined the Canton Township Volunteer Fire Department as a junior firefighter. He attended as many fire schools as he could and was elected lieutenant in 1999. He quickly moved up to captain under his Uncle Dave, the department chief, and his dad, who was the assistant chief. In 1998, he was elected secretary, a position in which he served until his death.

On August 13, 2007, Jeremy started with the City of Washington, Pennsylvania, as a career firefighter. His Uncle Jeff was a 19-year veteran of the department. Jeremy completed his Firefighter I certi-



Jeremy loved NASCAR and had gone to a few races. He especially liked going to Charlotte, North Carolina. He liked going out with people from neighboring fire departments. He would help anyone. He helped Johnny from Canton Volunteer Fire Department tear down his house and George from the city fire department move into his new one.

Jeremy is greatly missed by his friends, family, and members of both departments, and especially by his mom, Pamela; dad, Chuck; sister, Jill; and his two nieces, Megan and Haley.

*Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.*

— Ambrose Redmoon



# Remembering



## William “Billy” McDaniels, Sr.

### Mocanaqua Volunteer Fire Company Number 1 — Pennsylvania

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Fire Police Captain

Date of Death: September 15, 2007

Age: 51

Billy was involved with volunteer firefighting for 33 years. He first joined the Shickshinny Volunteer Fire Company at the age of 19 and continued there for 18 years. At that time, he joined the Mocanaqua Volunteer Fire Company, where he was a member for 15 years. He was a past president of the fire company, an office which he held for five years. At the time of his death, he was a fire police captain. Billy also belonged to the Shickshinny Area Volunteer Ambulance, where he held the office of president.

Billy loved life and people. He would help anyone if he could. He also helped as a crossing guard and was at the bus stop every day with the regular guard when he was able to be. He would also play Santa for the children in this area from time to time if he was asked to. Billy was the type of person who had friends wherever he went. He had a hello and a smile for everyone.



No matter what time of the day or night, when the tones went off, Billy would drop what he was doing and respond. He made his last call on September 15, 2007, at the age of 51. A call came in for a fire alarm at the Shickshinny Hi-rise. Billy had just sat down to watch the Phillies play. He got up and responded to the fire hall. While on scene, Billy fell ill, and he never made it home from the call. We all take solace in knowing that, at the time of his death, Billy was doing something he loved and was with his friends.

Billy's love of volunteering was passed on to his family. All of his children have been involved in volunteer firefighting and EMS service since they were in their teens.

Billy left behind his wife, Debra; sons, Bill Jr. and Stephen; daughter, Amy; grandson, Jonathan; family pets, Trish and Titan. He is also survived by his mother, Sara, and his sisters and brothers and their families. He also left behind many good friends.





# Remembering



## Michael D. Reagan, Jr.

### Sharon Hill Fire Company — Pennsylvania

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: September 29, 2007

Age: 19

Michael Reagan was critically injured in a structural collapse while fighting a residential structure fire on September 26, 2007. He died from his injuries on September 29.

Michael was a nineteen-year-old fireman for the Sharon Hill Fire Company and the Holmes Fire Company. He was attending college, where he was studying law enforcement. He worked at the police station as a turn-key, watching the prisoners in their cells. He was also a lifeguard many summers at the pool.

There is a scholarship fund in memory of Michael at his high school, for a student

who is a firefighter and will pursue a career in law enforcement.



We are proud of the person Michael became. He was a respected firefighter, a wonderful son and brother, and a caring and honest young man who touched the lives of so many. Anytime you needed to talk to someone or needed help with anything, Michael would always be there. He was a joy to many and will be missed by all who had the honor of knowing him.

Michael would be deeply appreciative of and humbled by this honor. He will be forever in our hearts.

*The life I touch for good or ill will touch another life, and that in turn another, until who knows where the trembling stops or in what far place my touch will be felt.*

— Frederick Buechner



# Remembering



## Raymond Charles Simonis, III

### Wissahickon Fire Company — Pennsylvania

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: December 19, 2007

Age: 48

Firefighter Raymond C. Simonis, III, was a member of the Wissahickon Fire Company of Ambler, Pennsylvania, for close to 20 years. He was also a member of HAZMAT Team 919 of Montgomery County. He suffered a massive heart attack shortly after responding to his final call on December 19, 2007. He was 48 years old.

Ray had so many endearing qualities. His brothers and sisters of the Wissahickon Fire Company will never forget his ability to make them laugh. People always told him he should have been a stand up comic. He had a gift for making people around him feel good, and he spread happiness and laughter wherever he went. The memories of his impersonations and stories continue to make us smile through the pain of his loss.

Ray was a loving husband and best friend to his wife, Chris. They were together since 1980 and would have celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this year. He was also a supportive and caring father to his three daughters, Marika, Alyssa and Gabriella. He has left them with a strong work ethic, a determination to never quit when things get rough, and an appreciation for the simple joys in life. He passed his love of firefighting to

his daughter Alyssa, who had the honor of joining the department and running calls with him for four years. He is also survived by his parents, Ray and Estelle.



Firefighter Simonis was a hardworking man who appreciated time spent with family and friends. Free time was spent coaching his daughters' sports teams, fishing, or cheering for the Philadelphia Eagles. Special times were made even better if he was enjoying a great meal and a good cigar!

Ray lived his life serving his community, his friends and his family. He gave 100% of himself and expected nothing in return. He would be deeply appreciative and humbled by the honor that has been bestowed on him from the firefighting community. His family is forever grateful to all those who have come to their aid since his passing. Special thanks to the Wissahickon Fire Company for all they have done and continue to do to help us heal and cope with our loss.

Ray was loved and respected by many and sorely missed by all who had the honor of knowing him. The world is a sadder and quieter place without him, and he will never be forgotten.



# Remembering



## Rodney Bradford Baity

### Charleston Fire Department — South Carolina

Classification: Career

Rank: Engineer

Date of Death: June 18, 2007

Age: 37

Rodney Bradford Baity, always known as “Brad,” was the Engineer at Station 19 for the Charleston Fire Department. On Monday, June 18, 2007, this loving, soft-spoken man would become part of a group that is now known as The Charleston Nine.

Brad was born on September 16, 1969, in Mocksville, North Carolina, to James and Dorothy Baity. The youngest of three children, Brad had two older siblings, Jimmy and Sharon.

Brad’s fire service actually began while serving in the United States Marine Corps. His MOS was Crash Crew Rescue Aircraft Firefighting. While in the Marine Corps, he met his wife, Heather. In 1997, Brad joined the James Island Fire Department, before being hired onto the Charleston Fire Department in September 1998. Brad moved quickly through the ranks to engineer in the CFD. His friends at the station recognized that Brad was not a man of many words, but a man of action. He also received the reputation as the prankster of the crew, playing jokes with a straight face. Brad also received his associate’s degree in fire science while at the Charleston Fire Department. Brad was an executive board member, serving as treasurer for the Local 61 firefighter’s union from January 2004 until his death.



Brad also had jobs on his off-duty days. Becoming a jack of all trades through the years, he did electrical, painting, and construction work. He also was a stagehand and member of the IATSE union.

We were blessed with two children, Mariah and Noah. As a father, Brad was a gentle giant who always spoke kind, encouraging words to his children. He was the type of father who just got down and played on the floor with his kids and laughed. Mariah and Noah remember their father always playing basketball and soccer with them in the backyard. Both of them remember Daddy being a big kid, pretending to be a giant worm chasing them around the house, just acting goofy.

Brad was the ideal husband: always loving, supportive, and helpful in every way. He was my true companion and was totally dedicated to his family. As his wife of nearly 14 years, it is the quiet soul-baring talks and the way he would always calm me down and give me peace that I will hold close to my heart.

No words can express how intensely Brad is missed by his family and friends. He was the type of man you could always count on and trust no matter what the situation. Brad was truly a man after God’s own heart, always putting others before himself.





# Remembering



## Theodore Michael Benke

### Charleston Fire Department — South Carolina

Classification: Career

Rank: Captain

Date of Death: June 18, 2007

Age: 49

Mike was just 19 years old when he started with the Charleston Fire Department in 1979.

He was a third-generation firefighter. His cousin Andy Benke knew Mike was destined to be a firefighter from a very young age. He recalls that after a campfire got out of control, Mike started the “plan” for putting the fire out. That plan continued for almost 29 years, until he tragically lost his life in a structure fire at the Sofa Super Store in Charleston on June 18, 2007. Eight other men also lost their lives that day; they became known as “The Charleston 9.” They all made the ultimate sacrifice to keep our community safe.

At the time of his death, Mike was married to Kim Cofield Benke. They had two children, a daughter Taylor (13), and a son, Hunter, (10). He also had a 30-year-old daughter, Holly Gildea; two grandchildren and one on the way (Kayla, “CJ,” and Julieanne.)

Mike was an extremely active parent and partner to all of his family. He was always driving kids to soccer and baseball practices/games, school, field trips, working in the yard, homework, housework (especially laundry), cleaning the pool, or whatever needed to be done. He ALWAYS found time to have fun with his family. He especially loved racing and telling people how proud he was of his family.

Mike was such a gentle soul—soft spoken, easygoing, disliked any type of confrontation, always willing to lend a helping hand—that he basically got along with every one. He had a tremendous impact on many people. He will be forever missed by all of us that had the privilege of being in his life. He has touched many of our hearts.



We all have wonderful memories of Mike. Holly will miss not being able to cheer for their favorite team, USC, and the smell of burned French toast will always bring a smile to her face. Taylor will miss her dad waking her up with a kiss on the head and, “Good morning, Princess,” and taking her to get a Moolatte at the mall. Hunter will miss his dad playing ball, fishing, and all the “guy” things they used to do.

Most of all, he will miss sitting in the recliner with his dad every morning. As his wife, there are many things I miss about him. Mostly, I miss having him as my friend and our day-to-day lives we shared for so long that just don’t seem nearly long enough now that he is gone.

We will ALWAYS remember the love, laughter, and memories that he gave to us.



# Remembering



## Melvin Edward Champaign

### Charleston Fire Department — South Carolina

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: June 18, 2007

Age: 46

It takes a village to raise a child. Melvin Champaign was born March 9, 1962, to Stella Champaign. During early childhood, Melvin was raised by his grandmother, Mary Love Champaign, who dedicated herself to Melvin and a host of brothers, sisters, and cousins. Melvin was the youngest grandson in his mama, Mary Love Champaign's, garden. Mama's continuous labor of love: pruning, tilling, fertilizing, watering, and always on her hands and knees, plucking out the weeds, worms, and bugs. Mama always kept watch over her garden to keep the danger out. In 1972, Melvin's mama did not show up at the garden. She told him, "Mama needs to plant you somewhere safe." That safe haven was the love and care of Evelina Seabrook and Mikell and Alma Fludd.

Melvin was a philanthropist. Melvin was loved and respected by all. He had an infectious smile. Children adored him. He spent a lot of his time volunteering with the Boys and Girls Club. He was a black belt in karate. On any given Saturday, one would find Melvin instructing a small group of youth in martial arts. A counselor to troubled children, he spent countless hours being a positive role model to these youth. Melvin was a man of many talents, a musician and songwriter who always had his keyboard in tow. A car-



penter by trade, Melvin worked side by side with his cousin, Carl Champaign, whom Melvin revered as his brother.

In 1980, Melvin joined the United States Army. He traveled abroad and finally settled in Tacoma, Washington, where he married. He is survived by his three young children, Eveion, Isaiah, and Rueben Champaign. He lived for his children, as his grandmother lived for him.

Melvin dreamt of being a fireman. He wanted to give himself to his community. He gave up his career as an ironworker and, in late 2003, he moved back to Charleston, South Carolina.

Melvin had a passion for the ministry. His uncle, Hercules Champaign, and Dean Johnson, from Alpha & Omega Bible College, were mentors to him. Alpha & Omega Bible College is where Melvin obtained his associate's degree in theology.

On Monday, June 18, 2007, Melvin was removed from his work in his garden and was planted in the courts of our GOD. "Listen, can you hear that? It is the joy of Melvin's garden." Dear Grandmama, I pray I have done what you asked of me. Here is your garden. Love always, Melvin.



# Remembering



## James “Earl” Drayton

### Charleston Fire Department — South Carolina

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: June 18, 2007

Age: 56

James A. “Earl” Drayton was one of nine Charleston firefighters killed June 18, 2007, in a fire at the Sofa Super Store. A 32-year veteran firefighter, Earl was the most experienced of the Charleston Nine and was well known to generations of Charleston firefighters. Sometimes called “Squirrel,” because it rhymed with his name, he was assigned to Station #19 in West Ashley. He only wanted to fight fire and loved to help people in any way he could.

Following graduation from C.A. Brown High School, Earl served eight years in the Marine Corps.

Known as “Cool Earl,” he had a quiet, soft-spoken confidence and was known as a sharp dresser who kept his black



Chrysler in immaculate condition. He had a habit of jangling loose change in his pocket when he talked. Earl was very patient. His interests included cooking, crabbing, vacationing on cruise ships, fixing things, working on cars, listening to James Brown, dancing, and being around children. He was a stagehand for local theatre groups, painting scenes and building sets for countless performances.

Earl is survived by his wife, five children, three stepchildren, his mother, siblings, and extended family. He loved being home with his family. He believed in supporting and giving his wife the best. He was a good father.

Earl was a man of integrity.

*Choose to think of him as a hero in death and I will tell you that he was a hero in life.*

— Jon McDuffie





# Remembering



## Michael “Frenchie” French

### Charleston Fire Department — South Carolina

Classification: Career

Rank: Assistant Engineer

Date of Death: June 18, 2007

Age: 27

Michael French, known to his family as “Mikey,” but around the station by the nickname “Frenchie,” was born on February 14, 1980, to Diane French and Mike Gragg. Mikey’s passion for firefighting was obvious even as a child, dressing up in his gear and hanging around the station with his father and uncle. He began as a volunteer with Moncks Corner Rural Fire Department at the age of fourteen. His mother recalls when his sisters were excited to get their driver’s license because they could drive around with their friends and hang out at the mall. Mikey was excited to get his so he could drive a fire truck!

As soon as he was eighteen, he started his career at Old Fort Fire Department. Before finding his home at the City of Charleston Fire Department, he also worked for Summerville Fire and Rescue and St. Andrews Fire Department. Chief Rusty Thomas remembers the day he graduated from rookie school, saying, “It was the best day of Mikey French’s entire life.” It took Mikey just one year to get promoted to assistant engineer, a job most firefighters wait two or three years to get.

Mikey continued volunteering at whatever fire department he lived near. In 2005, he joined Pine Ridge Fire



Department, and in just two years he rose to the rank of captain. “Frenchie had probably been at every fire department in Berkeley County, because no matter where he went, he was in the fire service. It was just in him and something he had to do,” said Fire Chief Nicky Sweatman.

Mikey loved his children, never entering the fire scene without a picture of his six-year-old daughter, Kyla, tucked inside his helmet as if she was looking over him. He was a prankster who loved to make people laugh, but was very serious when it came to fighting fire. When he wasn’t fighting fires, he enjoyed being outdoors, a passion shared by his oldest nephew, Kyle, who often joined him while fishing and hunting. A true country boy!

Mikey, along with eight other heroes, left us while fighting a fire at the Sofa Super Store in West Ashley. He was assigned to Station 16, but detailed to Ladder 5 on the day of the fire. Mikey is survived by his wife, Donna French; his children, Kyla Anne Nicole (6) and Aidan Michael Jennings (2); his mother, Diane French; two sisters, Brandi Clark and Jean Dangerfield; two brothers-in-law; three nephews; a niece; and many, many close friends. He is remembered as a true hero to all, and has passed on his passion of firefighting to his nephews, Kyle and Lil’ E.



# Remembering



## **William H. Hutchinson, III** **Charleston Fire Department — South Carolina**

Classification: Career

Rank: Captain

Date of Death: June 18, 2007

Age: 48

Billy became a member and started his career as a firefighter at age eighteen. He was promoted to engineer, and then to captain in 1999. Throughout his 30-year career, he served at several stations, including stations 10, 12, and 19. He was highly respected for his knowledge and skills as a firefighter. Rookie firefighters and seasoned officers always knew if Captain Billy was at a fire. They trusted him to lead them, as he always understood the risks.

Billy once performed CPR and helped save a firefighter who was suffering from a heart attack during a fire. While working during hurricanes, he always made sure his family was safe and that someone was there with them. Billy enjoyed when kids came by to visit the station. His children would come by to visit, and he would pick them up and let them swing off the ladder, hoping he had a firefighter in the making.

Billy was also a barber. Every duty day, his fellow firefighters would line up for their haircuts. Billy had a joke, kind word, and a smile on his face. He was never one to brag or boast about himself. His brother firefighters remember Captain Billy as lighting and always eating an egg sandwich and a Pepsi.

Billy loved to play golf and participated in tournaments, bringing home trophies to his twin daughters, Aubree



and Haley. His family remembers the good times they shared, vacationing in Myrtle Beach, and Billy playing and teaching sports to his daughters. Billy would go shopping with his daughters to buy gifts for his wife, Phyllis, always making it a special occasion. When he was off duty, he would attend football games for fellow firefighter Art Wittner's son, Josh.

One of Billy's proudest moments was when his oldest daughter, Christy, got married, and he walked her down the aisle. Another of his proudest moments was when he became a grandfather to Chase.

Phyllis remembers pinning his badge, collar brass, and nametag every duty day for eighteen years, also making sure he had his fire gear for work, including his barber tools. Phyllis was always proud of Billy and how great he looked in his uniform. His family was very proud of him, and he was always their hero. Billy will be missed forever by his family.

June 18, 2007, working B shift, Engine 19, with Captain Billy in charge, along with Engines 16, 15, and 10, sacrificed their lives fighting a fire at the Sofa Super Store. Captain William Hutchinson and eight other firefighters received Medals of Valor for their heroism. God bless the Charleston 9.



# Remembering



## Mark W. Kelsey

### Charleston Fire Department — South Carolina

Classification: Career

Rank: Engineer

Date of Death: June 18, 2007

Age: 40

*M*ark W. Kelsey, 40, a ten-year career member of the Charleston City Fire Department, and a 16-year member of the Ashley River Fire Department, unselfishly gave his life in the line of duty June 18, 2007, at the Sofa Super Store fire.

Mark was born and raised in Washington, Indiana, where he was a state champion wrestler in high school. He graduated and joined the U.S. Navy, where he served from 1985 to 1994. Mark started his fire career as a volunteer at the Ashley River Fire Department in 1991 and worked his way through the ranks to the position of captain and Certified Fire Investigator. After receiving an honorable discharge from the Navy, Mark joined the Charleston Fire Department in 1994 and worked his way up to the rank of engineer.



Mark was a motorcycle enthusiast. When he wasn't working at the fire departments, he would be riding his custom chopper with the Wolf Pack, enjoying life on the open roads.

The Wolf Pack gave Mark a nickname of "Trunk Monkey" for some of the wild gestures he has done in his past. The nickname followed him to the fire department, and the new Ashley River Fire Department pumper was dedicated to Captain Mark Kelsey, with a Trunk Monkey painted on the front corners of the truck.

Mark was laid to rest in his hometown of Washington, Indiana.

Mark, you are sadly missed by your family, friends, and the brothers and sisters of the Ashley River and Charleston Fire Departments.



# Remembering

## Louis M. Mulkey

### Charleston Fire Department — South Carolina

Classification: Career

Rank: Captain

Date of Death: June 18, 2007

Age: 34

At age 34, Louis Mark Mulkey was a veteran firefighter with the City of Charleston Fire Department and assigned as Captain to Engine 15. Louis had lovingly and honorably served the Charleston Fire Department for 11.5 years. Prior to being stationed in Charleston, Captain Mulkey was a firefighter at the Summerville Fire Department in Summerville, South Carolina.

Louis received numerous accolades while on the job, including Firefighter of the Year in 2006, for his assistance in saving the life of a fellow Charleston City Police Officer whose heart stopped beating during a foot pursuit of a potentially armed suspect.

In addition to being a distinguished firefighter, Louis was an extremely dedicated coach at his alma mater, Summerville High School, where he turned boys into men while coaching basketball

and football. The 2007-2008 Summerville varsity basketball team, which included players that Louis had coached since elementary school, went on to win the South Carolina 4AAAA State High School Basketball Championship this past year in his honor.

Louis, known to many as "Lulu," lived for sports, coaching, firefighting, and telling (and re-telling) stories with friends. Louis and his wife, Lauren, celebrated their one year anniversary on June 17, 2007. The following day, Louis and his crew responded to a fire at the Sofa Super Store in West Ashley, where God called him and his eight brothers home.

Louis is survived by his wife, Lauren Bennett Mulkey; his parents, Mike and Ann Mulkey; brother, Wayne; two nieces, Kayla and Danielle Mulkey; and a myriad of friends and players who love him dearly and will treasure him forever.





# Remembering



## Jeffrey D. Swartz

### Wagener Fire Department — South Carolina

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: August 19, 2007

Age: 36

Jeffrey did not grow up wanting to be a firefighter. His dream was to always be a farmer. It was a family tradition that he proudly pursued. It was his passion. It wasn't until April 2005 that he found a new passion. When one of our store employees' radio scanner dispatched the volunteer fire department to my grandmother's home, he responded to the call as a concerned grandson and came home a volunteer firefighter.

Jeffrey was born in Wagener, South Carolina, on October 7, 1970. He died in Wagener, South Carolina, on August 19, 2007. He was the son of Edward Swartz and the late Wanda Fulmer Swartz. He was the father of Brantley and Jamie Swartz. And he was my husband.

As the wife of a volunteer firefighter, I didn't know how much time he would be called away from his family. He would get up early every morning to make sure that chickens were fed.



Then he would go to his second job. Jeffrey loved chicken farming, but it left him with lots of spare time. He filled his spare time by purchasing a convenience store. The store kept him very busy, but when the tones were dropped for District 16, he was almost always the first one to respond. Jeffrey would take every call as a learning experience. He logged every call that he responded to in a notebook. The notebook became his scrapbook. It was a document of his journey as a fireman.

He took pride in being the best firefighter that he could be. He enrolled in every class that he could take, complaining only about the fact that he'd miss a call because he was sitting in class. He even took courses online. He wanted to be the best at everything. He was.

Jeff died in a motor vehicle accident while responding to a medical call. On August 20, 2007, I entered the final call into his logbook. It was the hardest thing I ever had to do.



# Remembering



## Brandon Kenyon Thompson

### Charleston Fire Department — South Carolina

Classification: Career

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: June 18, 2007

Age: 27

Brandon Kenyon Thompson was born in Mobile, Alabama, on May 2, 1980, to Diane and Frank Thompson. He was the youngest of three boys. His family moved to Summerville, South Carolina, when Brandon was three. The brothers, whose ages span a three-year range, always had a close bond and shared similar interests. It was only natural that, when Frank and Jeffery began volunteering at the Pine Ridge Volunteer Fire Department, fourteen-year-old Brandon would also.

Brandon was named Junior Firefighter of the Year, and during thirteen years as a volunteer at Pine Ridge, was honored as Rookie of the Year, Firefighter of the Year and Officer of the Year at the 40-member department. Brandon sought training opportunities and participated in a variety of classes. He worked to enhance the volunteer department's budget by researching and writing grants for safety equipment. Brandon held several officer positions, including assistant chief and station captain.

He grew into a wonderful man who gave of himself to his neighbors and his family. He was, at over six feet, a gentle, thoughtful, fun-loving friend to everyone. He was a peacemaker who saw life as a cup half full, limited only by his choices. He graduated from Stratford

High School and, in January 1999, he joined the Summerville Fire Department. Then, in 2003, he joined the City of Charleston Fire Department. He was assigned to Engine 10 as a firefighter. Despite encouragement to take the engineers' test, Brandon remained a firefighter because he wanted to be on the nozzle and fight the fire.

His brothers moved on to other areas of public service, but Brandon's passion remained firefighting. He was active in the area schools with fire safety training. He loved Higbee, his Weimaraner puppy.

On June 18, 2007, Brandon and eight other City of Charleston firemen responded to the Sofa Super Store fire. Brandon was not scheduled to work that day, but had taken a shift swap. Brandon was detailed to Ladder Company 5; the entire crew perished during the blaze.

Brandon's brothers, Frank and Jeffery, were honored to join City of Charleston firemen to carry Brandon from the charred rubble of the fire. Brandon's body was the last firefighter to be removed from the building's ruins. Brandon was the youngest of the Charleston 9. He will always be with us in the memories and stories that we share.







# Remembering



## Shane M. Daughetee

### Highway 58 Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. — Tennessee

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: January 26, 2007

Age: 24

Shane Daughetee died in a structural collapse while performing search and rescue operations in a residential structure fire.

would always call and let us know when he was on a very serious call.

Shane had seven years of service with the Highway 58 Volunteer Fire Department. He received the following awards during that time; Rookie of the Year in 2001, First Responder of The Year in 2005 and Firefighter of the Year in 2006.

Shane answered 80% of all calls from his station. He was always there for those that needed help. He loved kids and never missed a Christmas helping those less fortunate with "Christmas for Kids" throughout the Fire Department District.

Shane's passion was firefighting and EMS. He was planning to attend school to further his knowledge to become a paramedic. Shane was always looking for ways to improve his skills in firefighting and as a first responder. He would attend any and all classes that were given throughout the tri-state area. He



Shane had standard equipment garage door openers in his SUV, and he figured out a way to program them to open the bay doors at his station so the doors would be up before he was out of his car.

Shane always gave his time during Fire Prevention Week to visit elementary and middle schools to promote fire prevention and would dress up as Sparky the Fire Dog for the kids.

Shane's best achievement was that he earned the respect and praise from all the surrounding fire departments and the community. This was evident when almost 3,000 people came to pay their respects to him.

Shane is survived by his wife, Nicole; his mother, Linda; his father, James (Dick); his grandmother, Charlotte; and numerous aunts and uncles. The best memories were sharing 24 years with him.



# Remembering



## Theresa Maria Kauffman Lynn

**Luminary-Frostbite Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. — Tennessee**

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Assistant Captain

Date of Death: December 21, 2007

Age: 38

We remember Theresa as a loving and caring person. She was a volunteer firefighter on the Luminary-Frostbite Volunteer Fire Department. She died in a motor vehicle accident while responding to an emergency call on December 21, 2007, her parents' wedding anniversary.

She had a smile for everyone, and everyone liked her. She loved her horse and went riding with friends. She had a dog named Snowball that she loved very much. In her notes before she moved back home, she said at times Snowball was the only friend that she had.

Theresa attended Webb Chapel Church of God and helped with the children's church. She also drove the church



Sunday school van. In the two years that she lived in the area, she only missed church a few times.

Theresa worked at K&C Autos as a salesperson. Then she worked at a restaurant as a cook. Everyone said she was a good cook. After the restaurant closed down, Theresa put all her time into her service with the Luminary-Frostbite Volunteer Fire Department. In the month of December we didn't see much of Theresa, because she was so busy at the fire department.

Theresa is survived by her parents, Chester and Effie Kauffman, and by her two sons, Ronald and Joshua Kauffman. We love and miss her every day!

*I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.*

— Christopher Reeve



# Remembering



## Austin Hague Cheek

### Noonday Volunteer Fire Department — Texas

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: August 3, 2007

Age: 19

Austin discovered his passion for firefighting by accident. Seeing a neighbor's land blazing, he rushed to help. After the volunteer fire department arrived, he was able to assist them in getting the fire under control, and when it was time for them to go back to their station, they invited Austin to come join them for their weekly meeting. After that night, there was no looking back; he was hooked. He knew without a doubt that he was going to spend the rest of his life as a firefighter.

During the short year that he served with the Noonday Volunteer Fire Department, Austin's passion grew. He worked alongside seasoned firefighters and first responders, participating in vehicle extrications, fighting structure and grass fires, and planning his future. Because of his background in scuba diving, he intended to become certified in rescue diving so that he could use his skills to save lives in more ways than one. His mother, Tracey Bales, recalls that during their last conversation, she saw the light in his eyes and the true excitement in his face as he talked about going to school and becoming a career firefighter. He was on his way to the fire station and couldn't wait to get there.



During the early morning hours of August 3, 2007, Austin entered a house that was fully engulfed in flames, alongside his captain, Kevin Williams. It was there that they died, side by side.

Austin is remembered for his winning smile, his great sense of humor, and his strong handshake. Many have talked about their first impression of Austin as he firmly gripped their hand and looked them in the eye as he introduced himself. They could always see how genuine he was. He loved all of his parents, his sister and brothers, and his fiancée, T.J. He loved children, he loved firefighting, and he loved his friends. But more than anything or anyone, Austin loved Jesus Christ, and he had no problem sharing his faith with others.

Although he is missed terribly by his parents, grandparents, siblings, nieces, aunts, uncles, cousins and many friends, we realize that, although Austin's time with us was brief, it was a true gift from God. His life started as a miracle, as his family had waited so long and prayed so hard for him. Even though those of us who loved him the most saw him as a boy, the world saw the real man that he became.



# Remembering

## Joe E. Ivy

### Nacogdoches Fire Department — Texas

Classification: Career

Rank: Captain

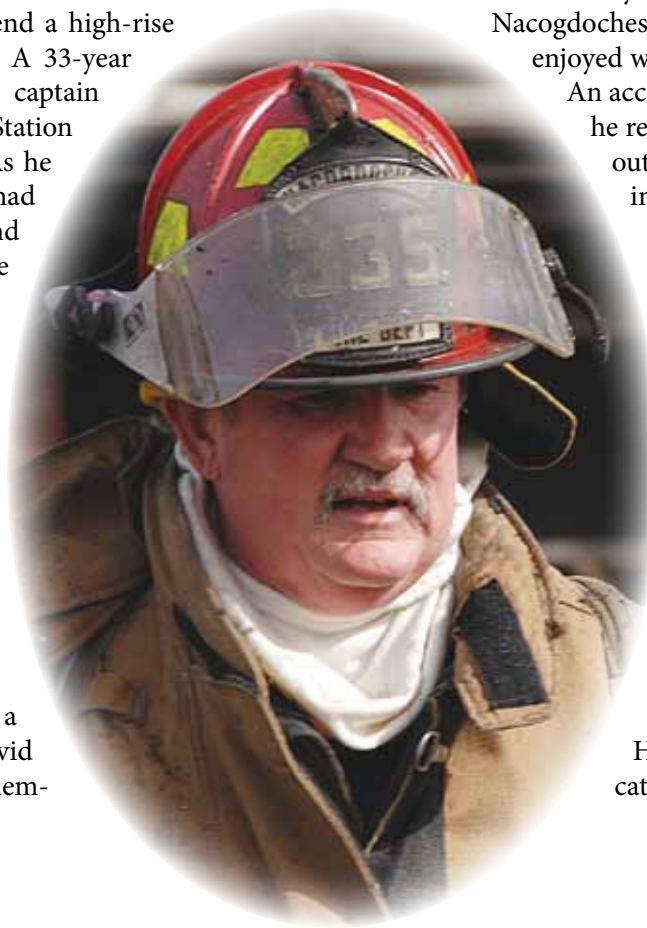
Date of Death: April 28, 2007

Age: 51

Joe Ivy suffered a fatal heart attack after traveling to Houston to attend a high-rise firefighting training session. A 33-year veteran firefighter, he was captain of the ladder truck at Fire Station 1 at the time of his death. As he rose through the ranks, he had worked at every station and performed every job with the department.

He was revered by the young recruits under his command and remembered by coworkers for his sense of humor and fun-loving nature. But when the tones went off, he was all business. He was a traditionalist who believed in hard work.

Joe was a burly man with a handlebar mustache. An avid outdoorsman, he was a mem-



ber of the Caney Creek Hunting Club and the Nacogdoches Go Texan Committee. He enjoyed working cattle and team roping. An accomplished athlete in his youth, he remained strong and was able to outwork younger firefighters even in his later years.

Joe was a loving father to his children and was also survived by his mother, a granddaughter, two brothers, extended family, and many good friends.

Firefighting ran in this family. Joe's brother and a cousin were also Nacogdoches firefighters, and another cousin is a Nacogdoches fire marshal.

He was a man of honor, dedicated to duty.

*If something comes to life in others because of you, then you have made an approach to immortality.*

— Norman Cousins



# Remembering



## Kevin Glenn Williams

### Noonday Volunteer Fire Department — Texas

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Captain

Date of Death: August 3, 2007

Age: 42

It took a year to get Kevin to attend a meeting at the Noonday Volunteer Fire Department, but after one meeting he knew firefighting was his calling. He joined the department in January 2006, was voted Rookie of the Year, and made captain in 2007. He was so proud and honored to be given this responsibility. He had found his niche and liked helping those in crisis.

On August 3, 2007, Kevin responded to a house fire. Once the fire was extinguished, Kevin and his partner and friend, Austin Cheek, entered the home to put out the hotspots. An unexpected flashover occurred, taking the lives of our Kevin and Austin.

Kevin was the father of two children. His son, Cpl Schyler Williams, is a United States Marine currently serving his second tour of duty in Iraq. Kevin's daughter, Amanda, is a college freshman pursuing a degree in criminal justice. Kevin also left behind his mom and dad, two older brothers, his younger sister, his four-footed "third child," Lucky Dog; and many, many, friends and loved ones. Kevin had a strong faith in God and now resides with his Heavenly Father.

Kevin is best remembered for his eagerness and enthusiasm when responding to a call. His adrenaline always caused him to pass right by the fire department. He was



often observed hitting the brakes, throwing the truck into reverse and backing up to the fire department driveway. Known for his perpetual singing and humming, his happiness was contagious to all those around him. He worked many hours at the fire department on fundraisers, such as building the annual haunted house and setting up for the NVFD Open House. He was always outside during the Open House, letting children hold the fire hose and demonstrating the use of the Jaws of Life for those in attendance.

Always eager and willing to help those in need, he would quite literally give you the shirt off of his back. That was Kevin—a man of integrity who loved others more than he loved himself. He loved his country and served in the Air Force during Operation Desert Storm. He loved his family and, most importantly, his Lord.

I will never forget the morning my parents came to tell me my brother was gone. I always thought my brother, my best friend ever, would be here to grow old with me. Kevin's father said, "You never think anything will ever happen to your kid. It never occurred to me that he would go into a fire and never come out." Kevin is greatly missed by his family and friends. We are left with our memories and thankfulness to the Lord for the time we had with him and for the many ways he touched each of our lives.

# Remembering

## Kyle Robert Wilson

Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue — Virginia

Classification: Career

Rank: Technician I

Date of Death: April 16, 2007

Age: 24

Kyle Wilson was born on May 25, 1982, in Olney, Maryland. He moved with his family to Prince William County at age one. He was a sweet, quiet child. He was observant and intelligent from early childhood. He attended school in Prince William County and graduated from Hylton High School in 2000. He received a degree in Athletic Training from George Mason University and had a passion for physical fitness and healthy living. Kyle participated in Dale City Little League for ten years and acquired the nicknames of “Mookie” and “Bucky.” It was not uncommon to hear the team cheer for “Kyle Mookie Bucky Wilson!”

Kyle put his talents of observation, intelligence, and physical fitness into becoming a Prince William County firefighter. He loved his job, and it showed in everything he did. On Monday morning, April 16, 2007, Kyle did not hesitate to follow the truck officer into the house to help the occupants flee the fire. When the situation got out of hand, he fell back on his training and fought to the end. It is a tribute to Kyle’s spirit and dedication that he was able to do the right thing in the most difficult situation.

Kyle was a true friend to those who knew him. He had a deep devotion toward those he loved, and there was nothing he wouldn’t do for a friend. He especially loved his brother, Chris; his sister, Kelli; and his Mom and Dad.

Kyle’s natural curiosity led him to explore different subjects of study, discuss politics and logic and challenge his mind. He was also a fan of the Discovery Channel. He had a great sense of humor and loved to go dancing. The “moon walk” was a favorite of his. He sang karaoke with his girlfriend and felt he had the better voice when, in reality, hers was the better of the two.

Kyle’s sacrifice on that April morning will never be forgotten. His selflessness and caring in a desperate situation is a testament to his true nature. His beautiful smile, fun-loving ways and quiet sensitivity will be dearly missed. Kyle, you leave behind a legacy of love and laughter that will be hard to match. So, from your brother, Chris; your sister, Kelli; your Mom and Dad; and all of your numerous friends and firefighter brothers, you will never leave our hearts. We wish you peace.







# Remembering



## Frederick Allen Burroughs

### Ghent Volunteer Fire Department — West Virginia

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Captain

Date of Death: January 30, 2007

Age: 51

Frederick Allen “Fred” Burroughs was killed when a propane gas explosion leveled a convenience store in Ghent, West Virginia, on January 30, 2007.

Fred became a junior fireman at the age of 17. The Ghent Fire Department had just been founded and was campaigning for volunteers. With the lack of anything better to do, he began to hang out there. It wasn't long until fire-fighting was in his blood. He began taking fire and EMT classes and found out he was good at what he did. From driving the trucks, to operating the equipment and the pumper, to entering a burning building and actually fighting fire, to extrication, to CPR, to management of the department, he was eager to learn and learned quickly. He had a burning desire to make a difference in the lives of others. You see, when Fred was 13, he lost his dad to a sudden heart attack. With no training in lifesaving maneuvers, he felt helpless. He never forgot the helpless feeling he had that day.

Fred served 33 years as a volunteer with the Ghent Volunteer Fire Department, holding positions of EMT, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, assistant chief and chief. At the time of his death, he also served as a member of the Board of Directors. The growth and well being of his department were always in the forefront of his

mind. His wife would tease him that he loved that department more than her.

His “income producing” job for five years prior to his death was as a building code inspector for the Raleigh County Code Enforcement Department in Beckley, West Virginia.

Fred was a very dedicated family man, tremendously devoted to his wife of 25 years. His son and daughter were his pride and joy, and he cherished special times spent with all of them.

Losing a man with Fred's integrity, knowledge, talents, love of life and family, quick wit, endearing smile, and dedication to his family, department and community has left a tremendous void in the lives of his wife, children, mother, other family members, friends, coworkers and fellow firefighters that can never be filled.

Volumes could be written about him. His contributions were so many, the lives he touched too numerous to mention. We will never know how many lives he was instrumental in saving on that fateful day, but his ultimate sacrifice for his fellow man and on behalf of his department is a legacy that will live on forever!

Fred now resides in his heavenly home, watching over us all every day. He is survived by his wife, Hazel; son, Christopher; daughter, Lindsay; and mother, Betty.



# Remembering

## Craig L. Dorsey, II

### Ghent Volunteer Fire Department — West Virginia

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter/EMT

Date of Death: January 30, 2007

Age: 24

Craig Dorsey was killed when a propane gas explosion leveled a convenience store in Ghent, West Virginia, on Tuesday, January 30, 2007. Two firefighters and two civilians died in this incident, and several others were critically injured.

Craig had been involved in the fire/rescue service since age 14, and he served with the department for 12 years. He also served with the Coal City Fire Department. He enjoyed being a firefighter and an EMT, and that was all he knew. He worked with his father, who is a chaplain for the Sophia City Fire Department. His father was inspired by Craig's ability to do that kind of work. Both of them loved helping people. Craig would always make sure he

called his dad to tell him, "Daddy, I had a good call today."

Craig was a Mason and a devoted member of the Beckley Masonic Lodge.

Craig is survived by his father and stepmother, Craig Dorsey, Sr. and Priscilla Dorsey; his mother and stepfather, Kathy and Mark Sizemore; and his son, Tyler.

We will always remember his smile and the jokes he would pull on people, and how he helped people in the community with whatever means he could. He was just an all-around great young man.

I miss him every day and want people to know that he was a tremendous joy in my life.



*I can think of no more stirring symbol of man's humanity to man than a fire truck.*

— Kurt Vonnegut



# Remembering



## Christopher Michael Jaros

### Ceredo Volunteer Fire-Rescue Department — West Virginia

Classification: Volunteer  
Rank: Firefighter  
Date of Death: April 7, 2007  
Age: 24

Christopher Jaros died in an automobile accident en route to the Ceredo Fire Station on April 7, 2007. The weather in early April 2007 was unusually cold, and the roads were hazardous due to snow. There were several accidents that night, and Chris was headed to the station to answer the call for a fatality accident. Unfortunately, there was black ice on the bridge he crossed over, and he lost control of his truck. He departed this life at the scene.

Chris was a devoted husband to Sara and a loving father to his daughters, Lauren, Skylar, and Taylor. Chris met Sara at the Ramey Home for troubled kids, where he was a childcare worker.

Chris joined the Ceredo Volunteer Fire Department in the spring of 2004 and previously served in the Summit-Ironville Volunteer Fire Department. He always enjoyed helping family, friends, and others, which was the impetus for him serving the community through the volunteer fire service. Chris was always ready to do what was needed at the fire department and had forged many strong friendships with fellow firefighters.

Along with serving the Ceredo Volunteer Fire Department, Chris was an oven operator at AK Steel,

where he made his living, and was going to be starting a new position the Monday after he died.



Chris enjoyed taking his family on short trips to spend time with them. They liked to go to Gatlinburg, Tennessee; zoos; and to take the girls to theme parks. He also liked to golf, watch the girls play soccer, do some hunting and a bit of camping. He was handy at home improvement and liked the satisfaction of taking something that needed a little renovation and turning it into a much nicer area.

Chris was a born-again Christian. He made his profession of faith as a nine-year-old and made certain of his salvation in his later teen years. He had a desire to see people trust Christ as their Savior and for his family to serve the Lord. He started attending Fellowship Baptist Church in early 2007 and joined a few weeks before he died. He had a good testimony after rededicating his life to Christ.

Chris is with the Lord now, but in this life, he was a good husband, loving father, a son in whom his parents were well pleased, a good provider, a loyal friend and a dedicated public servant in the service of the Ceredo Volunteer Fire Department.





# Remembering



## Robert W. “Bob” Phillips

### Athelstane Volunteer Fire Department — Wisconsin

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: October 26, 2007

Age: 64

Bob started his volunteer firefighting experience in September 1966, in Delafield, Wisconsin. He joined the fire department to help the small, rural community and worked his way up from rookie to lieutenant to captain to first assistant chief and remained committed for the next 23 years.

As a volunteer department in the 60s and 70s, we did not have a central or county-wide dispatch center. The county sheriff provided the “first responder.” As an officer, your shift was 24/7 on, no time off. Fire calls came directly into your home, and you “babysat” that phone one night a week and one weekend a month. To get work done outside during your “tour of duty,” you installed an outside bell that would ring when the phone did. In those days, you could “run off” when duty called and return to a store or restaurant later to pay your bill or receive your change.

Times did change, volunteers became paid-on-call employees of the municipality, and later this department hired a full-time chief. Along came countywide dispatch systems and 911.

In 1982, Bob worked on a department truck committee to spec out and build fire apparatus. Because of this experience, he joined Johnson Fire Equipment and

Marion Body Works and continued to sell fire apparatus until his death.

Bob retired from his full-time job in June 2006. In addition to the sales of fire apparatus, he began to sell fire gear and equipment for Fleming’s Fire 1, Inc. and also did fire inspections for Fire Inspections Services, Inc.

He was able to fulfill his lifelong dream of owning a cabin in the Northwoods. He purchased his little piece of heaven in 2001. He loved the hunting and fishing. He joined the Athelstane Fire Department in 2004. As was Bob’s passion for small rural areas, so was his need for the camaraderie that the Athelstane’s department provided him with abundance.

His retirement was very short, but he died a happy man. He was on a fire scene, which is where he wanted to be; he was with people he liked to be with, and the medical care was at his side. Bob died of a heart attack wearing his fireman’s boots, pants and jacket.

Bob is survived by his wife of 42 years, Kathy; daughter, Kimberly; and two grandchildren, Hannah and Skyler. His family is comforted knowing that, although more than 100 fire-related deaths in 2007 are far too many, Bob will take the time to meet each and every one of them and enjoy the camaraderie of the Heaven City Fire Department.





# Remembering



## David A. Rufer

### Monroe Fire Department — Wisconsin

Classification: Volunteer  
Rank: Firefighter  
Date of Death: June 12, 2007  
Age: 42

David was born in Monroe, Wisconsin, on December 4, 1964. He was the youngest of four, joining two sisters and a brother. He graduated from Monroe High School in 1983 and became a certified electrician. Following in the footsteps of several family members, he joined the Monroe Fire Department on October 16, 1986, at the age of 22. The Monroe Fire Department is a rural southern Wisconsin department consisting of 43 volunteer/paid on call members. David served on the department as a motor pump operator and was a team member of the safety committee. He was a certified Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Motor Pump Operator, Aerial Operator and was very proactive and specialized in rescue situations. He honorably wore the badge number 38.

David found his passion in vehicle extrication and served as Vice President of Safe and Fast Extrication, Inc. (S.A.F.E.), supporting their mission to lead the way in extrication training, research and development. Through S.A.F.E., he directed and was instrumental in the first post vehicle extrication research in the country, in collaboration with the Medical College of Wisconsin. This facility is dedicated to enhancing the team skills of emergency personnel and reducing the time it takes to get victims to trauma centers, as well as improving how they deal with serious injuries. David instructed hundreds of firefighters, EMTs and first responders on current rescue practices



and procedures. In addition, he competed in regional competitions and participated in international vehicle extrication competitions and learning symposiums, providing interaction with extrication specialists from around the world. He was also a team member of the Milwaukee Mile Fire Rescue Team, responsible for fire suppression and vehicle rescue during practices, time trials and races.

On June 12, 2007, during a routine training exercise, a hose drill with SCBAs, David collapsed between evolutions from a heart attack. His brother firefighters were unable to revive him.

*This day pains me the most.  
You were too young to leave  
your post.*

*A happy day this is not.*

*Remember that day was hot.*

*I talk to you out loud.*

*Your memory stands out proud.*

*I think of you this day...*

*But I do that everyday.*

*Your brother — Mark*

David leaves behind his family of two sons, a daughter, parents, two sisters and a brother and their spouses, plus three nephews.

Your unconditional love and funny little laugh is missed by all you touched.

*Your sisters — Ruth Ann and Linda*



# Remembering



## Benjamin Craig Rouchon

### Bluff Creek Volunteer Fire Department — Louisiana

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter/EMT

Date of Death: December 21, 2003

Age: 25

Benjamin Craig Rouchon, 25 years old, was home with his family in Clinton, Louisiana, on a Sunday morning, when he got word that the Woodland Fire Department was requesting medical help. A routine medical call for one local volunteer firefighter/first responder became the last one that he would ever go on. Ben, known to fire departments as "327," died in an automobile accident while en route to a medical call in Clinton. Benjamin was honored with the presence of Acadian Ambulance, which he worked for, along with his fire department family, Clinton Police Department, and the East Feliciana Parish Sheriff's Office, all of which he made time for.

Ben was born in Zachary, Louisiana, and raised in Clinton and could never imagine living elsewhere. The pride and admiration he had for his community was resoundingly expressed in his actions. He was active in church and took pride in his faith. Ben's dedication to providing a positive environment for the youth in his community was astounding, from coaching baseball to being a leader in his church's youth group. He joined



the volunteer fire department in high school. Ben also served as a reserve Clinton police officer. Ben was about to complete his tactical EMT training, and his excitement was contagious. Ben worked for Acadian Ambulance, and he had found his calling. He loved what he did, and he was good at it.

Ben was a man of true integrity, gentle strength, and many more qualities than there is paper. He truly did not want any credit for all the things he did. All of his many accomplishments were earned, and the gratitude he had for those who believed in him was immeasurable. Ben was a respected and highly dedicated medic, and loving team member who served his community well.

Those who knew Ben knew he was a character; he always had a straight face even when he was joking. He was a friend, a colleague and a fellow first responder. He had a family besides his birth family that only a few knew about. The family I speak of is his fire department family. Ben was going to help his fellow fire department members on Sunday morning when his life was put in the hands of his fire department family.





# Remembering



## Darrell K. Michael

### Russell Volunteer Fire Department — Pennsylvania

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: President

Date of Death: November 3, 2003

Age: 60

Darrell joined the Russell Volunteer Fire Department in 1960, at the age of 18. When the fire whistle blew, Darrell was out the door and jumping into a fire truck or ambulance, whatever the need.

When the members of the Russell Volunteer Fire Department purchased new land to build a new fire hall, Darrell was instrumental in the financial planning and construction. He devoted many, many hours working on the new building and was dubbed “the push behind the paintbrush.”

Darrell was totally devoted to the success of the department. He served as fire chief for ten years, as ambulance secretary for 17 years, and as a building trustee. He was on the bingo committee and never missed working Bingo on Tuesday nights. Darrell’s final service was as president of the department. Darrell was honored as “Firefighter of the Year,” voted by the members. When there was something going on at the fire hall, Darrell was part of it.

Darrell felt strongly about paying off the fire hall mortgage and put a plan in motion to do so. The mortgage

was satisfied in March 2004, after his death, at a special mortgage burning ceremony at the Russell Fire Hall.



Darrell retired from the Warren County School District after 30 years of service. He was an active member of the Russell United Methodist Church. He served as head trustee and as a member of the steering committee for the building project “Find Us Faithful.” He was voted “Man of the Year” by members of the Russell United Methodist Church.

Darrell’s family was very important to him. He is survived by his wife of 36 years, Kathy, and four wonderful and caring daughters and sons-in-law: Angela and Pat Hamilton, Jennifer and Steve Johnson, Sarah and Bill Frederick and Elizabeth and Joe Schmader. Darrell was a very loving grandfather, affectionately called “Papa” by Jacob, Jared and Justin Hamilton; Samantha Schmader; and Rachel and Abbey Frederick.

His passing left a hole in the hearts of his family, members of the fire department, many friends and extended family and the community he served.

# Remembering

## Greg Vieth

### Davenport Fire Department — Iowa

Classification: Career

Rank: Lieutenant

Date of Death: January 9, 2004

Age: 52

Gregory Vieth was respected for his dedication to his job and his family. Greg was focused on prevention. While working in the fire marshal's office, he revised a fire code manual to make inspections easier for firefighters. He felt honored to be a member of the HAZMAT team for the Scott County Community of Iowa. Davenport Fire Chief Mark Frese stated, "Greg was a man of high energy, and I wish I had a hundred more just like him." He had an effective, intense leadership style and always tried to see the best qualities in his fellow workers.

Vieth graduated from South Milwaukee High School in the late 1960s. He attended Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, and was a wellness and business teacher for several years. After trying out several occupations, he found his true love in firefighting.

He was a strong union member, and the day of his death was to meet with presidential candidate John Kerry as a representative of the local firefighters' union. He used his knowledge in business and accounting that he received at St. Ambrose University to help the firefighters and police officers negotiate a progressive contract with the city leaders. Greg was a master with numbers and statistics.

He led by example with physical fitness. He rode his bike to work, after a 45-minute fun ride, before his job began at 6:45 a.m. most working days. He lifted weights, promoted physical fitness, and helped pay for weightlifting equipment before the city realized its importance. He was also very proud that he participated together with other city workers in a local triathlon.

Greg had a lifelong love of learning and felt compelled to always better himself in his life goals. He was a hands-on type of guy who always wanted to be on the front end of the fire hose and in the middle of the action, but he was always willing to do whatever it took to help out others in need.

Greg completely embraced life and the love of his family. He was married to Jo, his wife of 29 years. His sons, Chad and Travis, were the light of his life.

He could not stop talking about them. He was a hands-on father who did childcare, field trips and never missed their activities when not at work. He coached their activities and did endless practice with them when they were growing up. The spirit of their father lives within Chad and Travis to this day.

Greg suffered a fatal heart attack during physical training. Family, friends and co-workers have missed Greg greatly since his early death.



# Remembering

## William "Bill" Riley

### Liberty Fire Department — Missouri

Classification: Career

Rank: Deputy Chief

Date of Death: October 6, 2004

Age: 46

William (Bill) Riley was a member of the Kansas City (Missouri) Fire Department for 25 years. His career began November 15, 1977. He was promoted to fire apparatus operator in July 1988; captain in January 1992 and division chief in January 2001.

During his tenure with the KCFD, Bill worked as the department's fleet manager, managing some 70 apparatus and vehicles. The position was one of the most difficult jobs at that time, due to the condition of the fleet. Bill worked diligently, building relationships with fleet maintenance and the firefighters.

Bill received the firefighter of the year award in 1995, presented by the Optimist Club for outstanding work in the commu-

nity. In 1996, Bill was presented with a letter of appreciation from the Veterans of Foreign Wars for his willingness to volunteer within the community. Bill retired from the KCFD in December 2002.

In August 2003, Bill joined the Liberty Fire Department as the Deputy Chief/EMS Director. In the short time Bill worked for the City of Liberty, he managed to implement some significant changes. Most notable was the outsourcing of EMS billing, which resulted in a \$600,000 increase in revenue to the City of Liberty.

Bill was respected by all. He was a Godly man whose spirit-filled demeanor brought peace, joy and happiness to those around him. Bill leaves behind his wife, Vicki, and son, Landon.







# Remembering



## Chelsea Lyn Garvin

### Fish River-Marlow Fire & Rescue Department — Alabama

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: December 15, 2005

Age: 19

Chelsea began her training with the Fish River-Marlow Fire Department as an eighteen-year-old Fairhope High School senior. She received her First Responder Certificate from the Alabama Fire College on March 27, 2005, and Volunteer Firefighter I Certificate from the Foley Fire Department on May 11, 2005. Her hard work throughout the 160 hours of training earned her the Certificate of Most Improved Recruit Firefighter from the Foley Fire Department.

During the May ceremony, a video was shown depicting the various training exercises that the graduates had endured. The Foley fire chief told the friends and families gathered that he wanted us to see what they had been through. He went on to say that there had been some tough times for the recruits, resulting in some becoming physically ill and, on one occasion, being reduced to tears. Upon leaving the ceremony, I asked Chelsea if she was one who got sick. She replied that it wasn't her and, after a short pause - knowing what I might be thinking - said it wasn't her who had cried either! I now understood the nervous laughter and sidelong glances shared on stage by her fellow male recruits.

During the summer, Chelsea enrolled in EMT training while serving with the Fish River-Marlow Volunteer Fire Department. On December 10, 2005, she received

an offer for full-time employment with a local fire department and was ecstatic. She shared the news with us and then left to work on the safety vessel with two other Fish River volunteer firefighters, escorting the annual Christmas Boat Parade on Fish River.

We can only imagine how she must have felt that night, escorting the beautifully decorated boats, Christmas lights reflecting off the water, excited about her new opportunity, in love and loving what she was doing. Knowing how incredibly happy she was that night is of some solace, considering that few of us ever achieve such contentment in our lifetime.

With the parade safely completed and rounding the last curve on the return trip to the marina, Chelsea's boat was struck head-on by another, much larger vessel. Chelsea was the last to be pulled from the water. Artificial resuscitation restored her heart beat, and she remained on life support in an irreversible coma for five days. On December 15, 2005, nineteen-year-old Chelsea was removed from life support, set free from the constraints of this world and undoubtedly on to adventures we cannot even begin to imagine.

On December 9, 2006, the Fish River-Marlow Fire Station was named in Chelsea's honor and is now the Chelsea Lyn Garvin Station.





# Remembering



## David W. Stautamoyer

### Blountsville/Stoney Creek Township Volunteer Fire Department — Indiana

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Assistant Chief

Date of Death: August 18, 2005

Age: 57

David brought out the best in everyone. He was a volunteer with the Modoc Volunteer Fire Department for 31 years and with the Blountsville/Stoney Creek Township Volunteer Fire Department for 15 years. At the time of his death, David was serving as assistant chief for both departments. Besides fighting fires, David spent many hours working for the departments in other ways. For 30 years, one of his favorite activities was lighting the fireworks at the Modoc Fourth of July celebration.

Many of the people that David helped during his involvement with both fire departments were longtime neighbors and friends. He lived in the Losantville, Indiana, area for over half his life. David and Paulette, his wife of 34 years, have three children that also grew up in this area—their daughter, Kimberly Miller (Gil), and two sons, Kevin (Amber) and Kristofor. David loved firefighting, but nothing surpassed the love he had for family. He enjoyed holidays and was the “grillmaster” during frequent summer gatherings. David especially loved spending time with his grandkids, Lacy Ann, Taylor Mae, Cody Dawson (CD), and Jessica Walker.

David’s desire to assist others began early in his life. He started as a boy scout and later served as a troop leader for many years. David enlisted in the Air Force at 18.



An unexpected industrial accident involving his father led to David’s honorable discharge due to family hardship, in order to run the family business. This is where David learned many of the skills he used throughout his life. He continued to serve others, including the Muncie Blind Association, through the Lions Club of Muncie, of which he was president three times. The Lions Club awarded David a lifetime membership and the Melvin Jones Fellowship Award.

David worked as maintenance supervisor for Cintas Corp. in Muncie, Indiana. He was employed there for 35 years. He was a jack-of-all-trades and could fix almost anything. Because of his generous spirit and work ethic, Cintas established a mental attitude award given in his honor.

It was very rare to be around David and not hear his fire radio. One Christmas, he left the family gathering at his sister’s house to assist with a fire in a nearby neighborhood, even though neither of his departments was involved. To him, it didn’t matter... someone needed help.

David died after responding to an EMS call with the Blountsville department. He continued to give to others even after his death, as an organ and tissue donor. The void left by David’s death is huge; the impact that he had on those that knew him is by far greater.

# Remembering

## Paul Ryan Brady

### Malverne Fire Department — New York

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: July 30, 2006

Age: 42

Paul Ryan Brady was born on May 17, 1964, in Manhasset, to Frank A. Brady, Jr. and Helen Ryan Brady. After graduating from St. Mary's High School in Manhasset, Paul earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from St. John's University in 1987. On Sept. 27, 1997, Paul married Lisa L. Humberston, daughter of William and Mary Louise Humberston of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Soon thereafter, Paul and Lisa bought their first house in Malverne.

Very active throughout his life, Paul climbed Mount Rainer in Washington and finished several 100-mile charity bicycling events. When he wasn't busy lending a hand at the firehouse or training for an upcoming bicycle ride or climb, Paul devoted his time to working around his home, a hobby that filled him with pride. Paul was a familiar sight walking his two favorite dogs around Malverne.

After joining the Malverne Fire Department, Paul quickly became friends with the entire membership. He always had a smile on his face and was usually one of the first men to arrive to calls in the middle of the night. A classic rock buff, Paul typically arrived at the firehouse wearing a 15-year-old t-shirt from a rock concert he had attended. These t-shirts became one of Paul's trademarks, and many Malverne Fire Department members still proudly wear some of Paul's t-shirts today. Paul took great pleasure in

his work at the firehouse and in spending time with the other members. He was always willing to lend a hand to anyone who needed it, or to share one of his beloved homemade microbrews with a brother firefighter at a party.



One of the best Memorial Day BBQs ever to take place at the firehouse was run by Paul Brady. As with any task, Paul put his whole heart and soul into the project, hiring a band and meticulously planning the menu so that everyone in attendance would have a great time. It was truly one of the best gatherings the department ever shared, and Paul enjoyed every minute of it.

On the morning of July 30, 2006, Paul reported to the firehouse to do a routine inspection on the truck for which he was the department mechanic. Paul accidentally fell off the truck. He was treated immediately by his brother firefighters and rushed to the hospital. Unfortunately, Paul succumbed to his injuries later that day.

Paul is sorely missed in Malverne and in the firehouse. His happy-go-lucky attitude, his big smile, his open heart and his great sense of humor will never be replaced; nor will his unwavering commitment to his duty as a firefighter, a duty he fulfilled with pride.





# Remembering



## John A. Stura

### North Belle Vernon Fire Department — Pennsylvania

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: October 16, 2006

Age: 78

Those who knew John would say, "What a great guy." He was well liked and respected in the community. Many lives were affected when John was struck by a vehicle and lost his life while doing fire department business on October 16, 2006. Many of his firemen buddies were with him, holding his hand while he died.

After high school, John joined the United States Air Force and served during WWII from 1941-1945. After being discharged from the Air Force, he got a job with Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel Co, at the Monessen, Pennsylvania, plant. He was general foreman and retired after 36 years.

In 1952, he married Gloria, his wife for almost 54 years. He had a daughter, Lorene; three grandchildren, Lisa, Gary, and John; four great-grandchildren, Kelsey, Brendon, Brayton, and Britton.

John joined the North Belle Vernon Fire Department (Station #80) in 1964 and remained active until his death. John's wife says he died doing what he enjoyed and loved. During the time he was a member, he received the Chief's Award in 1984, Fireman of the Year in 1987, and the Presidential Award for his dedication.

John was a member of the American Legion, the East Belle Vernon Athletic Association, and Naomi Club. He enjoyed bowling, playing cards, and painting. He was a big fan of the Pittsburgh Steelers and was a season ticket holder for years.

John was blessed that he was able to see three of his four great-grandchildren and enjoyed spending time with them. His buddy was Brendon, whom he enjoyed taking to the fire hall and always buying and giving him anything resembling firemen. The last time he was with Brendon, he presented him with a Station 80 fireman's helmet.

John's first love was his family, and he would do anything he could to help them and anyone else who needed him. He lived a simple life. His second love was being a member of the fire department. He remained active for 42 years, even after he could not fight fires because of his age. He was proud to be a fireman and very dedicated. He is truly missed.

John may be gone, but he will never be forgotten. His memory lives on in the hearts of family and friends.



# Remembering

## Gary Cook

### Medina Lake Volunteer Fire Department — Texas

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: September 17, 2006

Age: 49

Gary Cook suffered a fatal heart attack after participating in ladder drills and extrication training and responding to a fire call. He was a 15-year veteran firefighter with the Medina Lake Volunteer Fire Department.

He worked for Methodist Hospital in San Antonio for eight years and was employed by Getinge USA at the time of his death. He

was a member of St. Christopher's parish, where he served on the vestry, choir, and as the acolyte sponsor.

A loving husband, and devoted father and grandfather, he is survived by his wife of 27 years, two daughters, his parents, siblings, and extended family.

Gary was a caring man, quick to serve the needs of others.



*No kind action ever stops with itself. One kind action leads to another. Good example is followed. A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees. The greatest work that kindness does to others is that it makes them kind themselves.*

— Amelia Earhart



# National Fallen Firefighters Foundation

Congress created the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to lead a nationwide effort to honor America's fallen firefighters. Since 1992, the non-profit Foundation has developed and expanded programs that fulfill that mandate. Our mission is to honor and remember America's fallen fire heroes and to provide resources to assist their survivors in rebuilding their lives.

## **SPONSOR THE ANNUAL NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL WEEKEND**

Each October, the Foundation sponsors the official National tribute to all firefighters who died in the line of duty during the previous year. Thousands attend the weekend activities that include special programs for survivors and coworkers, along with moving public ceremonies.

## **HELP SURVIVORS ATTEND THE WEEKEND**

The Foundation provides travel, lodging and meals for immediate survivors of fallen firefighters being honored. This allows survivors to participate in Family Day sessions conducted by trained grief counselors and in the public tributes.

## **OFFER SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR SURVIVORS**

When a firefighter dies in the line of duty, the Foundation provides survivors with a place to turn. Families receive emotional assistance through a Fire Service Survivors Network. This Network matches survivors with similar experiences and circumstances. This contact can be an important part of their healing. Families receive a quarterly newsletter and specialized grief resources. Our Web site provides information on Federal, State and local survivor benefits and other resources.

## **AWARD SCHOLARSHIPS TO FIRE SERVICE SURVIVORS**

Spouses, children and stepchildren of fallen firefighters are eligible for scholarship assistance for education and job training costs. Since 1997, the Foundation has awarded scholarships totaling over one million dollars to survivors of America's fallen firefighters.

## **HELP DEPARTMENTS DEAL WITH LINE-OF-DUTY DEATHS**

Under a Department of Justice grant, the Foundation offers training to help fire departments handle a line-of-duty death. Departments receive extensive pre-incident planning support. With support from the Department of Justice, a new initiative is establishing response teams at the state level to provide assistance to departments and families when a line-of-duty death occurs.

## **WORK TO PREVENT LINE-OF-DUTY DEATHS**

With the support of fire and life safety organizations, the Foundation has launched the "Everyone Goes Home" campaign to reduce firefighter deaths. Its goal is to reduce line-of-duty firefighter deaths by 25 percent in 5 years and by 50 percent in 10 years.

## **CREATE A NATIONAL MEMORIAL PARK**

The Foundation is expanding the National memorial site in Emmitsburg, Maryland, to create the first permanent National park honoring all firefighters. The park includes a brick Walk of Honor that connects the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Chapel and the official National monument.





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*...and hundreds of others who have helped in so many ways.*

*Special thanks to the members of the fire service that assisted and served as family escorts and the honor guard units that participated in the Memorial Weekend programs. Special thanks to our survivors who return each year and assist with Memorial Weekend activities.*

*On the wings of a snow white dove  
He sends His pure sweet love  
A sign from above  
On the wings of a dove*

*When troubles surround us  
When evils come  
The body grows weak  
The spirit grows numb*

*When these things beset us  
He doesn't forget us  
He sends down His love  
On the wings of a dove*

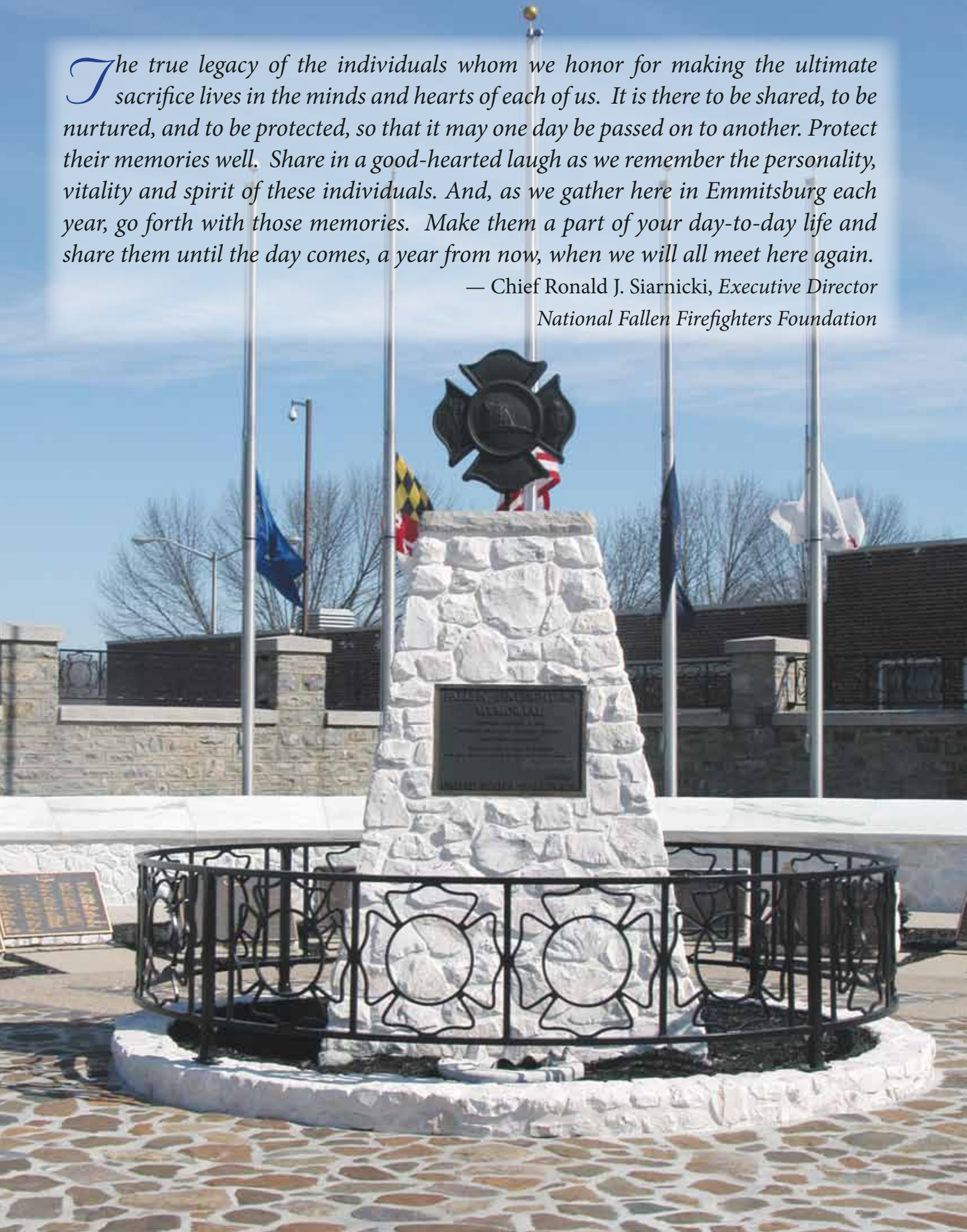
*-- Bob Ferguson*





*The true legacy of the individuals whom we honor for making the ultimate sacrifice lives in the minds and hearts of each of us. It is there to be shared, to be nurtured, and to be protected, so that it may one day be passed on to another. Protect their memories well. Share in a good-hearted laugh as we remember the personality, vitality and spirit of these individuals. And, as we gather here in Emmitsburg each year, go forth with those memories. Make them a part of your day-to-day life and share them until the day comes, a year from now, when we will all meet here again.*

*— Chief Ronald J. Siarnicki, Executive Director  
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation*



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