

# Our Firefighters, Our Heroes

## Honored by Seattle 4 - A Tribute to Service

Totem Report May 16, 2018

By Mike Colbrese

President Mark Wright opened the meeting by remarking that this is a special day for the Seattle Fire Department and Seattle 4. He commented, "It's the one time we come together each year to honor and recognize those who've gone beyond the call of duty. I'd like to introduce some guests who are here today to help us celebrate." He then introduced Deputy Chief Phil Jose, who helped emcee the day's ceremony. Phil works as the deputy chief in operations on C-shift.

The presentation of colors by the Fire Department's Pipe and Drum Band and Honor Guard provided a wonderful, ceremonial kickoff for the day's program. Chief Harold Scoggins, a Seattle 4 member, welcomed the audience on behalf of the Seattle Fire Department.



Mark then asked visiting Rotarians and non-Rotarians to stand and be recognized along with Seattle Fire Department personnel, their families, and other distinguished guests. Seattle Fire Department Chaplain Joel Ingebritson delivered the invocation.



Deputy Mayor Fong congratulated the recipients on behalf of Mayor Durkin and commented on the enduring impact that firefighters have on the community and each other. He closed by commending each for their courage, commitment, talent, and passion and thanked them for their service.

Local 27 President Lieutenant Kenny Stuart commended all public school teachers and gave a special thanks to his wife, who is a teacher. He recognized the common bond of service that exists between Rotarians and firefighters.

President Mark recognized three SFD members for their service to our country. Lieutenant Chris Carter from Engine 29 has been deployed since June of 2017 and will not return until summer of 2019. Captain David Pagan from Ladder 8 has been deployed since May 2017 and will return sometime this summer. Lieutenant Shaun Schenkelberg from Engine 36 is being deployed this month for approximately one year.

Chief Scoggins, noticeably bursting with pride, presented awards to all the recipients as they were announced by Mark and Phil.

The first award went to the members of the Mayday Procedures Workgroup, including Battalion Chief Matt Rogers, Battalion Chief Michael Sharp, Battalion Chief Geoffrey Wall, Battalion Chief Brady O'Brien, Battalion Chief Paul Foerster, Firefighter/Dispatcher Diana Delashmutt and Firefighter/Dispatcher Hilton Almond. They completed a comprehensive update of the department's Mayday Procedures, which represents a cultural shift not only for the Operations division, but Training and the Fire Alarm Center as well. As a result, over 1,000 members from the Fire Chief down received training.



Lieutenant Brian Anderson, Firefighter Jonathan Foree, Firefighter Gib Mastri II, and Firefighter Morten Haastrup each received an Administrative Citation for their efforts with the Pump Operator Academy. In 2017, the Pump Operator Academy Instructors were charged with creating a process by which engine drivers could train on pumping. The group designed a Pump Operator Academy, which meets all Washington State Certification Requirements as well as all NFPA requirements to certify successful students as pump operators.

Jose explained a particularly tense situation that occurred on March 13, 2017, when members of Ladder Company 11 heard sounds of a struggle while traveling on 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in West Seattle. Captain Jared Fields got out of the fire truck and immediately located a woman who was being assaulted in a truck. Captain Fields and his crew, Firefighter Ryan Rimmer, Firefighter Daryl Finley, and Firefighter John Guthrie, removed the assailant from the vehicle and placed themselves between him and the woman. The assailant then took a long bowie knife from the bed of his pickup, which the crew of Ladder 11 countered with hooks, Halligan tools, and verbal de-escalation. The assailant then fled the scene. The crew gave Seattle Police enough detail that the assailant was arrested a short time later.

In 2017, members of the Seattle Fire Department's Wildland Team deployed to 18 different wildland fires. Members were deployed in Washington, Oregon, and California for an equivalent of over 340, 24-hour shift days. A few of the larger fires the Wildland Team responded to include the Scatter Creek Fire and Jolly Mountain Fire in Washington, and the Central LNU Complex and Thomas Fire in California. Captain Erik Hotchkiss and Lieutenant Cameron Chambers have been a driving force on the Wildland Team for several years. They have been instrumental in expanding the team, coordinating deployments and scheduling wildland rotations.

Jose and Wright described other scenes in which firefighters displayed courage and service. Aid 14 was dispatched to the 5000 Block of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South for a report of a female down in early January of last year. Rescue One Members Lieutenant Colin McElroy and Firefighter Jesse Radomski found a woman curled up beneath a tree in

sub-freezing weather. McElroy and Radomski felt something wasn't right. They began calling women's shelters, found an opening, and transported the patient to a shelter. As it turned out the woman had experienced a tragic, sudden onset of mental illness. She had been missing for 72 hours and was presumed dead. The efforts of Lt. McElroy and Firefighter Radomski reunited this woman with her family.

On July 11, 2017, Lieutenant and President of Local 27, Kenny Stuart, was traveling on Interstate-90 outside Wall, South Dakota, when he came upon a cyclist who had been struck by a tractor-trailer. Lieutenant Stuart stopped to assist and after completing a rapid trauma survey, found the patient had severe injuries. The cyclist had a puncture wound in the neck, left shoulder injury, head trauma, and no motor function below the ribcage. Local fire units arrived, but Lieutenant Stuart remained with the patient and directed emergency medical service efforts. Lieutenant Stuart continued his treatment during transport to the airlift pickup point at the request of responders.

While attending a Rapid Entry Rescue Swimmer course hosted by West Pierce Fire and Rescue at American Lake in Lakewood, a male teenager nearby began struggling in the water. Lieutenant Michael McCaslin, Firefighter Dalen Roesijadi, and Firefighter Jonas Smith quickly realized that this was not part of the course, and began swimming toward the victim to assist. Prior to their arrival, another teen had attempted to intervene, and both began slipping beneath the surface. The fire department swimmer trainees successfully rescued both victims.

Several members of Recruit Class 105 were helping a fellow recruit move to a new home in Issaquah. During the move-in process, Firefighter Lane Cromelin, Firefighter Kody Hayes, Firefighter Katherine Knowles, Firefighter Tucker Lazare, Firefighter Ryan Read, Firefighter Nate Thompson, Firefighter David Walters and Firefighter Sam Woestwin heard a popping noise and a cry of "she shot me!" They proceeded to the adjacent apartment and found the shooting victim leaving an apartment. After getting the victim to shelter, the members began a full trauma assessment, called 911 and began rendering medical aid until the arrival of local first responders.

While driving northbound on Interstate 15 just north of Las Vegas, Firefighter Mark Jennings came upon a one-car motor vehicle incident where the driver had been ejected from the car, resulting in severe head trauma. An off-duty physical therapist had already started CPR, and Firefighter Jennings joined in without hesitation. He continued to perform CPR for 40 minutes until Clark County Paramedics arrived and took control of the scene.

While Lieutenant Mark Nelson was shopping near his home in Mill Creek, he noticed a fellow customer having balance problems in the adjacent check-out line. Lieutenant Nelson examined the man, who began to lose consciousness. After checking vital signs and finding no pulse, Lieutenant Nelson started CPR until the arrival of local Snohomish County Fire Units.

Certificate of Merit

Firefighter Aaron Fields was presented a Certificate of Merit for enhancing the Seattle Fire Department's reputation through his recognition by the International Society of Fire Service Instructors. Firefighter Fields was unanimously awarded the George D. Post Instructor of the Year Award for creating a grassroots program to enhance and improve engine company operations. In addition, Firefighter Fields has shared his experience and unique approach through teaching at national fire events, as an FDIC instructor, and as a member of the UL Fire Attack panel.

### Maltese Cross

The Maltese Cross, which is the second highest award for actions performed under hazardous conditions, is awarded to a member for meritorious actions that are beyond the call of duty and at great personal risk. The first Maltese Cross was awarded to Firefighter Brandon Freeland. While on vacation in Cashmere, Washington, Firefighter Freeland saw a male struggling in the current of the Wenatchee River. Firefighter Freeland saw the victim going underwater, and entered the river without the benefit of a personal flotation device to assist him. The victim went under water several times before Firefighter Freeland reached him. He had completed the Rescue Swimmer training a week prior, and was able to safely bring the victim through the whitewater to shore.

The second Maltese Cross was presented to Firefighter Josh Materi. Firefighter Materi was detailed to Ladder Company 10. While operating at an apartment fire on East Denny Way, Firefighter Materi learned of a victim on the third floor. He proceeded to floor three and entered the fire unit without the benefit of a hose line. He was immediately driven to his knees by fire rolling over the ceiling just inside the front door. Forcing the flames back with his pump can, Materi crawled into the room to search. Rising to his knees instantly blistered his ears, and he expended the remaining water in his pump can into the fully involved adjacent room to buy himself time to complete his search. Hearing a moan, Materi crawled over to a pile of debris and found a person. Seizing hold of the victim, Firefighter Materi successfully rescued her.

Each recipient was given a resounding, standing ovation.

### Employees of the Year for 2017

President Mark explained that these individuals have demonstrated incredible service to both the internal and external customers, going above and beyond their expectations. Videos accompanied each recipient's award presentation.



### Employee of the Year: Kellie Randall

Employee of the Year is awarded to the non-uniformed member who carries out responsibilities in an exemplary fashion. Through Randall's work, the department's

website has been totally re-done and several outreach programs have taken firefighters out into the community.

#### Firefighter of the Year: Craig Snow

Jose explained that Firefighter of the Year is someone who has a high regard for customer service, dedication to excellence and innovation and serves as a role model for others. Chief Scoggins commended Snow for being the driving force behind the implementation of the department's swimmer rescue program.

#### Officer of the Year: Captain Chris Greene

Mark remarked that Company Officers are responsible for providing support, guidance, and direction to their crews every day. They ensure that the department responds quickly and safely to each emergency, constantly serving their crew and the community.

#### Chief of the Year: Deputy Chief Reba Gonzales

Chiefs are responsible for ensuring that their members, battalions, and divisions are prepared for whatever comes their way.

#### Lifetime Achievement Awards

President Wright explained that this award recognizes the people who have devoted much of their lives in service through the Seattle Fire Department and honors one uniform and one civilian member. A video was shown depicting the work of each honoree.

The uniform member honored was Mike Osborne. Osborne, who is a driver, was celebrating the anniversary of his hiring, and has also served as a high school track coach for several years.

The honor for the civilian member was given to Loi Birge. Birge, who joined the department in 1978, has been the sole staffer responsible for entering all of the data on the department's medical health forms--an estimated one million entries since her start with the department.

#### Rotary Service Above Self Award

President Mark outlined the criteria for The Seattle Rotary Service Above Self Award, which recognizes community members who demonstrate care and concern for those in need, give selflessly of their time and resources to improve our community, and inspire others to take similar actions. "They are exemplars of the Rotary model of "Service Above Self."

Mark asked that Chief Scoggins provide remarks and present the award to this year's recipients of the Service Above Self Award, James and Sherry Raisbeck. In his remarks, Scoggins praised the Raisbecks for their unselfish giving and dedication to the Medic One Foundation, which provides the funding for exceptional training for each new

Medic One student. He extolled the virtues of Medic One and explained that each student receives an intensive, year-long, on-site training, which costs \$25,000. He went on to say that the Medic One Foundation is supported solely by contributions from donors.

“The Raisbecks support our paramedic program by giving \$50,000 *every year* to support the training of two paramedic students.” Over the years, the Raisbecks have funded training for 11 Seattle Firefighter Paramedics and have seen the paramedics in action. The Chief explained, “The firefighters and paramedics at Station 28 in South Seattle have responded to their home for numerous life-saving calls. We are happy we can be of service to you, and we are beyond thankful for the loyalty you provide to us. Thank you for being with us today to receive this award.”

Both Raisbecks thanked Seattle Firefighters for their service and for letting them be part of the team.

Jose closed by recognizing Assistant Chief of Resource Management Alan Vickery, Executive Director of Administration Helen Fitzpatrick, head of finance Chris Santos, and Assistant Chief of Operations Bryan Hastings. He provided special thanks to retired firefighter, Galen Thomaier, who supports the fire department through many activities.

To close the ceremony, the SFD Chaplain delivered the benediction by speaking to the joy, gratitude, and peace of the ceremony.

President Mark’s closing remarks included congratulations and thanks to the SFD Awards Committee, the combined, SFD and Rotary Awards Luncheon planning committee and the sponsors who made this event possible.