

FIRE FIGHTER FORUM

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the faint of heart. After all, very few want to work in the number one and two busiest stations in the city. But in his views, this is a segregation issue.

Fourth: He slandered me personally before City Council with an out-and-out blatant lie. This individual has attacked my good name and my integrity through his contemptuous remarks and false accusations before City Council and basically the public in general. I asked myself why should I be bothered by what he said after all, I'm not the only one he slandered that day. Well I do care because it does bother me when an individual tries destroying the reputation of individuals, reputations that take years to build only to be torn down by lies from an individual with selfish motives.

Fifth: I found it amusing when he mentioned that he had run for president of Local 341 and only received 100 votes out of approximately 3500 members making it appear that it was because of his race that he did not receive more votes. I assume that out of those 3500 possible votes, there were 750 to 800 total minorities, which could vote. That leads one to believe that he only received 1 out of every 7 or 8 votes from minorities even if 100% of them cast their votes. Those numbers show that this man does not represent every minority in this department but a select group, which he has surrounded himself with, men and

women who think and feel as he does. I have the utmost respect for minority Fire Fighters in this department, as not all have bought into his vindictive personal views. Men and women with integrity and intelligence, who think for themselves, refusing to let someone else think for them, refusing to let anyone brainwash them into a view of hate and discord and an attitude of endless excuses. It is time that this department, Fire Fighters from all races and ranks, comes together and takes a stand against individuals who would divide us by attacking the character of a few hoping to slither in and seize selfish opportunities through the chaos and disharmony they cause. I encourage the President of the International Association of Black Fire Fighters to make more public appearances as each one simply proves his lack of credibility and his inability to address real issues in this department and the solutions to those issues. Solutions other than fabricated lies and asking for someone's job only to be replaced by someone of his choosing with less qualifications.

In closing, I would remind all members that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. That light is only 12 months away, but only if you get involved to make it happen.

Danny Watkins, D.C. 82/D

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Remembering Our Fallen Fire Fighters

by Scott Mellott 15A

List of Line-of-Duty-Death Anniversaries for the month of November:

November 06, 1959 - Willis Neal McWhorter - Firefighter, Station 30

November 09, 1959 - D. H. "Jim" Chandler - Firefighter, Station 19

November 17, 1959 - Charles A. Jedlicka - Firefighter, Station 30

November 23, 1901 - Frank W. Medlenka - Driver, Station 8

List of retiree's who have recently died:

William D. May, served HFD 1951 to 1976, died Sept. 30th 2002.

Clare L. Travelbee, served HFD 1956 to 1978, died Sept. 8th 2002.

Wallace Andrew Whitley, served HFD 1946 to 1973, died Sept. 5th 2002.

The last weekend of September, I had the great pleasure of traveling to New York City to participate in a 5k run. The event was the First Annual Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers 5k Run. The event was held in honor of Stephen Siller, a New York City Fire Fighter who died on September 11 at the World Trade Center.

On the morning of September 11th, Stephen had just completed a shift at Squad 1 in Brooklyn and was on the way to meet his three brothers for their annual golf game. When he heard the news of the disaster at the World Trade Center, he turned around and headed for Manhattan. When he tried to enter the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, the police had closed it to traffic and would not allow him to travel through the tunnel by automobile. He then abandoned his truck and grabbed his fire gear and began to run through the tunnel. The crew from Engine 239 spotted him running on the catwalk in the tunnel with his gear slung over his shoulder. They picked him up and dropped him off at the WTC. He was last seen heading toward the towers to find his crew from Squad 1.

The First Annual Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers 5k Run was a wonderful event and I'm very glad I was able to be part of it. They had a total of 4,000 runners and walkers participating in the event. There was a ceremony before the race and after the race. The race began at the Brooklyn entrance to the tunnel and ended at Ground Zero. There were 343 FDNY Fire Fighters in dress uniform carrying American Flags lining the roadway in the tunnel. This was very impressive. After the last participant came through the finish line the 343 flag carrying fire fighters marched up to the finish line for the closing ceremony.

The event raised over \$150,000. This money was donated to the Stephen Siller, FDNY, "Let Us Do Good" Children's Foundation and to NYC Fire Fighter Burn Center Foundation.

In closing, in my own words, the spirit of this group of New Yorkers, just flat out overwhelmed me. I am looking forward to attending the event next year. The web site for this event is www.tunneltotowersrun.org.

Please visit my web site for more information on these fire fighters and many others that have made the ultimate sacrifice. www.houston-firememorial.org


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