



REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS

by Scott Mellott, Retired

As most know, I always welcome anyone who has words to say about a loved one. I feel that this column is a great place for someone to tell us about a loved one who is no longer with us. This month I am proud to share my column with Ryan Johnson who is a nephew of brother Fire Fighter Jay Jahnke. Jay died in the line-of-duty on October 13, 2001. Ryan was able to encourage other relatives to submit as well, however, I did not have enough space for them all, so I will continue this article next month. Right here is where I introduce my guest but as you can see below Ryan has done a great job of that himself.

To my brother and sister firefighters and friends:

First, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Ryan Johnson, and I have been with HFD for 11 years. My rank is Engineer/Operator/EMT currently assigned to Ambulance 38 on the A Shift. My grandfather was District Chief Claude Jahnke, and my Grandmother is Kay Jahnke, as some of you may know her. My father is retired Captain Rod Johnson (57/A). My mother Karen Jahnke Johnson is Captain Jay Jahnke's oldest sister. She is the oldest of four and Jay is the youngest.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Jay's family to once again thank everyone who has done so much for us. Thank you, Scott, for all that you have done to keep Jay's memory alive. You have told me more than once that Jay was like a brother to you, and I know he meant a lot to you. We would also like to thank the people who organized the many fundraisers for Dawn, Jayne, and Hunter. The Houston Fire Department Union Local 341 also deserves a great deal of thanks for taking care of virtually anything that was needed. A heart felt thank you to the Cy-Creek Volunteer Fire Department and Station 22, where Jay was a safety officer, for your fundraising and memorial ceremony. Thank you Fire Station 2 for holding the annual memorial gathering to remember Jay every year on each anniversary of his death. A special thanks to Troy Blakeney for providing his private jet to fly my first cousin Kenny into town from his military post so he could make it on time to the funeral for Jay. There were so many other things that were done that we were so thankful for. Thank you with all our hearts.

For as far back as I can remember, Jay has always loved the fire department. When I was a kid, we used to go to the fire muster downtown, and Jay was always getting into some kind of competition like the bucket brigade race. Sometimes he would take my older brother and I places, and we would stop by a fire station so he could show us the fire trucks.

When I got a little older, we would sometimes go to a fire scene that he had picked up on his scanner. I always thought it was so cool to get to go by the police cars and drive up by the fire trucks. He would say, "Just stay with me!" We would walk around and talk to people. I had no idea what they were talking about, and was too amazed by the fire and lights to listen.



Jay was so excited when I decided to become a Fire Fighter. He helped to guide me throughout my career. Jay told me to try and take every class the department offered like he did. I don't know how he accomplished all the things he did: father, Fire Fighter, instructor, side jobs, extra HFD classes, and too many more to list. I can only seem to do about three of those.

I remember when Jay, myself, and my friend Mike (now brother-in-law) went to the HFD Barbecue Cook-off in Memorial Park. Jay met us there. He had that silly-playful look on his face and said, "You guys thirsty? Want a beer?" His face lit up even more when we said yes. He replied, "Hope your really thirsty!" as he handed us each the biggest beer cans we had ever seen. These cans were almost as big as the mini kegs they sell in the grocery stores. They were called "ELEPHANT BEER", and we had to hold them with two hands. I met a lot of Fire Fighters that day with Jay, and we had some great laughs showing off that particularly strong beer.

Jay knew just about everybody. I used to have a great time with him at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Championship Barbecue Cook off. Jay was on the Safety Committee, and he could get us into any booth we wanted.

I was at the Four Leaf Towers fire where my Uncle Jay collided with fate. Those are the worst memories of my life. When they got Jay out of the building, I tried to make my way to him. The reality of the situation hit me when I saw from a distance his best friend Brad Stewart, and others, by his side attempting to revive him. Then all of my strength left me, and I collapsed. I am thankful that big Captain Rick Collins was there for me.

I think about Jay all of the time, especially on the mornings when I am driving to work. He has taught me to appreciate every moment of life. I know he is still with me, guiding me, until one day when we meet again and he says, "Just stay with me!" and he leads me to meet the Lord and all his new friends. I'm sure I'll be "amazed" beyond all belief.

I Love you and miss you Uncle Jay!

Remembering To Never Forget

HILLARY DARNELL EVANS
Served HFD from 1981 to 2007
Died September 16, 2007

WILBUR LEO SANFORD
Served HFD from 1963 to 2007
Died August 13, 2007

STEVEN SCOTT JAHNKE
Served HFD from 1972 to 2007
Died August 15, 2007

ALBERT LEE ZUBRIK
Served HFD from 1972 to 2007
Died July 26, 2007

DANIEL "DANNY" WAYNE CASANOVER
Served HFD from 1970 to 2002
Died July 25, 2007

MARSHALL ROBERTS, JR.
Served HFD from 1948 to 1980
Died July 20, 2007

LLOYD EARL THYER
Served HFD from 1942 to 2007
Died July 16, 2007

JOHN RILEY VOLLENTINE
Served HFD from 1973 to 1989
Died July 12, 2007

WILLIAM "BILL" LEE WHITE
Served HFD from 1974 to 1976
Died July 10, 2007

MAX HENRY McRAE
Served HFD from 1955 to 2004
Died July 6, 2007

JASON TEAGUE
Served HFD from 2001 to 2007
Died June 21, 2007

HORRACE FONTENOT
Served HFD from 1953 to 1966
Died June 4, 2007

KENNETH JEFF ROBINSON, JR.
Served HFD from 1948 to 1986
Died May 28, 2007

DOYLE DWAYNE JOHNSON
Served HFD from 1981 to 2006
Died May 20, 2007

HENRY HALLIO
Served HFD from 1952 to 1978
Died May 3, 2007

ROY ALEXANDER FOSTER, JR.
Served HFD from 1969 to 2004
Died May 3, 2007

OSCAR FREEMAN WALLACE, JR.
Served HFD from 1970 to 2000
Died May 1, 2007

RICHARD FRANK SMITH
Served HFD from 1978 to 2007
Died April 28, 2007

GEORGE W. WARD
Served HFD from 1945 to 1965
Died April 14, 2007

LARRY JULIAN BLACKMON
Served HFD from 1971 to 1978
Died April 4, 2007

FRANK JACOBS, JR.
Served HFD from 1947 to 1973
Died March 29, 2007

BOBBIE JAMES "BJ" EVANS
Served HFD from 1966 to 2001
Died March 21, 2007

HOMER EUGENE FRANKS
Served HFD from 1961 to 1977
Died March 17, 2007

JOHN TURNER COMSTOCK
Served HFD From 1978 to 1988
Died March 11, 2007

DOYLE SHELTON HOLDER
Served HFD From 1974 to 2005
Died February 25, 2007

CURTIS E. MORRIS
Served HFD From 1962 to 1986
Died February 20, 2007

AUSTIN PEAVY KENNADA
Served HFD From 1956 to 1983
Died February 18, 2007

MAXIE GENE JONES
Served HFD From 1959 to 1979
Died February 9, 2007

WILLIAM RAY YOUNG
Served HFD From 1955 to 1976
Died February 5, 2007

WILBER MARTIN JONES
Served HFD From 1945 to 1966
Died January 21, 2007

JIMMY EARL LILLEY
Served HFD From 1969 to 1991
Died January 20, 2007

LARRY ANTHONY WESLEY
Served HFD From 1979 to 2000
Died January 19, 2007

GEORGE EARL LOWDERMILK
Served HFD from 1950 to 2005
Died January 12, 2007

KENNETH RAY JUDD
Served HFD from 1963 to 1994
Died January 7, 2007

LEE DITTA
Served HFD from 1948 to 1978
Died January 1, 2007

**Total for the year from January 1, 2007
to present - 35 Deaths**

For current information on deceased
Fire Fighters, please go to my web site
www.houstonfirememorial.org
and click on "Recent Deaths"
or email Scott at scottmel@juno.com

OCTOBER DIED IN THE LINE-OF-DUTY ANNIVERSARIES

October 13, 2001
**JAY "JAY BIRD" PAUL
JAHNKE**
Captain, Station 2

October 19, 1971
**TRUXTON JOSEPH
HATHAWAY, JR.**
Fire Inspector, Training Academy

October 31, 1954
DELBERT HARVEY SHERFY
Chauffeur, Station 17

Celebrating 75 Years

1932 to 2007

Houston Professional Fire Fighter's Association, Local 341

As some of you may already know, this publication will be doing a two page picture spread each month for the year 2007. We will focus on the faces of our past and the present membership to celebrate Local 341's 75th year.

Scott Mellott



Station 22 - 1958, Robert Godbey (Bottom row sitting)

Photo provided by the family of Robert Godbey



Deputy Chief Drew Dodson - HFD 1942 to 1978

Photo provided by the family of Drew Dodson



I ran this picture last month and I was given some additional information on the picture. The fire station was not station 16 it was station 26 located at 3813 Broadway. The picture was taken in the early 1950's. Starting from the left. J. B. Martin (Chief Whitey Martin's uncle), Captain Walter Dudensing, Earl McWilliams, and Robert "Bob" Jacobs Sr.

Photo provided by the family of Walter Dudensing.

Celebrating 75 Years

1932 to 2007

Houston Professional Fire Fighter's Association, Local 341



Mike "Frog" Richardson, Robert Clayton, VE Rogers

Photo provided by Local 341



Claude Jahnke - Jay Jahnke, HFD graduation 1981

Photo provided by the family of Jay Jahnke



Top (L/R): Joe Lewandowski, Steve Jahnke, J. D. Winters, Tommy Schultz
Bottom: Chris Potier, Jeff Torongo, Kenneth Eisfeldt, James Sacco, Roland Chavez

Photo provided by the family of J. D. Winters.