



# REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS

*by Scott Mellott, Retired*

This month marks the 10th anniversary of the deaths of two of our Houston Fire Fighters - Lewis Mayo and Kim Smith. In the early hours of Monday, February 14, 2000, Engine 76 was first due for a report of a fire at a McDonald restaurant located at 12602 Bissonett. The building was heavily charged with smoke and fire and the of the two, upon entering, Kim took the nozzle over the counter heading to the seat of the fire in the back office of the restaurant. Lewis was in front of the counter "pulling slack", when without warning the roof collapsed trapping Lewis and temporarily trapping Kim. Kim was able to pull free leaving one of her boots and headed toward the back to hopefully escape. Lewis was near the side door and was pulled out immediately by his fellow Fire Fighters, and was rushed to the hospital where he was pronounced shortly after arrival. Kim was not able to escape and died before she was able to be rescued and was later found 10 feet from the back door of the building.

John and Jennifer Eby are two veteran Fire Fighters who were very close friends with Kim. I asked them to write about their friend.

*February 14, 2000. (Valentines Day) I was there that fateful night. The hardest thing I've ever had to do was call Jennifer that very early morning and tell her that her best friend, Kimberly Ann Smith had just been killed in a fire.*

*Kim was the kind of friend that most of us wish we could be. Jennifer received a call very early one morning telling her that her best friend had drowned while on vacation with her husband in New Zealand. It was a delayed honeymoon for them after more than a year of marriage. She was devastated to say the least. Kim was a rookie Fire Fighter at Station 68 where Jennifer worked. They hadn't known each other well and were not yet friends. Kim gave her a card to let her know how sorry she was for her loss. This was the kind of person she was. This was Kim. She genuinely cared about*



**February 14, 2000**  
**LEWIS EVANS MAYO, III**  
**Fire Fighter - Station 76/A**



**February 14, 2000**  
**KIMBERLY ANN SMITH**  
**Fire Fighter - Station 76/C**

*other people. This, along with many other wonderful traits, is the reason her and Jennifer became the best of friends. I know they shared most of their thoughts with each other, if not all.*

*As far I was concerned, she was my sister. We were her Texas family, as her immediate family lived in California. We spent holidays and birthdays together. Her and Jennifer traveled the country doing the combat challenge, even meeting up on occasion with Kim's father.*

*Kim was a driven person and wanted to succeed in all that she did. But it was never about her. She hated to fail in this profession because she felt she was failing those with whom she worked and those she was serving. She didn't want to let any of us down.*

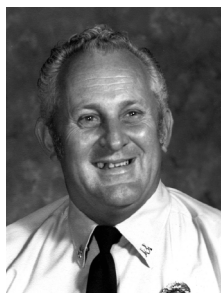
*She was also very competitive but also admired the accomplishments of those who bested her, though there weren't many. I remember the times I spent with her and Jennifer in the gym. Jennifer always told her she was freakishly strong, and boy she was right. Kim could bench press over 250 pounds, though you would never know to look at her. She made running the stadium steps at Rice University look easy. She didn't know how to give up, didn't know what those words meant.*

*Kimberly Ann Smith loved being a Fire Fighter and all that came with it, the camaraderie, the teamwork, the family atmosphere. She was the best of friend anyone could ever hope to have. She was the kind of person we should all aspire to become. This is why we loved her and why she will continue to be terribly missed.*

## LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH ANNIVERSARIES FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY



**February 03, 1969**  
**STEVE CHARLIE**  
**BARANOWSKI**  
**Captain - Station 37**



**February 04, 1977**  
**JACKIE DUNHAM**  
**LUDWICK**  
**Sr. Captain - Station 7**



**February 19, 2005**  
**GRADY DON**  
**BURKE**  
**Captain - Station 46**



**February 03, 1973**  
**LEWIS W. "MOE"**  
**RICHARDSON**  
**Captain - Station 7**



**February 14, 1921**  
**H. A. "ACE" HARRIS**  
**Pipe & Ladderman**  
**- Station 10**

**February 09, 1929**  
**JAMES MAGERSON "MAG" SMITH**  
**Pipe & Ladderman - Station 10**

**February 29, 1954**  
**WOODROW WILSON ERWIN**  
**Chauffeur - Station 24**