



The National Fire Heritage Center was pleased to have had the opportunity to give a print of the photograph entitled “Beyond Words” to the Line of Duty Death families in October 2016. Those wishing to obtain a personal signed copy are recommended to visit Mitchell Simon’s website at www.nevergiveup.us See related information on page 3.



Message from the President

The Future of the Past is Today

If you have followed the thought process behind the creation of the National Fire Heritage Center, you should be familiar with our motto of "Preservation of the Perishable." Several times, I have been approached by people asking me what that means.

Let me use a couple of ridiculous examples, the New York Super Pumper and the first smoke detector ordinance. The most perishable part of those two comparisons is the ordinance, not the chrome and steel of a giant piece of apparatus. Our entire effort is focused on those things that are disposed of on a routine basis that have historical significance. Hardware properly archived can last for centuries, but the individual acts and the preservation of the more vulnerable paper documents are susceptible to easy disposal.

Here at the NFHC, we are becoming increasingly successful in acquiring personal libraries that reflect that perishable type of information. More and more individuals are recognizing the value of these materials and are making extraordinary efforts to salvage them. Because the NFHC is not a fire museum, but rather an archive, we try to complement existing fire museums and fire libraries everywhere.

The interesting part of this phenomenon is that both hardware and perishables need a safe place to reside. At this year's Annual Board Meeting in

October, we discussed our capital infrastructure needs so we can start planning for an inevitable and increasingly vulnerable library of materials. The future of the past is going to be determined by our success in getting that fundraising effort going. We are looking for individuals who understand and respect the sophistication of this effort.

Vice President Bill Killen has followed up on our recent board action to create a Board of Trustees by appointing some new faces that may help us locate these badly needed funds. There will be more to report regarding these trustees, but it represents a major step forward of what we are attempting to do at the National Fire Heritage Center.

We have all heard the horror stories of lifetime collections being carted off to the dump because no one was interested enough to triage the material. We never want to forget that those past publications and documents in many cases are first person history. If we are to succeed in the future to preserve the past, we must have an adequate facility to house it.

As a member of the National Fire Heritage Center, your ideas are important to us, so I encourage individuals to come forward with any ideas they have.

Your Board remains dedicated to its motto. Let's make our future of the past a bright one by solving the problems of our infrastructure needs while we are engaged in our archival activities.

Ronny J. Coleman
President, NFHC

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Synopsis of October 2016 Board Meeting Minutes

The National Fire Heritage Center Board of Directors met in Emmitsburg, MD, on Friday October 7, 2016. The Board Meeting was well attended, and several action items were discussed that may be of interest to our committees and membership.

One of the more important actions was to elect Officers and appoint Directors. Officers for the coming year are **Ron Coleman**, President; **Willie Shelton**, Vice President-Operations; **Bill Killen**, Vice President-Finance; **Stuart Nathan**, Secretary; and **Paul Brooks**, Treasurer.

New Directors appointed for a three-year term are:

- **Steve Austin**
- **Fred Brower**
- **Ty Dickerson.**

There were three new inductees to the Hall of Legends, Legacies, and Leaders. They are:

- **James Manser**
- **Harvey J. Eisner**
- **Frederick R. Seibel.**

The Board agrees that the NFHC Strategic Plan has been completed for the most part and needs to be renewed. An online poll will be set up with all parties to determine a date.

During this year's meeting, the NFHC was allowed to participate with the LODD families by contributing a special photograph entitled "Beyond Words." Copies of this were given to the majority of the LODD families present. **(See photo on right.)**

Work has begun on establishing an Amazon Smile Account to increase our revenue. This is especially important in view of the fact that our income this



year barely exceeded our expenditures. Additional information will follow to all participants to sign up for the Smile account.

There was considerable discussion about the newsletter and website. One suggestion was to improve the content of our newsletter by having more submittals.

After considerable discussion, the Board approved a statement that the annual Board of Directors meeting should remain in Emmitsburg. It was the consensus of the group that for the near future, the NFHC should also remain in Emmitsburg.

Ronny J. Coleman
President, NFHC

History Makers: Gary West

Brief bio

As **Deputy Commissioner of the TN Department of Commerce and Insurance**, I oversee the State Fire Marshal's Office. I have proudly served as a volunteer in the fire service for the past 40 years, of which, 27 years has been as a career member. My professional career started at the Maryville, TN, Fire Department in 1984, and I later became fire chief at the Gatlinburg, TN, Fire and EMS Department. In 2005, I was hired as a Fire Management Consultant with the University of Tennessee to work in municipalities across the state. After working with almost every city in the state, I was hired in 2011 as the Assistant Commissioner of Fire Prevention and later promoted to Deputy Commissioner. My education includes a bachelor's degree in management and a master's degree in Business Management. I hold many certifications and have served in many organizations.

What first attracted you to working in fire safety?

My attraction to the fire service started at a very young age. As a child, we lived in Atlanta, GA, close to the FD headquarters and I was fascinated by the fire trucks and red lights. In high school, I joined the local FD as a junior firefighter, and by the time I was 17, I was allowed to actually drive a fire truck. This special privilege was given to me, because I was also trusted to drive a school bus for the local school. Both of these opportunities were provided because there was a shortage of drivers for school buses and fire trucks. Through high school and college, all I wanted to do was be in the fire service. I spent time in both EMS and law enforcement along the way, but helping people has always been my drive and attraction for being in the fire service. As my career progressed, I became more involved in codes and fire prevention. I realized my success would be in saving lives through fire prevention. This has truly been my life.



How did your career path change? What was your biggest surprise?

My career has taken several turns. I stepped off of my career path for a few years to be a business manager, and I have always dabbled in many other types of work as most firefighters have. Everything I have done prepared me for my current role. My experience in law enforcement, training, codes, fire prevention, and the fire service has been necessary for my success. My biggest surprise was fulfilling the dream of leading the fire service at a state level as Fire Marshal. I wasn't sure I was prepared at first. However, through my network of support and advice, we have had success to better the fire service in our state. After holding this position as at the state level, my ambitions continue to grow, and I have several thoughts of possible paths -- all while remaining in the fire service. I want to use my influence to carry on my lifelong mission in the fire service. I will also continue to volunteer at my local fire department as long as I can because this is who I am, and who I have always been.

In your view, what has been your greatest contribution to fire safety and why?

My greatest contribution and impact has clearly been my experience in working closely with cities and counties at the local level since 2005. Being able to provide information and experience to assist local community leaders

has been very rewarding. Through these relationships and partnerships, I have been able to have huge influence in sharing best practices in operations and prevention. Fire safety has become a more acceptable concept from these networking opportunities. While I am very humble, I think my best ideas and suggestions came from sharing and collaborating information from others.

Fire safety has progressed over the past several years through modern media, but I feel the most successful progress has been through modern tracking of events and forecasting in high risk areas. These are the two areas that I have focused on most. When you can forecast an event, there is opportunity to prevent it. That is my belief in improving fire safety.

Who were your mentors and how did they help you?

I have had many mentors and advisors throughout my career. Probably the closest mentors were three fire chiefs. My first chief started my service off right when I was a teenager by promoting the basics of firefighting and introducing the thought of a lifetime learning experience. **Chief Ed Ingram** of the Robbinsville, NC, Fire Department was a volunteer fire chief respected in the community, who served as a both a community leader and father figure to many young men back in the day. The second Chief was the one who had confidence in me to push me to start a lifetime career in the fire service. This person gave me guidance and taught me to have passion for the ones we serve. He believed prevention was important and he gave me many opportunities to improve my skills and knowledge. **Fire Chief Bruce Hill** of the Maryville, TN, Fire Department made me a better firefighter and a better person. The third chief not only gave me opportunity, but offered me responsibility. He truly believed in me and my leadership abilities. As a close friend he has always supported me through both the good and the bad. After offering me opportunities to be successful, he also allowed me to leave and

become successful as a fire chief outside of his department. **Fire Chief Ed Mitchell** of the Maryville, TN, Fire Department has been a friend and mentor throughout my career.

These are who I refer to as the “3 Chiefs” who have been great mentors to me and many others. These are the men I try to be like today.

What are the biggest challenges in the next 5 years? 10 years?

Our biggest challenge for fire prevention and safety, most recently, has been the thought that “codes and standards should be reduced or removed because we haven’t had recent disaster events where people have been injured or killed.” An example is the attempted removal of fire drills in schools, because there hasn’t been deadly fires in schools in present-day times. The fact is -- we continue to have school fires. School fires are extinguished by built in protective systems, and escape is made because of **practiced** fire drills. In the next 5 to 10 years, I feel we will continue to fight these challenges, and state regulations will supersede proven codes and standards. We will continue to be challenged with fire prevention efforts and while firefighting practices will improve, I feel that prevention will continue to fall behind. While many think prevention will never be as cool as suppression, I hope this changes to the contrary within the next 5 to 10 years.

What is fire safety's biggest piece of unfinished business?

We need to continue to change the image of fire prevention and the vital role it plays in saving lives and reducing property loss. We need to work closer with the insurance industry in measuring and forecasting risk and loss. We need to work closer with private industry to implement proven business strategies to reduce fire deaths and property loss. We still have a lot of unfinished business. We will not be done until the threat is gone. Our business of fire prevention will probably never be finished.

If you could start your career over, what would you do differently?

I would work even harder and be more focused in the early part of my career. "Focusing on fire prevention where it matters most," would be a theme I would have adopted years ago. I would have published more, I would be more involved in prevention efforts, and I would become more exposed to fire prevention efforts. I don't think anything I have done has been wasted time. I would simply be more focused.

Any regrets?

No regrets! Money has never been a consideration for me in a career that has so many rewards. The fire service has been very good to me. I only wish I could have more time to do more. To have personally helped more people, to have influenced more fire service personnel, and to have made more friends along the way. But again -- I have no regrets!

What is your advice to those who are just starting a career in fire safety?

"Follow your dreams" is what I tell young firefighters. That's what I did. When someone says "you can't improve yourself" or "your education or training doesn't get you ahead"... say "I don't believe it." And move forward. I have had many people try to break my passion, but I always keep my focus. Following the path to serve and protect others is very rewarding.

Updates from NFHC HQ

Website Enhancement

Much progress has been made by Webmaster **Maury Grundy** with many superb upgrades already done. A bit more needs to be completed before draft rollout to NFHC Leadership seeking review and feedback will occur. The package is better than any of us could have imagined!!!

Materials Processing

Archivist **Frank Schmersal** continues to devote significant time to all manner of actions regarding receiving and processing (identifying, photographing, labelling, database

documentation info entering, etc.) of newly donated print materials and also non-stop processing of materials in cartons from his year's-long backlog, too. Accounting, tracking and placement of these items are everyday efforts (including preparations that accompany materials on display). And, somehow he's managed to keep his sanity, too, while also doing a yeoman's effort here on a great many of those "other duties as required.

Logo Trademark

The NFHC's trademarked logo was 'renewed' with the **U.S. Patent and Trademark** Office to insure continued legal protection. This was required between the 5th and 6th year from issue and will be required again between the 9th and 10th year and then every 10 years thereafter, too.

Sprinkler System

A Central Station Technician (from **Westminster Security**, the alarm company) was in on 11/14 and worked for 5 hours to install sprinkler system tamper and flow switches via wireless to the main panel as authorized by the County's **Office of Life Safety**. This County agency, within the building department, is the approval point that started with plans review and continues through operational install / system set-up. Following approval (sign-off), on-going oversight shifts to the County Fire Marshal's Office.

Gift Shop Stocking

Over the past few weeks, Home Office Staff have been cleaning, repairing and preparing misc. items to go on sale in the Gift Shop. These have included a number of 'one-only' items like duplicate texts / magazines, toys, figurines; mini fire marks (paperweights), models, etc. – typically having values of \$1 to as much as 10 or so dollars and on rare occasion up to \$40. A fair amount of time is required to clean and price such things, but they add variety to the saleables inventory, thus drawing in potential purchasers who sometimes also include cash donations, too.

R. Wayne Powell
NFHC Executive Director

Did You Know?

Fire of Rome

In 64 AD on July 18, a fire erupted in Rome. Spreading rapidly throughout the market area in the center of the city, the fire burned for over a week. When the fire was finally over, almost two-thirds of Rome was nearly



destroyed. Emperor Nero used the fire as an opportunity to rebuild Rome in the more orderly Greek style.

Some have speculated that the Emperor

had ordered the burning of Rome to indulge his architectural taste, but he was away in Antium when the fire began. According to later Roman historians, Nero blamed members of the mysterious Christian cult. He launched the first Roman persecution of Christians in response.

Great Fire of London Revisited

On the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire of London, American artist David Best, who is known for making giant structures meant to be set on fire, recreated the Great Fire of London.



During a weeklong festival in London marking 350th anniversary of the Great Fire, a 400-foot, scaled replica of the older skyline was incinerated on the Thames River as part of the festival.

Fire at the White House



During the War of 1812, on August 24, 1814, British troops

entered Washington, DC, and set fire to the White House. First Lady Dolly Madison had already fled to safety in Maryland. The White House fire was set in retaliation for the American attack on the City of York in Ontario, Canada, in June 1812.

Elizabeth Ann Seton

On September 14, 1975, Elizabeth Ann Seton was canonized by Pope Paul VI at the Vatican in Rome, becoming the first American-born Catholic Saint.

Born in New York City in 1774, Elizabeth Ann Bayley was the daughter of an Episcopalian physician. She devoted much of her time to charity work with the poor and founded the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children in New York in 1797.

In 1803, she married William Seton. She traveled with William to Italy where she was exposed to the Roman Catholic Church. After she herself was widowed and left with five children in 1803, she converted to Catholicism. In 1808, she went to Baltimore to establish a Catholic School for Girls. In 1809, she founded the first religious order in the United States Sisters of Charity of Saint Joseph. Mother Seton's order grew rapidly, and she continued to teach until her death in 1821.

Many visitors to the National Fire Heritage Center and the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg also visit the nearby Mother Seton shrine.

Ronny J. Coleman
President, NFHC