



# IN THE NEWS

## CONGRATULATIONS

Chief Jim Kreher, Barrington Countryside on his recent retirement. Chief Kreher served 8 years as Chief with the BCFPD and 41 years as Deputy of Fox River Grove. He is President of the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance and past president of the Illinois fire Chiefs Association. IAFPD thanks Chief Kreher for his dedication to the Illinois Fire Service!



**Communication Materials** – National Firefighter Registry (NFR) for Cancer are now available at the [NFR.CDC.GOV](https://www.nfr.cdc.gov). With your participation in the NFR, we can leave the fire service better than we found it. You can help make sure everyone in the fire service is represented by sharing the materials with your network.



## Legislative Day 2023

IAFPD, IFCA and NIAFPD organized the return of the Illinois Fire Service Legislative Day held on March 8, 2023. The event brought together members from each organization for a day spent in Springfield. The day kicked off with a networking lunch and presentation by House Republican Leader Tony McCombrie followed by visits at the Capitol. We were delighted to meet and greet with 20 legislators who attended the evening reception.

# LINE OF DUTY DEATHS



### Chicago Fire Department

**Lieutenant Jan Tchoryk** (55) Last Alarm 3-3-5 April 5, 2023 while battling a high-rise fire in Gold Coast. A 26 year veteran to the Chicago Fire Department and served the U.S. Navy. Beloved husband of Natalia Kavkun. Loving father of three children one stepchild, beloved son, dear brother, fond nephew, cousin and uncle to many.



**Jermaine Pelt** (49) passed away Tuesday, April 4th while battling a house fire. He is survived by two children.

# IN MEMORY



**Perry Young** (85) of Lake of Egypt passed away, November 9, 2022. He taught three years at Western Kentucky University and later at Illinois State University and University High School in Normal. He retired in 1993 and moved to Lake of Egypt. He built houses and enjoyed woodworking. He was active with the Lake of Egypt Fire Dept. and construction of the fire station. Perry has served on the IAFFD Board of Directors, Lake of Egypt Water Board, was the Past President of Eagle Point Bay HOA and Past President of Lake of Egypt POA.



**Anthony (Tony) Joseph Vespa** (56) died peacefully at home on March 10, 2023. Tony graduated from high school in 1984, attended Lincoln Land Community College to earn a degree in Fire Science. He was hired by the Decatur Fire Department in March 1990 where he served the community for 27 years. He coordinated the Fire Science Program at Richland from 1991-2018 where he taught hundreds of future firefighters. Tony is survived by his wife, Lara of 32 years, two children, one grandson and both parents.



**Gerald L. Brooks** (73), of Mt. Carmel, passed away peacefully March 18, 2023. He served 21 years in the U.S. Coast Guard. He was an instructor at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glenco, GA, for 20 years. He started the Brantley County FD and served as chief. Upon retirement and relocation to the family farm in Wabash County, he served as fire chief for the Allendale Volunteer Fire Department and coordinator for Wabash Emergency Management Agency.



**Michael Lee Kracht** (62), of Centralia lost a long and brace fight with cancer April 7, 2023. Mike was a 1978 graduate of Centralia High School. Mike was a proud member of the fire service for over 30 years. He retired as Fire Chief with the City of Centralia in 2012. Mike was a carpenter and recently retired from Shores Builders in 2022. Mike leaves behind his wife, Susan, of 31 years, two daughters, one son and 5 grandchildren.



**Donald "Don" W. Lorenz** (87), passed away on February 3, 2023. Don grew up on a farm in Orland Park where he learned to work hard and take care of anyone who needed help. Don met Inez, the love of his life at age 19. He served 53 dedicated years to the Frankfort FPD beginning as a volunteer firefighter, emergency medical technician, volunteer fire chief, and district trustee. He developed the first organized training program and helped the Frankfort Fire Protection District grow from 1 station to 5.



**Robert K. "Bob" Yeakley** (81) of Hammond, IL, passed away February 7, 2023. A week before his 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary with wife, Peggy Ann, she survives along with two sons, three grandchildren and one great grandchild. Bob and his wife owned and operated Yeakley's Market in Hammond for 45 years before their retirement. He was a member of the St. James Catholic Church and was a former volunteer fireman for the Hammond Fire Protection District.



**Mark Einwich** (55) of St. Charles, IL, passed away March 7, 2023. He was united in marriage to Angela Koukol and was blessed with a blended family of six children. Mark began a career in fire service at the Pingree Grove Fire Department. Later he volunteered for the Burlington Department before becoming a dispatcher for the Kane County Sheriff's Office. He serves as an Elburn policeman before returning the fire service and finding a family at the Geneva Fire Department for the next 30 years, rising to the rank of Deputy Chief, before retiring in November of 2022. Following retirement, Mark continued on with the Burlington Fire Department as Deputy Chief.



**Mary A. VanWinkle (Karsten)** (70) of St. Charles, IL, passed away on March 25, 2023. Mary was the owner of Mary's Corner Tap in South Elgin, IL for nearly 40 years. She was on the Board of South Elgin and Countryside Fire Protection District for 13 years and the Board President since 2015. She was proud of her commitment to the department and the services she provided to the community. Mary was a huge sports fan and loved the Chicago Cubs and Bears. She enjoyed spending time with her family and friends, cooking, and taking care of business.



**William "Bill" L. Dirks** (78) of Crescent City passed away on February 12, 2023. He was an active member of the Crescent-Iroquois Fire Department for 55 years where he served as a former Assistant Chief. He served as a Trustee since 1997 to present. He was a member of the Army National Guard.

Bill was a member of the Knights of Columbus. Bill worked as a lineman for Illinois Bell and then retired from AT&T.



**Steven Claus Bergman** (71) of Mason City passed away on April 10, 2023. Steve is survived by his mother, his wife, Eleanor McAtee and 3 sons and 4 grandchildren. Steve graduated from University of Illinois 1973 and worked for Farmers Grain & Coal until deciding to farm full time. He was a former trustee of the Mason City Fire District.