

Joseph Stanbush

In 1958 a twelve year old boy by the name of Joseph Stambush joined the Bromley Fire Department as a Junior Firefighter along with his brother Frank. Thus began the storied career of the man affectionately known throughout the state of Kentucky as "Fireman Joe".



Joe spent 18 years with Bromley as a firefighter and Lieutenant. In 1972 Joe joined the Edgewood Fire Department. He has served as both a volunteer and paid firefighter with Edgewood and has worked closely with Retired Chief Joe Messmer for many years.

Early in his career Joe Stambush developed a passion for Fire Prevention and Education. In his own words Joe writes "Fire and Life Safety Education is my passion. Keeping communities safe is what I am all about". Typically, the job of Fire Prevention Officer is one of the least desirable positions in the fire service, lacking in the glory of the fire fighting positions on the Engine or Ladder Truck. Fireman Joe helped change that perception. With his tireless dedication and unbridled enthusiasm, Joe got people, especially kids, to listen to and follow his message of fire safety. He demonstrated that it is easier to prevent a fire from happening than to put out a fire caused by preventable behavior. Fireman Joe taught kids what to do to escape safely when a fire starts, eliminating the need for dangerous and often unsuccessful rescues.

The lessons Fireman Joe has taught have proven to be responsible for saving lives before the fire department ever arrives on the scene of a fire. In fact, it has been documented that the lessons taught by Fireman Joe have been responsible for at least ten (10) lives saved, and most assuredly, many more. At least ten fire deaths prevented through education. Ten lives saved by the teachings of a man who has dedicated his life to preventing fire deaths.

Fireman Joe has taken his message throughout Northern Kentucky where he has spent 6 years as the Fire Prevention Officer for the Erlanger Fire Department, 8 years with Point Pleasant, 10 years with the Fire Department of Bellevue/Dayton, and 3 years with Campbell County Fire District #1. Two different times during his career, Joe has served as the Fire Prevention Officer for three different departments at the same time, volunteering and working part-time. I can tell you from personal experience that Fireman Joe has never short-changed any of the departments that he served.

But Joe Stambush life is about more than just firefighting and public fire education. In 1966, Joe had to put his firefighting career on hold to enter the Air Force. He served as a crewman on a C-130 aircraft completing tours in Germany and Viet Nam. In 1971 Joe left the Air Force with the rank of Staff Sergeant. Somehow during his youth, Joe found time to marry the love of his life, Regina, and together they have spent 34 blissful years raising their family. Joe and Regina have three children. First came a son Dan, then a daughter Lori and finally a second son Joey. Dan is married to his wife Catherine and they have a daughter Cara. Lori and her husband Daniel have a son Ricky. Joey is still an available bachelor and can be seen at many fire department functions with Joe and Regina. If there is one thing that Joe is more passionate about than his fire career, it is his family. Joe cherishes his time with his family especially his grandchildren.

Joe is also very active in his church, where he has served on Parish Council, has been a lector as well as a singer in the Choir. Yes Fireman Joe can sing wonderfully, as he has demonstrated at many KFA functions over the years. He is also a member of the Vietnam Vets and the Bromley VFW.

Joe has been actively serving the KFA since 1988, when he accepted a position on the Public Education Committee. Joe has served on the Pub Ed committee ever since including 14 years as Chairman. Joe has taken Pub Ed in Kentucky from the backwoods into the national spotlight, making Kentucky a national leader in public fire education and life safety. He has attended many national forums on pub ed and recognized by associates with NFPA and other organizations as a foremost expert. He has also served on the Hall of Fame Committee of the KFA since its inception in 2002.

Joe has worked tirelessly for state-wide legislation on fireworks safety and serves on our Fireworks committee. He was a member of the conference committee for KFA President Bill Martin and was also a member of my Conference Committee in 2008. Joe also served as President of the Northern Kentucky Firefighters Association for two terms.

The tireless efforts and enthusiasm of Fireman Joe have not gone unnoticed. Joe received the Greater Cincinnati Pub Ed award in 1994 and the Northern Kentucky Firefighters Association Pub Ed award in 1995. He was named the Edgewood Firefighter of the Year in 1992 and 1996 and in 1995 was honored with the Liberty Mutual Hallmark Award. Joe received state recognition with the KFA Pub Ed award in 1996. Fireman Joe has been active nationally with the National Volunteer Fire Council and the NFPA and in 1999 Joe Stambush won the prestigious Mark Mueller award, which is given annually by the National Volunteer Fire Council to a national leader in fire prevention and public education.

Tonight we honor Joe Stambush with the highest honor in the Kentucky Firefighters Association. After 52 years in the fire service and 22 years of preaching prevention and education in the KFA, after thousands of appearances at schools and daycares throughout the commonwealth and beyond, and after inspiring hundreds of firefighters and fire chief's, including myself to take up the torch of fire prevention and education, tonight we honor and thank Fireman Joe Stambush with induction into the Kentucky Firefighters Association Hall of Fame.

Joe's presenter was his long-time Fire Chief in Bromley and a life-long friend to Joe and his family, Retired Chief Bill Leslie.