

Philmore Bowen

Chief Philmore Bowen started in his teenage years as a member of the Whitesburg Fire Department. When called to duty, he served the United States Army in the Asian Pacific from 1944-46. When arriving home, Philmore became active in the VFW and continued in the fire service.

In the early 1950's, seeing a need for fire service in Letcher counties unprotected areas, Philmore created a fire department through the local VFW, which would service the county. Philmore served as Chief of the VFW fire department until 1966.

Philmore became extremely active in the KFA. Working with Whitesburg Chief Remious Day, and KFA Hall of Famer Wayne Watts, both former KFA treasurers, Philmore took a great interest in the financial status of the organization.

Named Chief of the Whitesburg Fire Department in 1966, Chief Bowen continued his involvement serving on many KFA committees. Eventually landing on the finance committee where he became chairman for many years.

Chief Bowen retired as Chief of Whitesburg in 1986 and was appointed by the Letcher County Judge Executive to the position of county fire coordinator. It was in this job that Philmore made a dramatic impact on the fire service of his county.

Organizing the Sandlick Vol. Fire Department in 1992, Philmore served as the first Chief for three years. He was also instrumental in organizing the Cumberland River Fire Department. Philmore was the main contact for the mountain fire departments to the fire commission and the KFA.

Philmore Bowen was an active participant in all aspects of the KFA. Regular attending and conferences and executive committee meetings throughout the state, in 1985, he volunteered to host our annual fall E-Board meeting.

Starting with Sie Jewell's presidency, Philmore, his wife Mona, and a host of family and friends coordinated the executive board meeting in Whitesburg during the Mountain Heritage Festival. Each September, for over 10 years our KFA E-Board enjoyed the Southern hospitality of the Bowen's. The KFA officers annually participated in the festival's parade riding on everything from a snorkel to a pumper to a flatbed truck.

Chief Philmore Bowen passed away on July 12, 2002 leaving a permanent mark not only in fire service of Letcher County and Whitesburg, but throughout the Commonwealth with his dedication and contributions to the KFA. It is with pride and thanks that we tonight, induct our friend, Philmore Bowen, into the KFA Hall of Fame.

Presenting Chief Bowen's award will be KFA Secretary Dave Jansing who worked closely with Philmore and accepting on behalf of Chief Bowen will be his wife and our friend forever, Mrs. Mona Bowen.

