

Michael (Howdy) Kurtsinger



Michael Kurtsinger was born on August 12, 1952. He grew up in Louisville Kentucky. At age 18 Mike married his high school sweetheart Judy Brumley. That was the beginning of what has turned into 42 years of marital bliss. At least that's how Mike describes it. The Kurtsingers have been blessed with two children, Tina and Michael II, five grandchildren Courtney, Dalton Elizabeth, Katelyn and Michael III and one great grandchild.

At age 20 Michael was hired by the Louisville Fire Department. On his first day on the job he learned one of the cardinal rules of firefighters. Firefighters have no mercy on the new guy. One of the veterans of the department took one look at Kurtsinger, decided that he looked like Howdy Doody and declared that his name would be Howdy from that day forward. Needless to say the name stuck. Howdy spent 31 years with the Louisville Fire Department retiring in 2003 with the rank of Captain. Howdy took an early interest in the political side of firefighting. In 1984 he was elected president of the Louisville Professional Firefighters Union and served in that capacity until his retirement in 2003. He also served as Legislative Chairman of the Kentucky Professional Firefighters Association until 2003. Upon his retirement Howdy was awarded President and Legislative Chairman Emeritus status for his outstanding efforts.

In 2004 Howdy started with the Kentucky Fire Commission where he remains today. Howdy has worked for the betterment of firefighters since early on in his career. In the last ten years his involvement in the Kentucky Firefighters Association has been invaluable. He currently serves as Legislative Vice-Chair. Dealing with the politicians in Frankfort can be extremely frustrating but Howdy has equally frustrated those same politicians with his dogged persistence of what is best for Kentucky's firefighters. He has lobbied in Frankfort to bring state aid to its current levels, has brought increases in incentive pay as well as improvements in the pension system. Howdy has been instrumental in gaining funding for the KFA through the firefighter license plates and helped pass funding for on-line training for firefighters.

When he is not working for the fire commission or lobbying in Frankfort Howie likes to spend time with his family. He has coached girls softball and boys baseball. One of his girls teams pitched a no-hitter in the 12 and under USSSA championship, a rare feat and he also led his 15 and under team to the top ten nationally. The Kurtsingers enjoy spending spring breaks vacationing and they love to spend their summers at the lake.

Tonight Michael Howdy Kurtsinger is being honored not for any big fires that he has fought, although he has certainly fought his share. Tonight Howdy is being honored for fighting the legislative fires in Frankfort that are all so important and have so much influence on how we do our jobs.

Presenting the award to Michael Howdy Kurtsinger is his longtime friend and Fire Commission Chairman Ronnie Day.