

Woodrow Will

When the people of Hardin County, Kentucky needed to provide their own fire service outside of the Elizabethtown area, Woodrow “Woody” Will was one of 25 people who met to form a new fire department. In 1979, Kentucky 86 fire department was born, bearing its name from the major highway it serves and Woody Will became one of its most dedicated members, climbing to the rank of Deputy Chief, and still active after 26 years.



A teacher and supervisor with the Elizabethtown Community College and the Vocational Technical School, Woody was approached in 1984 to become Fire/Rescue Training Coordinator. When Woody asked school principal Neil Ramer what his job consisted of, he was told to “keep firefighters from calling the Governor’s office and never get students hurt”. Bob Brown, Woody’s other boss told him to go visit Charlie Shaw, Pat Trevathan, David Anderson, and Bill Hankinson, and with their advice, figure out how to make the best training program in the state.

After meeting first with training coordinator and KFA Hall of Famer Charlie Shaw, Woody was told, “don’t waste time meeting those other guys, because I have the best program in the state and just model yours after mine”. And in Woody’s words, “I never got around to meeting with those other guys but I did wind up with the best program area in the state”.

Woody attended his first KFA conference in that summer of ’84 in Louisville and was immediately struck by President Bob Gaddie, another KFA Hall of Famer, and the unique ability of the KFA to make a difference on a statewide basis. Woody immediately made an impact through his dedication and work ethic. For 14 years he assisted with the registering of delegates at our annual conference. Woody was appointed to various KFA committees including legislative, drivers training, Olympics, and membership. He served as KFA Regional Director for Region 5 for many years. Woody Will was one of 4 individuals from the KFA who wrote House Bill 4, which gave legal status to 60 % of the fire departments in Kentucky. That work resulted in Chapter 75.400 of the Kentucky Revised Statutes.

During the reorganization of the KFA in the late 1990’s, Woody arranged and moderated regional association meetings, where areas from throughout the state could discuss problems and more importantly plan for a smooth transition into the new organizational concepts of the KFA.

Woody has been a vital asset to his regional association serving in the roles of president in 1985, and secretary / treasurer of the Dixie Firefighters Association for many years. Woody’s assistance in Rick Games KFA conference of 1996 was invaluable.

A long-time member of the State Fire Commission, Woody worked tirelessly for the firefighters of the Commonwealth. He has written dozens of programs that have been or are currently being used for training across the state. He has promoted Regional Training Facilities and helped the Dixie FF Association build a memorial in E’town to honor all those who have served. Perhaps one of Woody’s greatest achievements was the start of the IFSAC firefighter testing program.

Woody Will has enhanced the status of the KFA through his work as the original editor and publisher of our newsletter “Smoke Signals” and by creating our original web site. Now, recently retired from KCTCS, Woody has once again taken over the role of Webmaster and newsletter editor for the KFA.

Deputy Chief Woody Will has help guide the KFA through the past 20 years. An accomplished singer and devout Christian, his songs and prayers have enlivened our spirit. Tonight we honor this “true gentleman” with induction into the KFA “Hall of Fame”.

Presenting Woody Will’s award is a long-time associate and friend, Chief Mike Hulsey of the Elizabethtown Fire Department.