

Chief Ray A. Muench

Chief Ray A. Muench has seen a long and distinguished career in the Kentucky Fire Service. Joining the Southgate Volunteer Fire Department in 1952 after serving his country in the Korean War, Ray immediately started his climb through the ranks. Elected Assistant Chief in 1961, Ray was groomed as the next Chief to succeed long-time Chief and 1937 KFA President William Conway. In 1965 Chief Conway retired and Chief Muench was elected to fill the role, a position he held for the next 11 years.



Ray's years as leader of the Southgate department saw great growth. Through purchases of radio's, breathing apparatus, approved turnout gear and new apparatus, the department had advanced into a new age, prepared to take on the challenges of the 1970's and 80's. In seeing an evident need for the community, Chief Muench was instrumental in bringing the department into the EMS age with the forming of Southgate's first ambulance service in 1967.

Chief Muench's progressive actions continued with the creation of a fire cadet program in the early 1970's. Of that first class of 4 fire cadets, three have been or are current firechiefs, including Ray's son, Marc, current Southgate Chief John Beatsch, and your KFA 3rd Vice-President John Daley. Many more have become vital volunteer members and career firefighters. All look to Chief Muench's vision, leadership, wisdom, and friendship in defining their careers.

In keeping with the Southgate Fire Department tradition of regional and state involvement, Chief Muench served the Campbell County Fire Chiefs, Northern Kentucky, and the KFA. 1969 President of the Northern Kentucky Firefighters Association, in that same year Ray was elected 5th Vice-President of the KFA and at Shively in 1974 assumed the Presidency of our state association. Chief Muench's leadership of the KFA laid the groundwork for many of the benefits we receive today, including the creation of the state fire commission, workers compensation and pension benefits, volunteer state aid, and many others.

Ray Muench, with his talent for entertainment, set the tone for future state fire conferences, hosting a memorable convention in 1975 in Campbell County, the first the county had hosted in 34 years. Throughout the years he continued to entertain the old and fascinate the young with his quick wit, singing and accordion playing, mostly at convention poolsides and hospitality rooms.

Throughout the years, Chief Muench continued to stay active in the Southgate Fire Department and the local fire associations. He is currently the department historian and manages the honor guard. Two years ago the department honored him for 50 years of active service. Ray also served as the Campbell County Director of Emergency Service for 10 years after his retirement as Chief.

Ray's wife Joan and 8 children have been by Chief Muench's side throughout this ride. He presently has 4 sons and 2 grandsons active in the fire service. I think all are here tonight. It is with great pride and honor that we induct Chief Ray A. Muench into the Kentucky Firefighters Association Hall of Fame.

Presenting Chief Muench his award will be his eldest son and former fire chief of the Southgate and Ft. Wright Fire Department's Chief Marc Muench.

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