

WAYNE WATTS

William “Wayne” Watts was the final, but not at all least, inductee into the “Hall of Fame”. Wayne was serving as our KFA treasurer for the 30th consecutive year when he suddenly passed away on June 14, 1997, shocking us all. The 77th annual conference held that year in Northern Kentucky was dedicated in the memory of Wayne.

Wayne was first elected treasurer of the KFA in Somerset in 1967. he was re-elected every consecutive year, with his last election being in Bardstown in 1996. Wayne was highly respected for his honesty and thriftiness. He managed our finances through a period of immense growth. His contributions were not limited to financial matters. His knowledge and experience of the fire service proved a great value in decisions made by our executive committees. A voice of reason, Wayne commanded tremendous respect among his peers.

Wayne started his fire service career with the Harrodsburg Vol. Fire Department in 1946. When the Mercer County Fire Department was established in 1954, Wayne was appointed the first Fire Chief. He built the department from a one-engine unit to a first class operation. He continued serving the department after his retirement from Chief by working to create the Mercer County Fire District Board. At the time of his death, Wayne was serving as Chairperson of that Board.

In 1989, Wayne Watts was appointed to a position by Governor Wilkinson to serve on the State Fire Commission on Fire Protection, Personnel, Standards, and Education. He chaired the training facility committee. His work on the commission has had a tremendous effect on the advancement of fire service training and firefighter safety throughout the Commonwealth.

Wayne was most proud that his entire 51 years in the fire service was through volunteerism. Never paid a cent for his duty. Wayne Watt’s life was dedicated to the fire service and the firefighters of Kentucky. He is a legend in the KFA through his effort, kindness, and longevity. It is with great pride that we include Wayne Watts into this first class of KFA Hall of Famers.

Presenting Wayne’s Hall of Fame Award was the person who had the difficult task of replacing Wayne as treasurer and who was retiring from his duties after 6 years of exemplary service to the KFA, Treasurer Bryant Stiles.

Accepting on Wayne’s behalf was his lovely wife, Mrs. Betty Watts, and children.

