2013

CALIFORNIA FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL
As President of California Professional Firefighters and Chair of the California Fire Foundation, I am once again honored to welcome you to the California Firefighters Memorial Ceremony, our annual tribute to the men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our state.

Each year, we come together in this hallowed spot to pay tribute to the "casual heroes" who put their lives on the line every day. Whether they were lost in the flash of a catastrophe or eventually succumbed to a job-related disease, each of the 22 men and women we honor today gave their all for us.

We gather in Sacramento this year with heavy hearts as we reflect upon the significant losses experienced by our profession and those with whom we serve. Firefighters nationwide were dealt a substantial blow when a dozen firefighters lost their lives in an explosion at a Texas fertilizer plant earlier this year. Less than three months later, the fire service suffered the tragic loss of 19 Prescott, Arizona firefighters – including five with California roots – in a horrific wildland blaze that resulted in the greatest one-day loss of firefighters’ lives since 9/11. And only last month, thousands of our brothers and sisters here in California put their lives in jeopardy while fighting the Rim Fire – the third largest fire in our state’s history.

These incidents are poignant reminders that when a firefighter puts on turnouts and heads out to a call, there is always the chance he or she will not return. The polished limestone wall at the California Firefighters’ Memorial honors the more than 1,200 "casual heroes" who gave their lives in the line of duty since California became a state.

This special tribute on the grounds of California's State Capitol honors not only the sacrifice of those we have lost, but also the determination and commitment of those who fight on every day in service to their state and community.

As firefighters and Californians, we recognize the danger that these brave men and women face every day and the significant sacrifices made by the families they leave behind. For all of them, and for the people of our state, we etch their names into this proud Memorial.

Brothers and sisters, we will never forget you.

Lou Paulson
President, California Professional Firefighters
Chair, California Fire Foundation
CALIFORNIA FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL CEREMONY

PRELUDE MUSIC

UNIFORMED FIREFIGHTERS PROCESSION

PRESENTATION OF COLORS
U.S. Forest Service Honor Guard

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Kamala Harris, California Attorney General

 NATIONAL ANTHEM
Humberto Agurcia, Firefighter/Paramedic, Los Angeles County Fire Department

INVOCATION
Jim Miguel, Chief, Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department

WELCOME
Lou Paulson, Chair, California Fire Foundation

“LET IT BE”
UC Davis A Cappella Group

SALUTE TO THE PROFESSION
Mark Ghilarducci, Director, California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services

REMEMBERING A FELLOW FIREFIGHTER
Mark Williams, Battalion Chief, CAL FIRE

“BECAUSE YOU LOVED ME”
Avery Chapman

FLAG PRESENTATION TO FAMILIES
Demetrius Shaffer, President, California Fire Chiefs Association

THE LAST ALARM
Dan Terry, President Emeritus, California Professional Firefighters

RELEASE OF DOVES
RECESSIONAL
In Their Time

By Bob Stanley,
Sacramento Poet Laureate

All these men and women
listed line by line
rose to the occasion
in their time

Those who here remember
memories don’t grow old;
feel the burning embers
of their soul

Names upon the limestone
here in fading light
names of highest honor
carved in black on white

Children from the countryside
city, field or town
now their names adorn this stone
upon the ground

Every waking morning
Every empty night
despite the empty feeling
we still fight

To keep the brightness of their eyes
keep that fading gleam
forever in our memories’
shining dream

All these men and women
listed line by line
rose to the occasion
in their time
**William Michael Reardon**  
Engineer, Roseville Fire Department  
September 17, 1987

A Sacramento native, Mike Reardon was initiated into the fire service through his neighbor, Assistant Fire Chief Ray Sharp, and served as a “Sleeper Fireman” through his high school years. After high school, Mike joined the Roseville Fire Department Volunteers and at the age of 21, became a full-time firefighter, eventually reaching the rank of engineer. Mike maintained close relationships with his firefighting brothers, both at work and in his personal life. One of his favorite activities was participating in the Firemen’s Olympic Trap and Skeet Shooting event. Mike enjoyed an 18-year career before succumbing to job-related lung cancer at the age of 39.

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**Jerry R. Chastain**  
Engineer, Orange County Fire Authority  
January 28, 2007

Jerry Chastain lived his dream of being a firefighter. He started his career serving the California Division of Forestry for seven years. He served 32 years with the Orange County Fire Authority, promoting to engineer during that time. He loved being a firefighter because he loved helping people and was passionate about his family and his faith. He also enjoyed the camaraderie of station life. He enjoyed the Dodgers, Lakers and UCLA football. Jerry lost his courageous 10-year battle with job-related cancer at the age of 60.

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**Joseph F. Curran, Jr.**  
Firefighter, Sacramento City Fire Department  
December 26, 2009

Nicknamed “The Real Deal,” Joey Curran, Jr. was born on October 31, 1949. Prior to joining the Sacramento Fire Department, he served in the Army during the Vietnam War and was awarded the Air Medal and the Army Commendation Medal. When Joey returned home, he began firefighting in Indiana with his older brother, Dale. He later moved to Sacramento where he worked for 30 years. Joey was a loving son, husband, father and grandfather. At his funeral, his wife Jeri was given the Sacramento Fire Department’s highest honor, the Medal of Honor, for Joey’s bravery during a call early in his career. Joey died in 2009 from job-related coronary artery disease.

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**Gary Eugene Lott**  
Captain/Pilot, CAL FIRE  
August 9, 2011

Gary Lott, “Cowboy,” to those who knew and loved him, was born in Centralia, Illinois in 1944. He learned to fly while in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. In 1988, his flight skills and a “no one left behind” attitude led to his saving a group of firefighters caught in a potential burnover situation, for which he received two Helicopter Heroism awards. Gary eventually went to work for CAL FIRE and served 16 years as a forestry helicopter pilot. Gary was able to follow his dream of sailing the Caribbean before succumbing to job-related cancer.
Gordie Varney was a loving, humble and hard-working man who made a lasting impression on every life he touched. Gordie had a natural ability running equipment which eventually led him to his true calling at CAL FIRE where he worked passionately for eleven years as a fire equipment operator. He took great pride in his profession and in making a difference in so many people’s lives. Gordie shared his passion with his son who is also an HFEO with CAL FIRE. Gordie passed away after a two-year battle with job-related colon cancer.

Richard Halstead began his fire career with the City of Dinuba before advancing in his profession to CAL FIRE for the next 34 years. Richard was the lead teacher developing the first Valley ROP Wildland Fire Science Program at Reedley College. His love for teaching fire science was a lifelong passion. Captain Halstead was an outstanding fireman, serving with honor and distinction. He was a loving husband, father, and grandfather. After a courageous three-year battle, Richard succumbed to job-related cancer in 2012 at the age of 61.

Known at the fire station as “JC,” Jerald became a firefighter in 1987. One morning, while recovering from back surgery, he sat up on the edge of his bed and said, “I miss home,” referring to the brotherhood at the fire station. He was a devoted San Francisco Giants fan, loved vacationing in Cabo San Lucas, and devoted time and energy to restoring homes and fixing cars. JC was a brush clearance fire inspector when he died from a job-related heart attack.

A longtime resident of Laguna Beach, Steen Jensen started his fire service career in 1981 as a volunteer firefighter in Orange County. In 1983, he became a full-time firefighter with the Laguna Beach Fire Department. He quickly became a firefighter/paramedic and subsequently promoted to fire captain in 1989. In addition to his honorable service as a firefighter, Jensen also served as a fire explorer post advisor, first aid/CPR instructor and information technologist. As an engine company officer, he led his company through the most destructive wildland fire in Laguna Beach history, the 1993 Laguna Fire. He died in 2012 after a two-year battle with job-related cancer.
David M. Duke
Engineer, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department
July 25, 2012

A native San Diegan, David joined the San Diego City Fire Department in 1971 and served for 32 years. During his career, he received many awards from the VFW, American Legion, City and County of San Diego, California State Assembly and United States Congress. In 1982, he founded a consulting business to provide fire, disaster and CPR training to over 60 assisted living and long term care facilities. He also served as president of his community Fire Safe Council from 2002 – 2012. David loved people, his firefighter family, camping and traveling. Most of all, he loved his family. David lost his battle with job-related cancer in 2012.

José Manuel Martinez
Captain, San Jose Fire Department
August 10, 2012

José knew from a young age that he wanted to be a firefighter after seeing his Tío, Juan, of Tulare at work. José’s first firefighting job was with CAL FIRE in 1997. He joined SJFD in 2001 and was promoted to engineer in 2004 and then to captain in 2011. José loved being a firefighter as much as he enjoyed being a husband and father. José was a joyful person with an infectious attitude and smile. He liked to run, play golf, spend time with his family and friends, watch sports and volunteer for his son’s endeavors. José fought a short but tough battle before succumbing to job-related cancer at age 41, just two and a half weeks after his twin daughters were born.

Dennis Charles Hanson
Captain, CAL FIRE
September 8, 2012

Dennis Hanson began working for CAL FIRE in 1987 as a seasonal firefighter, working his way up to captain in 2001. He was a medical and training instructor. Dennis had a great sense of humor and a passion for working in the field and serving people. Dennis enjoyed woodworking, remodeling, fishing, building pole structures and telling jokes. He died of job-related cancer in 2012.

John J. Cobos
Firefighter, Los Angeles County Fire Department
October 11, 2012

Even as a child, John knew that he wanted to be a firefighter. In 1981, John became a Los Angeles County firefighter and became a paramedic in 1988. In 2005, he was honored with the prestigious Paramedic of the Year award. John loved his career and took pride in his work and the people he worked with. John was a true inspiration to many young firefighters and many say they would never be who they are today if it weren’t for John. Off duty, John was a loving husband, father of three, and grandfather of five. He died in 2012 of job-related cancer.
Robert E. Van Wormer
Battalion Chief, CAL FIRE
October 27, 2012

Robert was a dedicated Battalion Chief and Peace Officer with 24 years of service to CAL FIRE. He held many assignments over the years, including the Law Enforcement/Fire Prevention Program, the Aviation Program and seven years on an incident command team. Chief Van Wormer was known for his strong leadership and fire operation skills, and his ability to work with people. He was a man of great integrity and a valued mentor. His trademark sense of humor is one of the things his loved ones will miss the most. Robert died in 2012 from job-related heart complications.

Luis Alfonso Magallanes-Molina
Fire Fighter II, CAL FIRE
November 11, 2012

Luis Alfonso Magallanes-Molina was introduced to firefighting in 1993, when he worked for the California Conservation Corps. He was hired by CAL FIRE in 2002 and quickly became an asset to the firefighting community. Luis was a leader that was always committed to helping others and set the pace at his station with his hard work. Luis was a family man first, but was also devoted to taking care of his firefighting family. He was strong while battling the cancer that would eventually take his life. To this day, decisions are made at Luis’s station based on what he would have done. He died from job-related cancer at the age of 40.

Isaac Hollis, III
Battalion Chief, National City Fire Department
November 26, 2012

Prior to joining the fire service, Chief Hollis served four years in the Navy and worked for the San Diego Police Department. He began his fire service career with the National City Fire Department in 1971, achieving the rank of Battalion Chief in 2004. Chief Hollis received the highest decoration ever earned by a National City firefighter, the Medal of Valor, for saving another firefighter that was engulfed in flames. In 2012, Chief Hollis was diagnosed with job-related brain cancer and succumbed later that year.

Gerald L. Mohney
Engineer, San Bernardino City Fire Department
December 13, 2012

Gerald “Jerry” Mohney was a dedicated husband, father, uncle and friend to all. He cherished being a member of his beloved San Bernardino Fire Department, where he worked for 36 years. Jerry was known as an honest, plain-speaking, no-nonsense man. He enjoyed golf, hunting, shooting, vacations in San Diego and playing with his dog. He leaves behind his loving wife Linda, daughter Stephanie and a host of family and friends. Jerry died in 2012 of job-related brain cancer.
Karen Leigh Shubin
Battalion Chief, CAL FIRE
January 23, 2013

Battalion Chief Karen Shubin’s motto was: “It’s all good.” Even in difficult times, she looked for the positive in everything. While in college, she worked for Davis City Fire Department and during the summer season for CDF – the start of a 29-year career with CAL FIRE. A role model and an advocate for many, she was tenacious with a strong character. She had an unending devotion to her family, always had a story to tell and never met a stranger. Her greatest accomplishment was a happy marriage and four wonderful children. Karen Shubin succumbed earlier this year to job-related cancer.

John Robert Duff
Captain, Ventura City Fire Department
February 16, 2013

John was hired in 1981 as a Ventura firefighter, promoting to engineer in 1991 and captain in 1997. John brought out the best in the people he worked with and he expected nothing less. He felt great responsibility for those under his leadership and shared in the pain of their failures and the pride of their successes. John was one of Ventura City Fire Department’s first water rescue technicians, was on the forefront of handling hazardous materials incidents, and was part of the Urban Search and Rescue team. John Duff died of job-related cancer earlier this year.

Alexander J. Stevenson
Fire Apparatus Engineer, CAL FIRE
May 24, 2013

Alex was born in Novato on September 21, 1973. From the age of three he knew he wanted to be a firefighter. He worked as a fire apparatus engineer for CAL FIRE in Sonoma, Lake and Napa Counties for nearly seventeen years, truly living his dream. Alex is remembered for his dedication, strong work ethic, fine character and incredible sense of humor. Though he fought a nine-year battle with job-related brain cancer, he never lost his joy of life, his hope, his optimism, or his amazing ability to make people laugh. Alex was only 39 when he passed away.

Luke Douglas Foster Sheehy
Region 5 Smokejumper, U.S. Forest Service
June 10, 2013

Luke was truly at home in nature and chose a profession that allowed him to be constantly surrounded by it – wildland firefighting. Born in Susanville, CA, on May 2, 1985, Luke grew up as a fearless, adventure-seeking young man and at age 18 he decided to become a firefighter. Luke enjoyed spending time with his family and friends, playing guitar, snowmobiling, fishing, riding his motorcycle and hunting. His ultimate dream was realized in 2009 when he joined the elite crew of California’s Region 5 Smokejumpers in Redding. In June 2013, while fighting the Saddle Back Fire in the Southern Warner Wilderness, he was struck and killed by a falling piece of timber.
Janet L. Chatelain
Captain, Los Angeles County Fire Department
June 23, 2013

Jan began her career with the Los Angeles County Fire Department in 1999 and promoted from firefighter to engineer to fire captain. She was an avid tennis player, skier, scuba diver and bicyclist. Life for Jan always seemed like a fun adventure, partially because of the adventurous things she did, but mostly because of the adventurous spirit with which she approached everything. Jan had an infectious spirit and zest for life that was her gift to all who knew her. Sister Chatelain died of job-related lung cancer at the age of 52.

Christopher Lee Douglas
Engineer/Paramedic, CAL FIRE
July 5, 2013

Christopher Douglas, affectionately known as “Topher,” was born on November 19, 1971. After five years of volunteer, reserve and paramedic service, he began working with CAL FIRE in 2004 and promoted to apparatus engineer/paramedic in July of 2012. At graduation, he received the Carpe Diem Award – an honor bestowed by his peers. Topher valued his life-long friendships and other passions such as surfing, playing guitar, cooking, working on cars, traveling and spending time with family. While responding to a traffic accident, Topher was struck by a truck as it passed his stopped engine. His wife is expecting their second child in early 2014.