

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

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FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS REMEMBERED IN MOVING SACRAMENTO CEREMONY

(SACRAMENTO) In a solemn remembrance steeped in the traditions of the firehouse, hundreds of uniformed firefighters, family members and grateful citizens gathered in the heart of California's capital Saturday, to pay tribute to those who paid the ultimate price to keep us safe.

On Saturday, September 30th, the California Firefighters Memorial Ceremony honored 31 California firefighters who died in the line of duty, adding their names to more than 1,300 inscribed on the brushed limestone wall of the California Firefighters Memorial in Sacramento's Capitol Park. The Sacramento Memorial bears the names of California firefighters who have died in the line of duty since California became a state in 1850.

"The dedication and honor of the men and women we remember today cannot remain inside the walls of the firehouse – it deserves to be on display for all to see," said Lou Paulson, chair of the California Fire Foundation and president of California Professional Firefighters. "Our fellow Californians will come to this hallowed place, see the names on this memorial, and never forget what it means to give 'the last true measure of devotion.'"

The midday ceremony includes a solemn procession of uniformed firefighters and the presentation of flags to family members of the 31 honorees. The ceremony also featured the traditional ringing of the "Last Alarm" and tributes from firefighters and dignitaries alike.

"We can never say 'thank you' enough to the brave men and women who give service – and their lives – to keep us safe," said Attorney General Xavier Becerra. "Today we memorialize 31 firefighters who answered the call ... and offer our promise that their courage and sacrifice will never be forgotten."

The California Firefighters Memorial honors firefighters who died in the line of duty, whether from traumatic injury or job-related illness. During Saturday's ceremony, Ventura County Fire Department Firefighter-Paramedic David Clark offered a remembrance of his close friend Ryan Osler, who died last fighting the Canyon Fire in Santa Barbara County.

"No amount of training can prepare you for this kind of loss," said Clark. "As firefighters, we come together as brothers and sisters, reaching out to those who have lost your loved one. You are a part of our family, and your loved ones are in our hearts, and the stories we tell. We will never forget them."

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Unveiled in April of 2002, the California Firefighters Memorial features two stunning statues and a dramatic Memorial Wall on which the names of 1,325 fallen firefighters are now engraved. The Memorial was created without any state funding through private contributions to the California Fire Foundation, most of them directly from firefighters.

The annual ceremony is conducted by the **California Fire Foundation**, a non-profit charitable organization created by California Professional Firefighters in 1987. The Foundation's mission is to aid fallen firefighter families and the communities they protect through an array of public education and victim assistance projects. California Professional Firefighters (CPF) represents 30,000 career firefighters and paramedics. It has over 170 affiliated local unions, and is the State Council for the International Association of Fire Fighters.

MEDIA: Downloadable photos, video from today's ceremony, links to photos and bios of honorees, and background on the Memorial at www.cafirefoundation.org/media.

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