

The For Survivors of Fallen Firefighters Journey

MARCH 2010 ISSUE 35

“The legacy of heroes is the memory of a great name and the inheritance of a great example.” ~Benjamin Disraeli

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary online, one definition of legacy is “something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past.” More simply put, it’s what we carry forward.

Legacy can take many forms. It can be something we commit to in a loved one’s name — a particular service or cause, a memorial or scholarship program, intentional

acts of kindness and charity. It can be the qualities, values, and talents passed on from a parent to a child. Think of your own family; there are probably names, customs, beliefs, habits, or professions that have been handed down through generations. Though the people are long gone, the threads of their lives still connect us.

In this issue, survivors talk about how the legacies of the firefighters they loved are unfolding in their own lives.

By Steve Tullis

Son of Arthur “Bucky” Tullis (1999-IL)

My dad, Chief Arthur “Bucky” Tullis, was a firefighter for 42 years until he died on May 4th, 1999, of an apparent heart attack on the scene of an activated fire alarm. I was 27 years old and three weeks away from marrying my high school sweetheart.

I was also newly promoted to associate creative director at a prestigious ad agency and about to be transferred from Oak Park, Illinois, to the New York office. My career and my adult life were about to take off. However, my life changed instantly on that day, and I have never been the same since.

I am the youngest of three boys. Growing up as the son of a fireman, my childhood was magical. We spent our entire youth in the firehouse, climbing on the trucks, going for rides, and chasing fires. We were the envy of our friends. While I admired my dad and benefited from his status as a fireman and chief, I never once thought that I would join the fire service. It wasn’t until his death that I realized my calling.



Steve Tullis

Shortly after my dad’s funeral, I made the decision to leave my career behind and carry on my dad’s legacy as a firefighter. It took two years, but eventually I was hired by the Hinsdale Fire Department as a full-time firefighter and paramedic. I also work as a paid-on-call firefighter in LaGrange Park, where my father served for over 35 years. Now I have three sons, and I even live in the house that I grew up in. My life seems like a Norman Rockwell painting, but I am now providing the same childhood for my children as my dad did for me. The irony is overwhelming at times, especially when I have to leave the family dinner table to go on a call or yell at my boys not to roughhouse in the living room.

Maybe it’s therapy for me as a survivor. Maybe it’s fate. Or maybe it’s just how my father wanted it to be, and in some strange way his line-of-duty death helped guide me in that direction. Whatever it is, I love the life I live, and not a day goes by that I don’t think about my dad. I just wish he was around so I could thank him.

By Jennifer Frayne

Sister-in-law of Kenneth J. Frayne (2001-IL)

I was looking through photos of my son, Kenny, and came across this picture. It made me think about how my son has missed out on knowing his Uncle Ken. He was such a strong, wonderful, smart, and caring person. How unfair life is sometimes. Kenny is only 3 ½, and he doesn't really understand what we are talking about when we talk about Ken. We take him out to the cemetery with us, but he won't understand for a long time.

I think about the wife Ken left behind. The life he barely began to live. The huge construction company that he built and the customers he left behind. His mom and dad, who lost their oldest son. His siblings, who lost their oldest brother. Nieces and nephews who barely knew him, or never will know what a great person they are missing

out on knowing. He never had the chance to have children, travel, or grow old. He can't enjoy the simple pleasures in life like going to a movie, or having a barbecue with his family and friends. Why was he taken?



Kenny Frayne

When I see my little boy, Kenny, I see a little bit of Ken in him. I have heard stories of when Ken was little. Kenny is very similar in his actions. He has to build things, and he uses his hands a lot. He loves his tools and helping dad. He is not into coloring or sitting still for any length of time.

It makes me wonder sometimes if part of Ken is still with us.

I always hope Ken knows how much we love him and miss him. We know he is watching us and guiding us through life, forever and always.

By Cathy DeFlumere

Wife of Al "Foxye" DeFlumere (1996-NY)

The year we were married (1985), my husband had been a member of the Blauvelt Volunteer Fire Company (BVFC) for 20 years, and I had been a member of the Ladies Auxiliary for seven years. That is how we met. Our three sons, Ryan, Matthew and Travis, were born within six years after Foxye and I were married.

Most of you know what life was like living with a volunteer firefighter—drills and meetings and, of course, interrupted dinners. The boys lived for visits to the firehouse. Foxye was an ex-chief and, at the time of his death, had been financial secretary for I don't know how many years, so there were lots of times where he had to go do some firehouse business and the boys would beg to go. Of course, Daddy

said yes, and off they went, sometimes including the dog for the visit. The boys also loved Sunday morning visits after church to the firehouse with Daddy to "play" on the trucks.



Ryan, Cathy, & Travis DeFlumere

Foxye died in a fire in our own home. He led Ryan and Travis and me to safety and went back in for Matthew, but they never made it out. They were found together by the window Foxye had led us out. When the tragedy happened, Ryan and Travis were told by our parish priest that their daddy and brother died. The first thing

Ryan, then age 8, said was, "We need to go to the firehouse so I can join, because the guys are down one fireman now, and someone has to take Daddy's place."

While raising the boys alone, I wanted to show them

how important it was to volunteer in the community. As a family, we volunteered at book drives, coat drives, we went to New York City and fed the homeless, and we volunteered with our church.

The legacy now lives on in our family. Three years ago, at age 19, Ryan joined the BVFC. Travis joined a little over a year ago at age 16. As I write this, they are both

attending training at the Fire Center for Firefighter II status. What more could the boys do to honor their dad? I am sure if Matthew were alive today he would also be a member of the fire department.

I am so proud of them that they are continuing their community volunteerism by remembering and honoring their dad.

By Michael and Kim Reddy

Fellow firefighter and friend of Brent "Lovey" Lovrien (2008-CA)

Initial attempts to hold on to thoughts of Brent "Lovey" Lovrien through conversations and framed-photos were not enough. So, as the birth of my son approached, one month before the one-year anniversary of Lovey's death, naming him Brent simply felt like the right thing to do. It allowed me to preserve the memory of a respected firefighter and colleague. It also allowed me to give my



Brent & Michael Reddy

son a name with significance and meaning.

"I couldn't be more proud of my little Brent if he were mine! I just know if my Brent has buttons in the other world, he has popped them over this little one!"

- Patricia Lovrien

Mother of Brent "Lovey" Lovrien (2008-CA)



Kim, Michael, & Brent with Patricia Lovrien

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Upcoming Events

"When Families Grieve"

April 14, 2010, 8 - 9 p.m. ET/PT on PBS
(check local listings)

This 1-hour primetime TV special, produced by Sesame Workshop and hosted by Katie Couric, includes the story of a family whose firefighter was honored at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial. For more information, go to www.sesameworkshop.org/grief. Additional materials will be available at that site after the program airs.

5th Annual Fire Service Survivors Conference

Schaumburg, Illinois - May 10-14, 2010

It's not too late to sign up for this year's Survivors Conference. We'll be closer to the middle of the country this year, and we hope that will make it easier for more people to attend. All adult survivors of firefighters who have died in the line of duty and have been honored at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Emmitsburg, Maryland, are invited to attend.

Contact Linda Hurley at lhurley@firehero.org or (301) 447-7693 to ask questions or request registration materials. We hope to see you in May!

Do you like what you read in *The Journey*?

If you would like to read more, we have back issues available through our Web site and in hard copy. To access back issues in pdf format, go to: www.firehero.org/resources/newsletter. If you prefer to have an actual paper copy, please contact Jenny at jwoodall@firehero.org or (301) 447-7691 with the issue numbers or topics that interest you.

Have you ever considered writing an article?

We'd love to hear from you! Submissions for *The Journey* are accepted at any time and can be on any topic related to your personal experience with grief, loss, and healing. We realize that sometimes it's easier to write to a specific topic, which is why we offer suggestions in each issue. If you've never written, if you've thought about writing but felt too shy, if you aren't sure anyone will be interested in what you have to say, just send it in. We'll work with you.

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program (PSOB)

Frequently Asked Question...

I heard that the PSOB Office provides scholarships to survivors of fallen firefighters: how do I apply?

Eligibility for the Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance (PSOEA) Program first depends on whether the student:

- has received a portion of the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program death benefit, due to the student having been the spouse or child of a public safety officer who died in the line of duty, or
- was the eligible spouse or child of a public safety officer who received the PSOB disability benefit.

If one of the above situations applies to you, or if you have additional questions, please email your telephone number to AskPSOB@usdoj.gov so the PSOB Office can follow up

with you directly. Also, please visit www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob_education.html for more details on the PSOEA Program.

Enacted in 1976, the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program provides death, disability, and education benefits to those eligible for the program.



BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program
Toll-free: 1-888-744-6513

We want to hear from you about...



How does your experience with losing a loved one affect your day-to-day life? Is your life richer in some ways because of what you have learned along the way? Are there things you no longer

fear? Ways in which you have grown?

Insights you have only because of what you have endured? Strengths you didn't know you possessed?

If you'd like to share your thoughts on this topic, please send a Word document or e-mail to Jenny Woodall at jwoodall@firehero.org by April 30. If you don't do computers, send a typed or neatly handwritten copy to:

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
The Journey
PO Drawer 498
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

This project was supported by Grant #2009-PS-DX-K016, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author(s) and do not represent the official position or policies of the United States Department of Justice.