



Van Buren Township

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 24, 2013

Board of Trustees honor Firefighter Danny Wilson Wilson retires after 30 years of service



At its regular Board of Trustees meeting on June 18, the Van Buren Township Board of Trustees recognized Firefighter Dan Wilson, who retired after 30 years of service.

Wilson joined the Van Buren Township Fire Department as a volunteer firefighter in 1983, when the Township's Fire Department served 19,000 residents. There were no state-of-the-art fire stations, just Station #1 and Station #2 that were located at the north and south ends of town.

No duty crews were on staff at the stations. Firefighters had monitors at home, and a tone would go off when there was an incident located at their end of town. They would head directly to the fire station to change into their uniforms and set off in the trucks to assist. Wilson was known to be almost always on the “first truck,” which means he was almost always one of the first firefighters to arrive at the scene in the big red truck.

Wilson served through many major incidents, which included the tragic airline crash on I-94 in 1988, landfill fires, and several Lemontree (now the Providence of Harbour Club) apartment fires. Summer was the busiest time for calls with fires set off by cigarettes thrown carelessly by drivers and railroad track fires from train sparks that ignited dry grasses.

Wilson was well-respected by his fellow firefighters. He was known best for his infectious smile and witty sense of humor, but he was also an exceptional driver of the fire truck, due to his professional experience as a truck driver. He trained most other firefighters how to maneuver and operate these then stick-shift (manual) engines.

Additionally, in whatever spare time he had in addition to his busy family life and agendas, he also participated in many hot rod car shows and enjoyed dejuicing with fellow firefighters and friends with his specialty “doo wop” oldies.

About his retirement, Fire Chief Dan Besson said, “Danny has always served the community well - responding to their calls for help at all hours of the day and night. I will have a difficult time replacing his experience and love for the community and the job. People like Danny Wilson just don’t fall into fire service every day. It has been an absolute honor to have worked side by side with him and to have him serve under my command as the fire chief”.

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