

72nd Annual Awards Event Dedicated to Wayne R. Johnson

Thursday, October 7, 2021

This is our 72nd annual awards dinner, and as you know, each year we dedicate this event to one of our active or deceased members. This year, we dedicate our program to Wayne R. Johnson. I want to say a few words about Wayne.



On March 24th 1961, about one month after his 18th birthday, Wayne became a social member at Elsmere, and 11 days later on April 4th he became an Active member of the Elsmere Fire Company. He went on military leave a few years later, and upon his return, never left Elsmere Fire again. Wayne is the ultimate community servant. He loves his community and he loves the Elsmere Fire Department. In fact, he spent most of his life in this department serving others. He spent more years here than he has with his wife Barb, more years here than he's lived in any one house, more years here than he's worked at any one job, more years here than any one of us present today. That's a true testament to someone that loves what they are doing. As a volunteer member of this department, he had the courage to face danger wherever he was placed at a fire call, (especially in the 60's and 70's when many of the safety equipment and training techniques didn't even exist) and his life's mission of serving his community continues to this day. Over the past 60 years, he can truly say that he has seen it all, and accomplished a great deal in both achievements, training and serving. He has received all of our prestigious awards, The Kenneth McNary award, the Firefighter of the Year Award, and the Kevin M. Shea Participation award, received a gold watch and many plaques. He has imposed his guiding hand to train other firefighters, while serving as Lieutenant in the 70's, and his administrative skills have left an indelible mark on our department, while he served as a Company Director for 9 years, Company and District Treasure, Company Secretary, Company President for 5 consecutive terms,

And Commissioner for over 20 years, ...a position which he currently holds today. In addition to all his firematic and administrative skills, one of the most notable attributes about Wayne is his deep and sincere love of the Elsmere Fire Company and all of its members. He treats his brother and sister members like they were his own, and he treats this firehouse like it was his own. There is hardly a day that passes where you won't see his truck and loyal dog somewhere on the grounds. If he notices something that needs to be done or picked up, he will immediately tend to it....sometimes he may let people know about it, or not be too quiet about it, but he always takes care of it. His pride shines through in everything he does, and everything he does is with the highest ethical and moral standards. Wayne is truly a community servant, and he shows us by example, how important it is to give back to your country, community, family and neighbor. We're all better people for simple knowing Wayne, and he continues to live on as example to all of us as we continue his legacy of serving our community.

~Commissioner Joseph M. Catalano