



IABPFF “SMOKE”

VOLUME 2 | 50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION | OCTOBER 2020



MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:

The Membership of the IABPFF is comprised of 90 Chapters and represents 5100 fire service personnel and a 200 Lifetime Members.



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**ORGANIZED: Organized
in Hartford, Connecticut,
October 3, 1970.**



FOUNDING ORGANIZATIONS:

Vulcan Society Inc.,

New York, N.Y.,

Phoenix Society Inc.,

Hartford, Connecticut,

Vulcan Pioneers of New Jersey Inc.,

Newark, N.J.,

Vulcan Pioneers of Hudson County Inc.,

Jersey City, N.J.,

Valiants Inc.,

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



IABPFF “SMOKE” 50th Commemorative Edition



We are thrilled to celebrate IABPFF's Semicentennial! Our organization is rooted in its rich history and strong fraternal foundation.

Dr. King once said *"We are not makers of history; we are made by history"* so this newsletter honors those who paved the way and reminds us to never forget how far we have come.

In these uncertain times, it is clear that our work is not done. The IABPFF will continue the work of our founders and strive to make every new day better than the last.”

Carrie Edwards-Clemons, President

Tribute to A Black Fireman

I heard the engines' clanging gongs,
 A block or two away
 And then I saw the raging fire,
 Dark smoke and waters' spray.
 I saw the shiny ladder
 As it reached up to the wall.
 And then I saw him climbing,
 Climbing upward, toward the call.
 His black hands gripped the ladder,
 Which he climbed with sure pace.
 The smoke engulfed his body,
 Flames danced about his face.
 "I can't hold on! Please help me!"
 A youthful voice, a pleading cry.
 "Hold on! Hold on! I'm coming!"
 Was his firm assured reply.
 The roof began to crumble.
 The building's end was near.
 Those below began to scatter
 At the sound which filled their ears.
 His dark face was gripped with horror,
 His mind was seized by fear.
 As he reached the fire window
 He heard—"Swing the ladder clear!"
 In that next heroic moment
 As I closed my eyes to pray,
 A black hand grasped the child
 And lifted him away.
 There atop the ladder
 Clearly seen by every eye,
 Were the fireman and the child
 Dark silhouettes against the sky.
 He was grimey, hot and haggard
 As he stepped down to the ground.
 A cheer arose—he smiled,
 But he never turned around.
 When a reporter asked his name,
 I heard him quietly say—"NO NAME PLEASE!"
 Compared to bigotry and other barriers I've overcome,
 This was an easy day."



Inception of the IABPFF

My introduction to how the IABPFF first started was listening to stories from the Fire Department of New York's retired fire officers and past Vulcan Society Presidents, Brothers Vincent Julius and his good friend Brother James Lee. They would always talk about how proud they were of the organization that they helped form. My curiosity was peaked when they would share stories going into details about the inception of their/our organization and how after the first formal meeting of Black fire fighters the 5 founding organizations worked diligently driving from Connecticut to Pennsylvania digging the footing for the solid foundation of what would become The International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters. Although this is the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters and the holding of the IABPFF first convention. The concept and formation started a year earlier when members from the Vulcan Society of New York, Inc. made a recommendation for a Black Fire Fighters Seminar. The Vulcan's executive board agreed and here we are now celebrating our 50th Anniversary as The International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters. The beginning of the organization that we are celebrating was actually arranged in a little over 3 months. In the book *Hard Climb Up The Ladder* written by Chief John Stewart of Hartford Connecticut, he reveals it was John Ruffins of the Vulcan Society who read a July 21, 1969 Newsweek Magazine article titled *Fireman Under Fire*, which planted the idea in his head. This article was, talking about the friction between the Black Community and White fire fighters.

Just remember the year before in 1968 Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated.

The rioting in all the major cities across the country made international news showing the world a lack of diversity in our nations fire service. This July 1969 article inspired Brother Ruffins and left him with the feeling that he had to do something. I'm sure that he didn't have an international organization in mind, but he knew something had to be done and at the very next meeting he came prepared to make it happen. At a July 1969 Vulcan Society executive board meeting '*Publicity Committee Chair Hamlin, Trustee John Ruffins, and Historian Vincent Julius; presented their guidelines for a seminar for Black Firemen sponsored by the Vulcan Society.*' The Vulcan Society executive board was more than willing to accept this mission's challenge. In a recent conversation with Brother James Lee 2nd Vice-President at the time, he told me that "*The decision was unanimous*". I was so consumed while doing my investigation at The Schomburg Center for Research of Black Culture, that I almost missed my bus back to Baltimore. To read the minutes of the Vulcan Society meetings, showed the dedication and determination that it took to establish strong foundation that the IABPFF is built on today. The recording secretary Harry Speed who Brother Lee commends for his thorough documentation of Vulcan Society meetings chronicled this statement" *The President felt that there is a need for such a conference, that it has tremendous potential, that the time is right, that such a project should come from New York.*"

Having read the Newsweek Magazine article prior to my research it was astounding to see how much was done within 101 Days, from July 21 - October 30 to ensure that the Black fire fighters in attendance of this first meeting of Black fire fighters was an insightful, informative, enjoyable experience. They would meet to talk about what they would call this first meeting seminar vs conference, as you could imagine the conference title won. Meetings were held to discuss their goals, the conference agenda format workshops, speakers and plenary sessions. They had to meet to lock down a date and venue for this conference; the most important thing of any event is date and place. They decided the first ever Black Fire Fighter Conference will be held October 30th - November 1st 1969 at the Commodore Hotel. In less than a month, they had an event name, purpose, date and location, to invite their target audience Black fire fighters from all over the country.



The Vulcan Society being organized almost 30 years at this point had already been networking with and assisting Black fire fighter like Baltimore with our IAFF issues and have been supportive of social events and activities developing relationships with many of the east coast organizations. This made it pretty easy for them to put the word out to a core group of organizations about the conference. For young members of the IABPFF today, it may be hard to believe that this organization started with no type of social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or email. Yet they did have the U.S. postal service (snail mail) the telegraph, a telephone and what still works today; tell a fire fighter. The communication that they had and the energy from word of mouth was contagious with the target audience. This built the curiosity for the new entity that was so very much needed and long overdue. Minutes of the October 2, 1969 board meeting revealed at that time they had correspondence from as far away as Wichita, Kansas and Oklahoma City, and were giving interviews to reporters from around the country.

They worked tirelessly to lay the foundation of establishing what would become the greatest institution in the world to address the issues of Black fire fighters. As we now know, the First Black Fire Fighters Conference was an overwhelming success. The 250 attendees exceeded the committee's expectations of 200 as they came from as far away as Los Angeles, California. Brother Lee mentioned there were a few non-Black attendees as well. The individuals who attended the very first meeting of Black fire fighters didn't just come to this conference in New York City because they wanted to just take a trip to see "The Big Apple". They came to take care of serious business and that they did. Let us keep that in mind for the next 50 years and see what happens.

This group of comrades left New York City on November 1, 1969 charged with sharing with others their experience. Also to spread the word to recruit others to attend the following years convention. In addition, they were challenge to come up with ways to address these 5 issues.

- 1 Fire prevention in the Ghetto community
- 2 Recruitment of Black youth in the fire service
- 3 Promotional and internal problems in the fire service
- 4 Harassment of fire fighters
- 5 Formation of Nationwide organization of Black Professional Fire Fighters



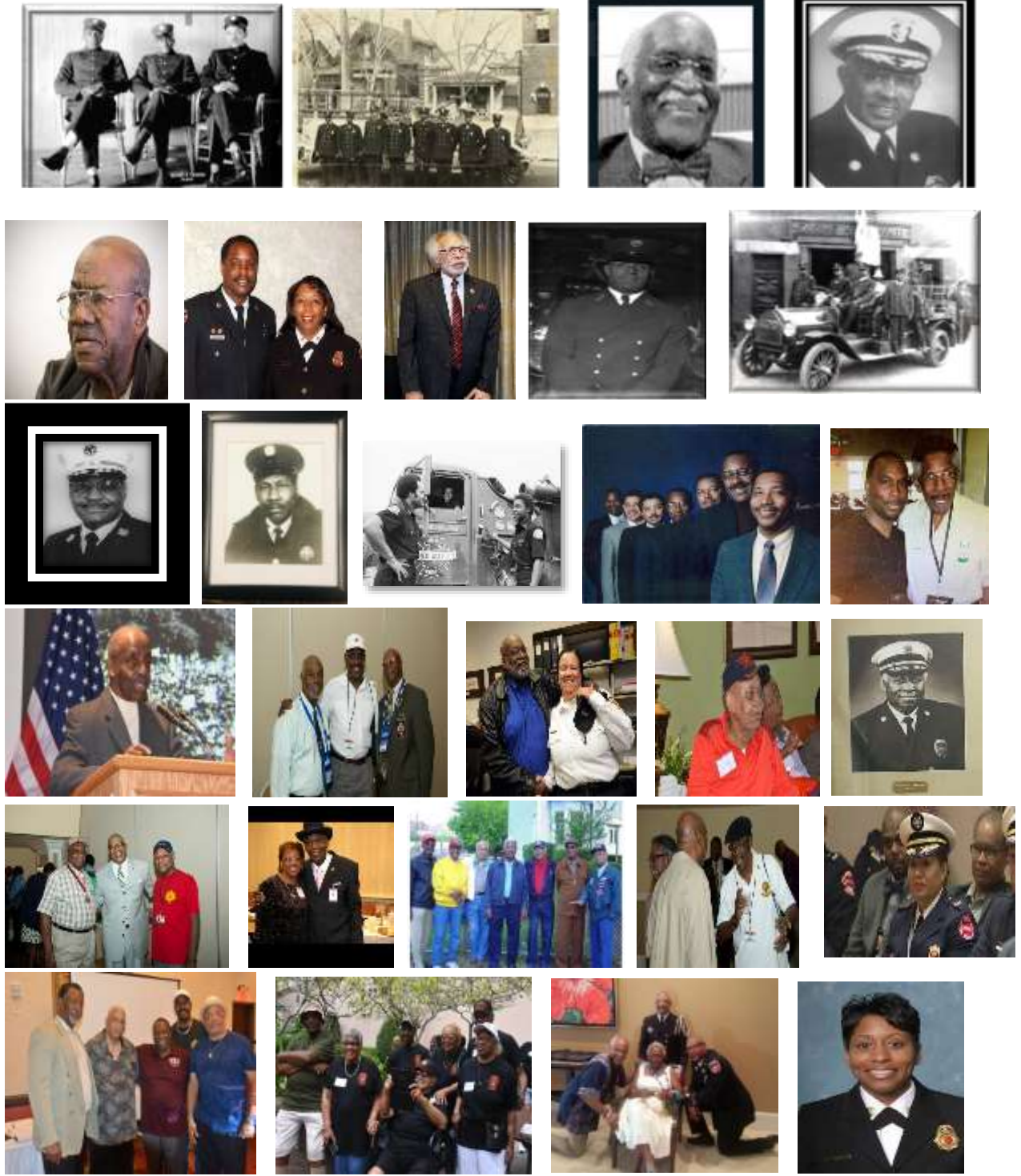
It has been said that the most significant action of the First Black fire fighter conference, was the vote to hold a national convention with the goal to establish an organization for Black fire fighters. At the November 13, 1969 Vulcan Society board meeting President David Jackson extended his "Thanks" to all the members who made the First Black fire fighters conference successful. He also stated the same help would be anticipated for the proposed convention of Black Professional Fire Fighters in 1970. Meeting minutes reveal that President Jackson requested that Club Valiants of Philadelphia Pennsylvania be the convention host. The December 11, 1969 meeting it was concluded that Club Valiants of Philadelphia did not have the manpower to host a convention. Discussion was had about the impending meeting to be held in January 1970 to plan a convention for a national organization for Black Professional Fire Fighters with President Jackson saying, "*We must not lose momentum or interest*".



Brother George Collins, Lifetime Member



From the Archives





HISTORY OF THE IABPFF

It was in early February 1970 that the five founding organizations met in Brooklyn, New York at the Vulcan Hall for their first meeting to prepare for the first convention of what would become The International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters. At this meeting were the presidents and representatives of the Vulcan Society President David Jackson, Phoenix Society President Cecil Alston, Vulcan Pioneers of New Jersey Robert Slaughter, Vulcan Pioneers of Hudson County New Jersey Joseph Tinsley and Club Valiants Howard Rhone. I always wondered with the over 250 people at the 1969 conference how only these 5 organizations got to become the founding fathers of the IABPFF. Brother Jim Lee now 89 who was at that meeting stated it was the close relationship that had been established over the years that made it a natural fit for these organizations to work together on such a project. Another meeting attendee from Hartford Richard Epps, a young 29-year-old at that time remembers traveling to different cities, being at many events and hearing the elders say that they should do something more than social activities. The Vulcan Society being the first group of Black professional fire fighters to organize had been instrumental in the formation of these organizations and was highly regarded by the other organizations.

The meeting started by selecting a chair for the committee; John Stewart from the Phoenix Society of Hartford was nominated and voted in to run the meetings.

They also decided that any future meeting would function under the name “*National Convention Planning Committee*”. Next they needed to decide the location of the national convention. Brother Stewart let it be known that the Phoenix Society would be honored to host the national convention in Hartford, Connecticut. He shared with the group some preliminary work that had been done soliciting interest and support from insurance companies in Hartford. One company had committed to making space available in their 22 story building, as well as introductory conversations held with the downtown Hilton Hotel offering reduced rates.

I have a millennial mentee who calls this plug and play, it’s all set up you just follow the road map. Well those guys thought it was a great idea and were considerate and respectful enough of the initiative and the effort already established, that they voted unanimously to hold the national convention in Hartford. Preconvention just like in current conventions, the discussion of finances came up and all 5 founding organizations agreed to place \$100.00 each in an account for the use by the host committee. They concluded this meeting by voting that the 5 presidents would be the governing body of the convention committee and agreed at the next meeting they would elect officers, assign duties and work on the convention agenda.



February 28, 1970 was the second planning meeting where the first order of business was nominations and elections of officers for the national convention committee. The next order of business was the decision for a name, which was to be “The National Convention of Black Professional Fire Fighters”.

Having selected a convention site, the next order of business was a decision to select the date of Thursday October 1, 1970 to Saturday October 3, 1970, only leaving them 7 months to complete all the work needed to put on a First Class convention. These actions were followed up with discussions of workshops for the convention.

They decided on 5 panels and at the end of this meeting it was felt that they were well on their way to making the vision of a national convention of Black fire fighters a reality. Six weeks later on April 18 1970 the third convention committee was held in Newark, New Jersey.

In addition to general convention business, host organization the Phoenix Society gave confirmation that the downtown Hilton Hotel and Hartford Insurance Plaza would be the facilities where the conventioners will convene. It was also reported that letters went out to fire departments across the country, in addition to press releases being sent to Black newspapers and radio. Also letters went to National Black organizations like the Urban League, NAACP and SCLC informing them about the Black Fire Fighters Convention for them to spread the

word to their members. At that meeting names of attendees were announced including one lone Black Fire Fighter in Springfield Massachusetts and Black fire fighters in Baltimore, who wanted to organize and be part of the convention.

July of 1970 a year after the idea of a Black conference came up the 4th meeting of the convention committee was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The National Black Fire Fighters convention now three months away, with planning running smoothly. Interest to attend was still high with reports of the Camden, N.J organization and Black fire fighters from Savannah Ga. who were 20% of their department. It was agreed with some opposition to invite the IAFF and IAFC presidents to the convention banquet. The main focus of this meeting was to determine which organizations would lead the panels at the national convention. The results of who would lead the workshops are as follows

- 1) Phoenix Society Name and Structure workshop
- 2) Club Valiants Membership and Dues workshop
- 3) Vulcan Society Bylaws workshop
- 4) Purpose and Aims workshop Vulcan Pioneers of Hudson County, N.J
- 5) Constitution workshop Vulcan Pioneers of Newark, N.J.

At the next meeting in August the Vulcan Pioneers of Hudson County, New Jersey finalized their work giving reasons why all Black fire fighters from across the country should ensemble together and organize themselves.



September 12, 1970 at the Vulcan Hall in Brooklyn, the 5 founding organizations representative knew that the convention was less than a month away. After reviewing the agenda and panel discussions, Chairman John Stewart proposed a youth session to feedback from the youth and their issues. This was prompted by the social unrest that was going on during the summer in the Black community in Hartford and across the nation with our youth. Two weeks later on September 26, 1970 the final meeting was held in a suburb outside of Hartford. For the last time they went over the convention agenda, firm up remaining details and adorned the meeting. With less than 5 days away these men were ready to convene the most historic event in the history of Black's in the fire service.

Since being a member for almost 25 years every time I hear someone talk about the first IABPFF convention being in Hartford Connecticut, I often would ask "*Why Hartford*"? The accounts of these planning meetings are chronicled in Chief John Stewart's Book "*Hard Climb Up The Ladder*", of which I have taken most of the information for this article. Yet the answer of my question was not found in the 46 pages dedicated to the IABPFF. Common sense would have me conclude that they were the only one to come to the meeting with a presentation for a proposal. Still I wanted to know what made this group of men from Hartford believe that they would

be the chosen ones to host such a significantly historic event. Everyone I was able to talk gave the credit to their trust in one man, Brother John Stewart. In conversations with then Phoenix Society President Cecil Alston and his wife, Brother Alston 90 years old this year shared with me the presentation at the first planning meeting was all John Stewart. He said Brother Stewart was a well-organized man whose ability to plan came naturally; "He could see the big picture and still know all the details to make it happen". Sister Alston told me that Brother Stewart was just a special person. She said "When John brought up the idea it was immediate by-in from the Black community of Hartford and he knew that we would be behind The Phoenix Society to make sure their efforts would be a success". She also stated "Don't forget the Phoenix Society's Woman's Auxiliary, the wives were very supportive of our husbands and the hard work it would take to make this event happen". The Auxiliary was started by the wives of founding Phoenix Society members, they looked at support for this as just another opportunity to serve their community. When I spoke to Nelson Carter who was elected treasurer of the convention committee because of his repetition to squeeze a dime out of a nickel, he simple answered my question with the question, "*Did you know John Stewart*"? "Brother Richard Epps looked at Brother Stewart as an elder with foresight whose leadership will take you wherever it was for you to go.





Finally, the day of the national convention had arrived, attendance was impressive, excitement was in the air and feelings of Brotherhood was at an all-time high. *On Thursday October 1, 1970 at 4:00 PM Phoenix Society President Cecil Alston struck his gavel on the podium and said these words. "On behalf of the Phoenix Society, I welcome all of our brother professional fire fighters from around the country, and their guest, to the first ever "National Convention of Black Professional Fire Fighters"* The crowd erupted with cheers and applause, when he announced that there were over 400 registered convention attendees. In a recent conversation with Brother Alston as he approaches his 90th birthday, he told me that it was a proud moment for all who had put in the hard work to make this day successful. Brother John Stewart later wrote those who visualized a national convention just a year earlier were overjoyed with the response. They saw this as confirmation of their belief that it was a need for Black fire fighters to come together and address their common concerns.

Brother Alston continued the opening by reminding the attendees of the goal of establishing a national organization for Black professional fire fighters, draft a charter and elect officers. Alston yielded the podium to official greetings welcome from city officials and the opening prayer before, introducing to the convention Chairman John Stewart. Brother Stewart recounts how elated he was as he greeted the convention attendees with these 3 words, *"Welcome to Hartford!"* He also acknowledged the historic significance of the day in this statement, *"This is something to tell your children and grandchildren about"*. Once again he reiterated the necessity for Black fire fighters to organize to address issues of segregation in the fire service and to improve community relations with our Black youth. Brother Stewart concluded his remarks after 20 minutes using just a few notes scribbled on a piece of paper. This was followed by questions and answers, direction and instruction for the remainder of the convention and at 6:00PM the opening day of the first convention of Black professional fire fighters was adjourned.

The next day at 10:00 AM the attendees knew that this would be the day to get convention business done for a national Black professional fire fighters organization.





When the meeting was called to order it was announced that on Day 2 of the convention there were nearly 600 registered fire fighters from all over the country. Again these individuals gave themselves and their fellow attendees a rousing round of cheers and applause as they knew the importance of just being present at the First Ever National Convention of Black Professional Fire Fighters. After going over the agenda for the day and explaining what was to be accomplished, they broke into the 3 morning workshops that were assigned at registration. In the workshops they discussed, debated and dug into the details of the aforementioned panel subjects that were led by each of the founding organizations. The same thing was repeated in the afternoon. These workshops were followed by a plenary

session attended by all registered conventioners where reports were given on all 6 workshop subjects. This was the time and place for questions and answers, clarification of all concerns and any additional suggestions or recommendations that may need to be adopted by the group. After the discussion met everyone's satisfaction and agreed upon changes were made the plenary session was adjourned. Every time I see that iconic picture of that banquet, I am in awe of how the photographer with his panoramic view was able to capture the pride and comradery of being in the same room with hundreds of individuals who were complete strangers less the 36 hour prior. Brother Carter said it was a banquet that everybody who worked on it walked on Cloud Nine at that time and spoke of how grateful they were for people to want to travel to Hartford for this convention. He went on to say *"This convention shook Hartford, it shook the whole state of Connecticut, all the politicians who thought that they should be there were there"*. This was confirmed by the documented attendance of Governor John N. Dempsey who showed up to give his personal greetings. Brother Alston stated at that point we just said *"Thank God, we did it!"* He shared the memories of thoughts sitting on the dais inside the Hilton Banquet Hall, as he took in the view of the Gathered Throng, *"It made you want to grab yourself by the coat and put your thumbs behind your lapel with pride."*

There was a bit of controversy during the convention, when a rumor reached then Chief Edward Curtin that this new Black fire



That evening the fire fighters, their wives and guests filled the Hilton's grand ballroom for what was the hottest ticket in town, The National Convention of Black Professional Fire Fighters banquet.

fighters organization would be starting their separate union. Chief Curtin called to his office President Alston and threatened to fire him and have him jailed for violation of city regulations. Phoenix Society members vowed to stand with their president and told the Chief if he goes, We Go! The rumor was cleared up and the local organization was stronger than ever.

Saturday October 3, 1970 the final day of this historic convention had come. The same vitality and enthusiasm that started the convention off on Day 1 was still in the air. Those of us who have pulled off a big project or event can only imagine the spirit of excitement as the members of the planning committee marveled at the success of such a momentous occasion. Brother Stewart recounts his thoughts with these words *"On this last day of the convention,*

we knew we had already accomplished something that was meaningful and lasting". On the closing day of the National Convention of Black Professional Fire Fighters, the business of voting on the constitution for the organization and election of officers was the objective for the day. Although it was the charge of the first conference, emphasized in the planning meetings and understood by invited conventioners, that they were there to establish a national Black fire fighter organization. On the previous day in the plenary, they found out that they would be establishing an international organization. Brother Aaron West who chaired the Phoenix Society's panel of Name and Structure proposed as a name "The International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters". From a

workshop, to the convention floor, to becoming the official name of a much needed organization then and now. I can say to Brother West that the name is still befitting. They went on to vote unanimously to adopt the proposed constitution for the newly formed International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters (IABPFF). After lunch the last vote of the convention was the vote for founding officers.

There was competition in the elections, but the founding officers elected were President David Floyd, Vice-president Robert Paul, Treasure Charles Hendricks and Recording Secretary Bill Brogden. The newly elected President David Floyd, was a 33 year-old, 10-year veteran of the FDNY and 1st Vice-president of The Vulcan Society, who took his oath of office and was sworn in with his clenched fist raised. When I asked Brother Jim Lee about the clenched fist action he simply said *“That was just who Dave was”*. The swearing in was followed by a very inspiring speech that left the crowd reassured that the organization that they had just formed was in very good hands. The floor was yielded to Brother Stewart of the conference committee where the historic conference was recapped to remind the registered attendees what a huge accomplishment they had achieved. He provided well wishes and safe travels and made the announcement of the 1972 IABPFF convention.

This was followed by closing remarks from host organization President Cecil Alston, including the announcement of a reception hosted by the Phoenix Society Woman’s Auxiliary. President David Floyd retained the floor to close the meeting with these words, *“The National Convention of the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters is now adjourned”* and he gavelled the convention to a close. The attendees closed the convention with just as much fervor and exhilaration as it began if not more. They ended with applause, cheers, handshakes, and salutations, all in anticipation of what the future would bring. In October of 2020 we see the future is now and we have maintained The International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters for the last 50 years. We have even made history this year by electing our First Woman IABPFF President Carrie Edwards Clemons, Deputy Chief from Flint MI. to lead us into the next 50 years. From here I can see the future and the future is bright.



Brother George Collins, Historian



WE HONOR OUR PRESIDENTS

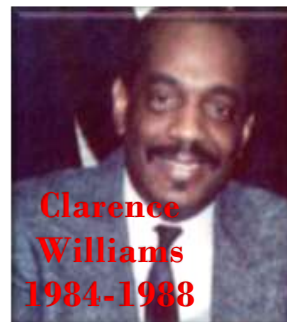
& the International Black Firefighters Foundation (IBFF)



**David J.
Floyd
1970-1980**



**Charles
Hendricks
1980-1984**



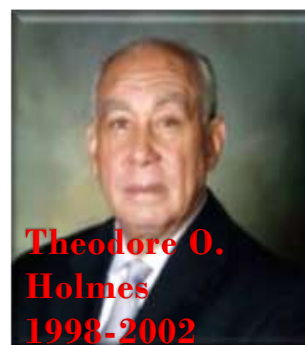
**Clarence
Williams
1984-1988**



**Romeo
Spaulding
1988-1996**



**Oshiyemi
Adelabu
1996-1998**



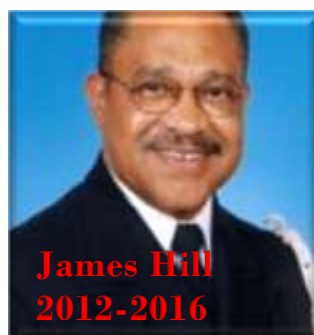
**Theodore O.
Holmes
1998-2002**



**Johnny
Brewington
2002-2008**



**Joseph
Muhammad
2008-2012**



**James Hill
2012-2016**



**Addington
Stewart
2016-2020**



**Carrie
Edwards-Clemons
2020**

Member Spotlight

*All I Am, I Owe
I Live Eternally In The Red*



NCR Director Linda Brown

First Female Regional Director in the IABPFF. One of the first 5 women hired in Omaha Fire and Rescue, Director Brown was a member of the Omaha Association of Black Professional Firefighters since August of 1987. Sis Brown held positions as National Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Regional Director, Corresponding Secretary and Black Women in the Fire Service. She also held positions in her local chapter. Sis Brown's objective was to be an effective Regional Director and to strive to direct the North Central Region into becoming a strong and progressive Region where its existence is utilized to benefit the members, its communities and the IABPFF as a whole. "As a new female firefighter entering into the workforce, I needed a sign that I was on the right path. When I saw Director Brown at the podium running the Regional meeting, I knew that I was headed in the right direction. Watching Sis. Linda Brown, Theresa Harris and Melanie Anderson, I saw what was possible for me. Thank you for paving the way and inspiring me to do more and be more."

Sis Carrie Edwards-Clemons, President

SER Director Brenda Brooks

First Female elected Director of South East Region. Director Brenda Brooks truly lives by the saying "All I Am, I Owe, I live Eternally in the Red!" She was brought into the IABPFF 35 years ago (1985) by then President of the Progressive Fire Fighters of Central Florida, Roy Jerelds and Milton Kelly (both deceased). She recalls that they saw her at a meeting with the City's Mayor with an Orange County t-shirt on. David Floyd talked Clarence Williams into placing her on the Executive Board. Even then, Director Brooks had a following because of her desire to do right and fight for the rights of her chapter and community.



Director Brooks is a walking griot of all things IABPFF. "It is not about the size of the person in the fight, but the size of the fight in the person. From the first time I met her, I admired her while watching her in action. Thank you SER Director Brenda Brooks for all that you do and have done!"

Sis. Keisha Wilson, Board Member



Captain David James Floyd



*All I Am, I Owe
I Live Eternally In The Red!*

Born October 17, 1937, New York City native, David James Floyd was a man of vision, ambition and compassion. Just a few days after his 23rd birthday, Floyd was appointed to the F.D.N.Y. and assigned to Division 11, in Brooklyn, New York. During a time when racial tensions were high and organizations like Brooklyn, CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) continued to boycott well-known companies for hiring little to no African Americans, David Floyd continued to matriculate in his career, from Firefighter 4th Grade with Engine 238 in 1961 to Firefighter 3rd Grade with Ladder 108 in 1962.



On June 11, 1966 David James Floyd was assigned to Rescue Company 2 in Brooklyn New York, becoming the 1st black firefighter to be assigned to a Rescue

Company in the history of the New York City Fire Department. With his career on a steady incline he was promoted to Lieutenant in 1971 (assigned to Ladder Company 123 in Brooklyn), where the roster of this legendary and illustrious Fire Company had the largest black firefighters representation in Brooklyn, with 17 of the 25 members identifying as black. He was later transferred back to Rescue Company 2, becoming the 1st black officer assigned to a Rescue Company.

With little concern about the titles and accolades for this lieutenant, received 2 Voluntary Duty Accommodations and one Meritorious Service Award from the rescue of a trapped couple in Midtown Manhattan. More than anything, David James Floyd wanted to make a difference.



Lieutenant David James Floyd was trailblazer who made quite the name for himself, serving as the President of the Vulcan Society from 1971-1972 and 1983-1986. Under his leadership, the Vulcan Society, Inc. filed a lawsuit in 1971 against the New York City Fire Department's entrance examination and won. With several assignments and accomplishments under his belt, it seemed like nothing could slow him down until Phoenix Society's 10th Anniversary Awards Banquet, on Friday, May 28, 1976. One dance with one young lady, to one record, Misty Blue by Dorothy Moore, changed his life. Not long after, David Floyd and Quinnie L. Kennedy became inseparable. They married on July 2, 1983 and Mrs. Floyd remained a constant support to his vision.



After other assignments, Floyd was promoted to Captain on April 18, 1987, and his last assignment was as Captain of Ladder 20 in Lower Manhattan. He retired on April 24, 1996 after 36 Years of service to the F.D.N.Y.

Though he was quite the decorated firefighter, Floyd believed in honoring those who paved the way for him. He was

instrumental in having the street located in front of the Harlem YMCA (135th Street between Lenox and 5th Avenues) renamed as "Chief Wesley Williams Place," in honor of the founder of the Vulcan Society FDNY. He is also responsible for having a statue of Chief Williams placed inside of the Harlem YMCA, the place where Chief Wesley Williams trained and maintained his legendary physical prowess to deal with the trials and tribulations of being a black man in a predominantly white environment. The IABPFF as well as the Houston Black Fire Fighters Association have named their awards for valor after Floyd. *20,000 Alarms*, by Lieutenant Richard Hamilton, devoted a chapter to Captain Floyd, entitled "Black wasn't always beautiful." Captain David James Floyd was passionate about addressing the frustrations of minority firefighters and changing the community in which he lived. His beloved wife and youngest daughter Andrea Floyd continue to support his legacy and visions of The Vulcan Society, Inc. as well as the International Association of Professional Black Fire Fighters.



Sis. Quinnie Floyd



BLACK WOMEN IN THE FIRE SERVICE

“Through The Eyes of a Black Woman”

History is the told story of yesterday. Heritage is the innate strength that each of us has inherited from our ancestors and legacy is values that have been handed down from previous generations; Today is the moment we live for. It is an awesome privilege to serve in the fire service. A rare opportunity that is sought out by many but achieved by few. To have the courage to put on the uniform, wear the badge and represent your family, your values, community and department is power. Yet there are times when we feel powerless within our respective departments; as black women we are constantly compared to our counterparts as if we don't do the same job. This leads to frustration and stress. However, we must hold on to beliefs in ourselves and strive to make change where we can.



The first woman to serve as a firefighter was in slave from New York City in the early 1800's: Molly Williams. Let me pause for a moment here. Williams was a slave; who was not only the first black woman but woman period to serve as a firefighter. Her

work went above and beyond our traditional understanding of slavery; her name is mentioned historically as it symbolizes a woman's strength in the fire service and illustrates how capable women in this profession are.



This story of strength is not new to black women in the fire service; like Williams we all serve multiple roles. Our roles are important, and our lives are significant. Despite the narrative that is being told and believed, we have value that can far exceed the minimum of just existing. Our roles are not perfunctory, and we do not exist in the background as Williams was expected to do. To be just counted does not speak to our value or worth as black women in the profession.

In the Fire Service and EMS field, we have made many contributions and have touched many lives. Our intelligence, courage, strength and leadership is the forefront of

who we are. Not only is this the very essence of who we are but they are the very qualities our families and communities need. This was true for Molly Williams and continues to be true for the newest black female recruit who has just joined our departments. Let us continue to rise to the occasion as we have always done and continue to recruit women for a better tomorrow. We must encourage ourselves to stay committed and promote within our ranks.

This is who we are, it in our history, our heritage and our legacy.

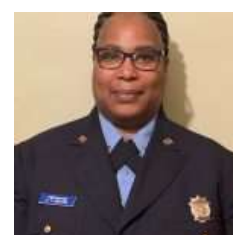
When you feel the pressure of the world and your strength is weakened, do not be discouraged. Stand strong, stand tall and stand bravely for you have Black women from all around the world standing with their hands on your back, holding you up, sharing their strength. Don't stop reaching out and telling your story. We need to hear it, we need to know it. For it is the only

narrative of who we are; it is the only way we strengthen each by speaking truth to power.

We have a lot to celebrate, as my Sista's from California, Illinois, Tennessee, Georgia, New Jersey, Washington D.C, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Michigan, New York, Connecticut, Virginia and yes, the Virgin Islands, have said loud and clear. So don't stop! Keep making waves for black women who are coming through the door that you have left open.



*Sis. Felicia Bryant, Chair.
Black Women in the Fire Service*





HEALTH AND WELLNESS

with Terri Reed

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. This is an annual campaign to increase awareness of breast cancer. The goal is to show every woman that her life is important and to ensure that every woman has access to education, screening, treatment, support and hope. Breast cancer is the most common cancer and the second most fatal cancer in women.

This year, more than ever, there is a need to focus on breast cancer. Forty-two thousand people are expected to die from breast cancer in 2020 in the U.S. alone. If no action is taken, and with the COVID-19 pandemic still creating chaos around the globe, there is no saying what the impact of COVID-19 may be on breast cancer patients.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) projects that pandemic-related delays in diagnosis and treatment disruption could result in 10,000 additional deaths from breast cancer and colorectal cancer over the next ten years. In addition, researchers report that during the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic, diagnostic and screening mammograms have decreased over 80%. There has also been a 50% decline in visits to primary care physicians. All these plus disruptions in diagnostic tests, lab work and delayed appointments are all likely to have an impact on cancer patients.

Breast Cancer Risk Factors

Although men can get breast cancer, the main risk factors are being a woman and getting older. Other risk factors include:
Changes in breast cancer related genes (BRCA1 or BRCA2)

Starting your period before age 12 or starting menopause after age 55

Never giving birth or being older when your first child is born

Taking birth control pills or hormones during menopause for more than five years

A family history of breast cancer (parent, sibling, or child).

Being overweight, especially after menopause.

Breast Cancer Warning Signs

Most breast cancer has no signs or symptoms in the early stages. Warning signs include:

New lump, thickening or swelling in the breast or armpit

Irritation or dimpling of breast skin.

Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or breast.

Puckering, dimpling, or pain in the nipple
Nipple discharge

Cancer Awareness Month, it is time to encourage women to get checked, make healthy choices, and take care of their breast health. Women can improve their knowledge and increase awareness by educating themselves about breast cancer.

Please Stay Safe!



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS

CALL TO ACTION

Cleveland, Ohio October 2020 – The International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters (IABPFF) unite with other organizations and communities across the country protesting injustices and the racism that has affected every aspect of our lives as African Americans. We are aware of the increasing complexities of these problems and those of our Brothers and Sisters of color globally. We are angry, saddened, hurt and confused by the assumption of guilt, inconsistent standards, implicit bias and toxic culture that is ingrained in the fabric of our country. We as an organization will not stop advocating for change until systemic racism and racial disparities in our communities across the country and within the fire service is addressed.

THIS IS A CALL TO ACTION!

The International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters support the peaceful protest of racial injustice caused by those who are tasked to protect us across the country. The Executive Board authorizes members of the IABPFF to peacefully protest under the banner of the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters.

“The current justice system focuses on punishment and not restorative practices. For that reason, we will protest until the unfair and racist treatment of our Brothers and Sisters of color cease.”

For more information about the IABPFF please visit iabpf.org



The International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters

The IABPFF ENDORSE JOE BIDEN FOR PRESIDENT

October 2, 2020

The IABPFF is pleased to announce the endorsement of Joe Biden for President in the upcoming November election.

Mr. Biden has shown that he is an engaged leader for communities of color. We believe that he will be responsive and support issues of importance to first responders. He exemplifies democratic ideals and has a long record of accomplishment and support for public servants.

Joe Biden is the best candidate to lead the United States out of crisis and into recovery.

"Joe Biden will represent all people; bring civility back into the political arena and fight to improve the lives of hardworking Americans."

President Edwards-Clemens



International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters / 17703 Grovewood Ave. Cleveland, OH 44119 / www.iabpf.org



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK
PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS

FIRE FIGHTERS
FOR BIDEN
HARRIS

Thank you to all who contributed to the 50th
Commemorative Edition of IABPFF "SMOKE".
To view pictures submitted, please visit: www.iabpf.org.
Submit articles for the next edition of SMOKE via
email at dthompson@iabpf.org.

The IABPFF reserves the right to edit or not use articles submitted.