



IABPFF, Inc. “SMOKE”

VOLUME 4 | STRENGTH AND POWER EDITION | JULY 2021



**ORGANIZED OCTOBER 3, 1970
IN HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT.**

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., and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

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



Strength and Power

As I think about the theme of this edition of Smoke, I am inspired by these stories of strength and power. It often requires us to dig a little deeper or to aim a little higher but it is important to remember that we are stronger together.

Our founding fathers knew this and were able to lay the foundation upon which we stand today. They had high hopes for our beloved organization; this was reflected in the creation of our logo.

The symbolism of Allah (God) being the glue that holds the fist together is a reminder to us all that He is our anchor and gives us the strength and power to keep the fire burning for justice.

Carrie Edwards-Clemons
President

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IABPFF LOGO: WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN



COLORS - Red, black and green were the colors used by Marcus Garvey's black pride of African movement of the 1930's. The "Red" is for our blood, the "Black" is for the race, and the "Green" is for hope.

HAND - The hand was selected because of the number five (5). The five fingers represent the five founding organizations of the International, which were Phoenix Society, Hartford, CT.; Valiants, Inc. of Philadelphia, PA; Vulcan Pioneers of Hudson County, Jersey City, NJ; Vulcan Pioneers of NJ, Newark, NJ; and Vulcan Society, Inc., New York, NY.

CLENCHED FIST

Symbolized Strength and Power When the Fingers (Organizations) Came Together.

OUTLINE OF FINGERS

It was strongly felt by the designer that the Almighty had a guiding hand in bringing Black fire fighters together from across the nation. The outline of the fingers was shaped to form the Arabic word "Allah" which means "GOD".

FLAME

Represents the heat that is necessary to take something old (five groups), and forge them into something new (The International).

Some of the major accomplishments that the IABPFF is responsible for are: 1) the increase of African Americans in the fire service, 2) the increase in African American Chief Officers, 3) the acceptance and increase of females into the American fire service, 4) the establishment of its own Executive Development Institute at Florida A & M University, 6) the introduction of new state-of-the-art technology in fire defense strategies to the fire service, 7) the assistance with many legal challenges to discriminatory hiring, recruitment, promotional and disciplinary systems within fire departments, and 8) the assistance with many national legislative initiatives that affects the fire service community. We now have the IABPFF Foundation established which is designed to deliver the educational needs of the IABPFF membership. It will become the educational arm of the association as we continue to grow.

IABPFF 2nd National President

Charles Hendricks



The thing that I like most about writing these first 3 newsletter articles commemorating the 50th Anniversary of The International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters(IABPFF), is that we get a snapshot of the persons who laid the foundation for us to be part of such a great institution as The IABPFF. In this edition of "Smoke" we will highlight our second president, Philadelphia fire fighter Charles Hendricks. Before taking the helm as IABPFF president he was our Inaugural Treasurer for the first 10 years of our organization. Brother Hendricks' wife Ethel says "No matter what organization that Charles belonged to he usually ended up becoming treasurer." She said "He always wanted to know where the money was". The fact that we have an organization that has been able to survive financially for 50 years is a testament to the unquestionable legacy of Brother Hendricks.

A founder of Club Valiants, Inc. of Philadelphia, he was one of the approximately 250 attendees at the first meeting of Black fire fighters held October 1969 in New York. Mrs. Hendricks reflected on the years before the 1969 first meeting of Black fire fighters from across the country. She said "We would always

have such a good time attending each other's events from Baltimore to Hartford. "She would often hear them say, "We need to start an organization" so when the decision was made and it was time to put the work in, Sis. Hendricks, like all the wives during that time, was very supportive, which added to the success of the efforts of their idea to establish the first ever Black fire fighter's organization.



Past President Hendricks was present at the first planning meeting in February 1970; for the first National Convention of Black Fire Fighters, that would be held October 1970 in Hartford Connecticut. Brother Hendricks being part of many community, civic, education, youth and social organizations in Philadelphia, along with being chairman of the board of trustees in his church, he jumped at the chance to be part of forming a national organization of Black professional fire fighters. Being an integral part of the 9 months of preparation for this Inaugural Convention, the Valiants, one of the 5 founding organizations, were responsible for the Membership and Dues Workshop. It was only natural for him to take on some type of leadership position in the newly formed International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters and instinctively it would be the treasurer.



Brother James Lee approaching 90 years old has been part of the IABPFF from the suggestion of the idea in July of 1969. He said, "Charlie Hendricks was a gentleman. I always marveled at how smart those guys were". As his spouse Mrs. Hendricks could not help but to notice the strong bond of brotherhood between her husband and David Floyd, our founding president. "They traveled together all the time to build up their new organization". "I always loved going to the conventions and didn't miss one until recent years". She also talked about the support system the dynamic duo of IABPFF founding president and treasurer had for each other. How enthusiastic and committed they were in their leadership position. Always in communication with each other, talking on the phone often many times every week. They would even attend meetings of her International Toastmistress group which gave them skills that helped enhance their natural leadership in their new positions representing The IABPFF. They took the best practices of already established institutions along with finding organizational strategies that were the foundation of building an organization that would stand the test of time. Sister Hendricks recalls how surprised she was at the moment when Brother Hendricks decided to be dedicated to something bigger than himself.

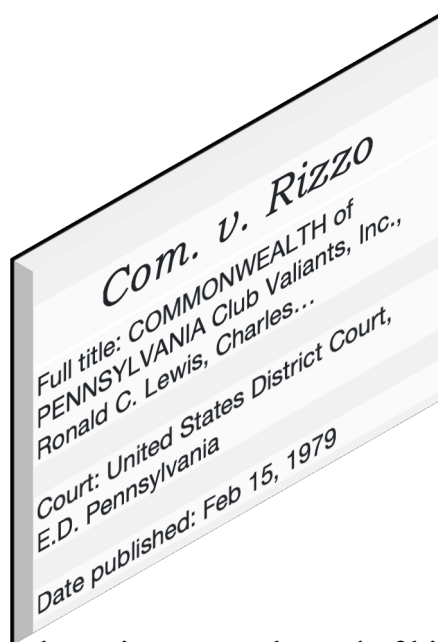
"We were on vacation, and Charles had brought all these books as study material for the next promotional exam". While sitting on the beach in Wildwood, New Jersey he simply said, "I'm not going to read all these books, and I don't want to be an officer. I can do more as a fire fighter than I can as an officer. As an officer you are beholden to someone who is over you and they can put more pressure on you".

AW! "The Good Old Days" when we put our selfish, opportunistic instincts aside and made our decisions to sacrifice for the greater good of our people.



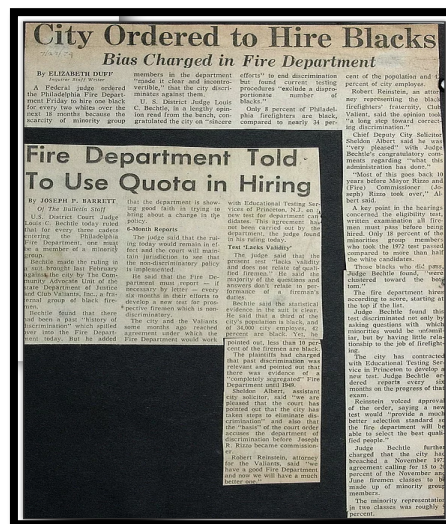
The good thing about the examples set by people like Past President Hendricks; some of us have shown that you can gain position and power, and still "Lift as You Climb". After 10 years President Emeritus David Floyd concluded his calling as Inaugural President of The International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters and Brother Hendricks like many others wondered who would be the best person to lead this still young organization of Black Professionals in the fire service. Working so closely with the founding president for a decade, innately he made the decision to offer himself up to be the next president. James Lee refers to the relationship between Brothers Floyd and Hendricks as "Excellent". He recalls the election following the David Floyd presidency. "I don't remember if Charlie Hendricks ran unopposed; but I do know that there was no competition". Described by his son-in-law Reginald Walker as "A leader who rose out of his people, but never above them".

Appointed to the Philadelphia Fire Department (PFD) in the late 50's, Brother Hendricks was one of the 5 original plaintiffs in the lawsuit *Commonwealth v. Rizzo*. February 15, 1979 he and the others put their jobs on the line and stood up to one of the most powerful mayors in the country, to address the issue of discrimination in Philadelphia's Fire Dept.



A winning lawsuit was not the end of his efforts, he did grassroots recruiting everywhere he went. Many African American fire fighters in Philadelphia followed the proposition of Brother Hendricks "Even if you don't want the job, just take the test! "Retired Commissioner Lloyd Ayers, Past Club Valiants President, Northeast Regional Director and IABPFF Vice-President remembers Brother Hendricks as "A Special Guy ", who was very personable and devoted to the growth of The IABPFF. "He stayed on us about the need to be unified. He encouraged us Valiants to network with the other IABPFF chapters from across the country." "Although he was a fire fighter you would have thought that he was a chief. Even the Chief's acknowledged him, while they were in his presence".

Brother Ayers, appointed to the Philadelphia Fire Department in 1974 to 2014 and was in the last class of recruits before the federal consent decree for PFD was implemented.



Brother Ayers shared with Brother Hendricks the gratitude of many who he touched personally and professionally during his lifetime in the final days prior to his transition on May 5, 1991. The response from Past President Hendricks was simply "As Long as You Know". I interpret that to mean we all need to know the sacrifice that was made by the people who paved the way for us to benefit from the fruits of their labor. I feel we all should be obligated to make our own contributions to The IABPFF to ensure that it not only survives, but thrives over the next 50 years.

We are blessed to have had two of the greatest visionaries of their time to be inaugural officers and leaders of the IABPFF during our growth years. They were extremely prepared and set the tone of a smooth transition of power, with a pass the torch mentality that the race for equality must continue. The David Floyd & Charles Hendricks relationship went beyond this life.

After the death of his friend, brother and partner in the movement, President Emeritus Floyd advocated for 5 of the most important organizations that Brother Hendricks served in, commission an artist to do a bust of him.



This bust was unveiled in May of 1993 at the Afro-American Historical and Culture Museum in Philadelphia. This bronze sculpture memorializes Past President Charles Hendricks at the Valiant's Hall in Philadelphia as an

appreciation of his sacrifice and a reminder of his legacy.

The next Smoke Newsletter articles commemorating our Golden Anniversary will be coming from the living past presidents in their own words. They will be given the opportunity to share with us how their presidency help shapes The IABPFF. Fortunately, the 4 years of the Charles Hendricks presidency has some documentation and we will let the following speech give you an idea of his work during the time of his administration.

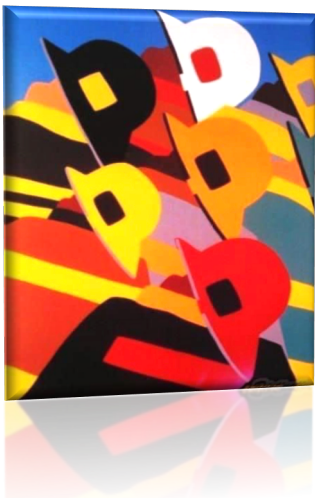


*Bro. George Collins, Co-Chair.
IABPFF, Inc. Historical Committee*

IN UNITY - IBF Foundation

IN HONOR OF THE 12 BLACK FIREFIGHTERS LOST IN THE WORLD TRADE CENTER

“In Unity” the painting commissioned by the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters in honor of the 12 black Fire Fighters lost in the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.



Fine Art Lithograph 28x22

By World Renowned Visual
Artist, Synthia Saint James.

Original painting commissioned
by the IABPFF.
We will never forget!



Bro. Johnny Brewington, IBF Foundation Chair.
Login to www.iabpf.org for more information

Las Angeles Fire Department Hose 4

Our History

**By Bro. Brent Burton, Co-Chair
IABPFF, Inc. Historical Committee**

Greetings to all of our IABPFF readers and subscribers. This article will be one of many to come. President Edwards-Clemons asked the Historical Committee to provide our newsletter with a piece of historical information for the benefit of making our membership aware of some of the stories and little-known facts of our history throughout the previous years. Blacks in the fire service is nothing new nationally, however, we must never forget those that came before us to pave the way so we can all enjoy the luxury of working in one of the most noble professions in the world.

This article will start with Hose Company #4 of the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD). Hose 4 was located just outside of the downtown Los Angeles area in a community known as Westlake. This was where most of the Black Firefighters in Los Angeles would get their start.



The photo shown here is from 1921 and it includes those from the first generation of Black Firefighters in Los Angeles under segregated conditions.

The LAFD was organized in 1886 and the first Black Firefighter hired was Sam Haskins in 1892. Haskins was killed responding to a fire in 1895 and the next Black Firefighter to come on the job was George Bright in 1897. Haskins, Bright and the next two Black Firefighters hired worked in integrated fire houses until 1902.

In 1902, Bright promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and that's when segregation started in the Los Angeles Fire Department. The Department took many of the Black Firefighters in the Department and placed them at Hose Company #4 under Bright's Command. In those days, the Fire Department had a harsh schedule, where firefighters worked 30 days on with 3 hours off during the day to go home, and 1 full day off. The remaining Black Firefighters were assigned to Hose Company #2 under the command of a Mexican-American Lieutenant, Frank Leiva. In 1912, the Department went to a two platoon system and they combined Hose Company 2 and 4 together. William Hall whom came on the Department in 1909, promoted to Lieutenant in 1916 and replaced Frank Leiva. Leiva went back to a white fire house where it was acceptable for him to command white men and other Mexican-American firefighters. Bright retired in 1917 and Edward Walker was made Lieutenant.

In the next edition of SMOKE, we will continue this story and discuss the rest of our History. We will also feature other historical stories in addition to Los Angeles' history.



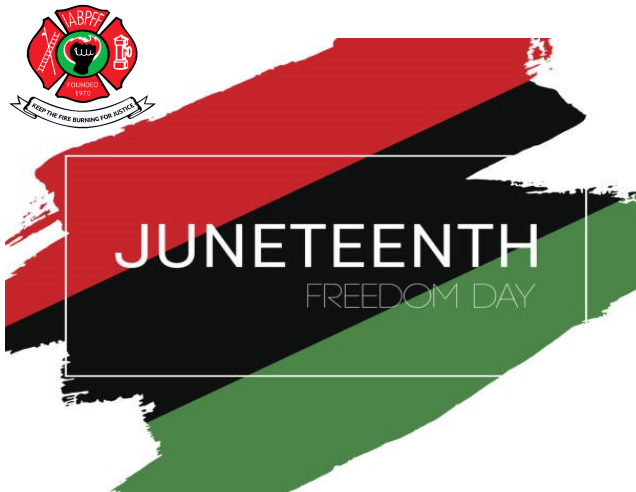
Always remember; The capacity to learn is a gift, the ability to learn is a skill and the willingness to learn is a choice!

BLACK HISTORY STILL BEING MADE

In 1991, Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly appointed Brother Theodore Holmes to serve the citizens of Washington DC as acting Fire Chief of the DC Fire Department.



Brother Theodore O. Holmes 6th President of the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters and his son Christopher Y. Holmes are making history by being the first black father and son to serve the Washington Community as Chief Officers with the DC Fire and EMS Department.



**“STRUGGLE IS A NEVER ENDING PROCESS.
FREEDOM IS NEVER REALLY WON, YOU EARN
IT AND WIN IT IN EVERY GENERATION.”**

—Coretta Scott King

“The Greatest Fire Tragedy Ever to Strike the African-American Race”



Over the years I’ve had an opportunity to watch several stage plays by the granddaughter of the owner of the Rhythm Night Club. Mrs. Danese Frazier-Turner is also a good friend and invited me to watch the latest stage play “Death by Dancing” online and participate in a zoom panel discussion which was very enlightening. Hearing her mother and several family members made me want to share it with my IABPFF family. This tragic fire that happened more than 81 years ago changed the lives of a generation of African-Americans, and helped establish safety codes nationwide.

The Rhythm Club Fire of Natchez, Mississippi

Much has been written over the years about the deadly fire at the Coconut Grove Club and other famous nightclubs but there has been little written about another devastating nightspot blaze, the Rhythm Nightclub Fire, which occurred in Natchez, Mississippi, in April 1940. It was a bit of mystery to us as to why no one has taken a closer look at this fire, but based on the time and place – the heavily segregated South – the answer became clear: All of the

victims were African Americans. I have never been of the belief that racism is behind every bad thing in American history, but when looking over the newspaper articles that pertained to the fire, the writing style in them made the situation pretty plain. The Rhythm had been a Negro club, staffed and owned by Negroes, patronized by Negroes (“imitating their white counterparts by dressing in evening clothes,” as one contemporary news report sneered) and the tragedy was not taken as seriously in 1940 as it would have been today.



Mississippi was still a segregated state, plagued by the Jim Crow laws, and many white residents had little use for the blacks that lived among them, alive or dead, unless they cleaned their homes, mowed their lawns or proved themselves useful in some other way. It was a devastating event when 216 African American music lovers lost their lives on the night of April 23, 1940, but far too few people seemed to care about the victims – or their ghosts.

The Rhythm Nightclub Fire occurred on St. Catherine Street in Natchez. It was an area referred to as the “Negro section” of town, on the edge of the downtown business district. The wooden, oblong structure was built in 1925 to serve as a church, which later closed.

It was used as a garage for a time before being converted into a nightclub in 1938. The building was ramshackle and run down and had only one entrance, located at the back.



A stage had been erected at the front, where the altar of the church had been. In an attempt to decorate the place, the club's proprietor, Ed Frazier, had draped the walls and rafters with Spanish moss. It hung down above the customers, giving the place a moody, bayou-like atmosphere that must have appealed to the late night revelers. Tragically, it would prove to be the club's undoing. The Rhythm Club had numerous windows on both sides of the building, dating back to its construction as a church, but thanks to a problem with what the owners referred to as "gatecrashers," shutters had been nailed over all of the windows to keep non-paying customers out. The shutters would also serve a more sinister purpose – they would keep everyone inside.

The evening of April 23 was an exciting night for the black community in Natchez. One of the biggest names in Negro entertainment, Walter Barnes, was playing at the Rhythm Club with his 15-piece orchestra. It was bound to be one of the big shows of the year and the club attracted the cream of the local African

American society. Present that night were black attorneys, physicians, teachers, social workers and scores of other community leaders. They were packed into the place, elbow-to-elbow, with more than 300 other customers, some having come from as far away as Louisiana to hear the Chicago orchestra. Walter Barnes was a native of Vicksburg, Mississippi. He was born in 1905, and had moved to Chicago in 1923, where he began studying reed instruments with classical teacher Franz Schoepp. He took further studies at the Chicago Musical College and the American Conservatory of Music. He took over as the bandleader from the Detroit Shannon outfit in 1924 and re-named the band the Royal Creolians.



He traveled across the country and recorded music with the band in 1928-1929 for the Brunswick label. Barnes made a name for himself by taking dance music to small Southern towns, where most other big name entertainers rarely performed. Barnes recruited musicians from several different states for his tours and was always popular in Mississippi. When he arrived in Natchez in April 1940, he was on the last leg of his current tour.

He brought with him a 15-piece band, including a female singer. After Natchez, they only had two more stops on the tour, Vicksburg and New Albany, Mississippi, before returning to Chicago.



The fire broke out around 11:35 p.m. According to Ernest Wright, an elevator operator who came to meet his wife at the club after getting off work, the fire was started by a careless cigarette. He told the police that he saw two girls come out of the women's room near the front of the hall and heard one of them say: "Now you did it. You set the place on fire." Wright said that he didn't see anything for a minute and then he saw blinding sheets of flame. "In a moment," he said. "The whole place was on fire."



Fire officials believed that a cigarette had inadvertently touched one of the streamers of Spanish moss, which were hanging from the rafters. The dry moss had been hanging there

for nearly two years, and instantly burst into flames. A cry of "fire!" went up from the crowd. Someone managed to slip outside and contact the fire department, which arrived less than five minutes later. Even then, however, it was too late for scores of people trapped inside. Once the people jammed into the club realized that the place was on fire, they immediately went into a panic. There were shouts, screams, cries and curses, and in moments, the crowd became a clawing, fighting mass as they tried to get out of the single door. Almost 150 people escaped before the thrashing, terrified victims became jammed into the doorway, unable to break loose and blocking all means of escape for everyone still trapped inside.



The fire department arrived at 11:40 p.m. Frightful screams came from the towering flames that now engulfed the building from wall to wall. A few moments later, the tin roof fell in and the crash sent a shower of sparks and flames soaring into the dark sky. The firemen immediately went to work, dousing the fire with water, and working frantically to try and pull the trapped people from the building. Meanwhile, inside, it was a hellish scene. People fought, punched, kicked and scratched, struggling to get out of the door. There was simply no place for them to go.

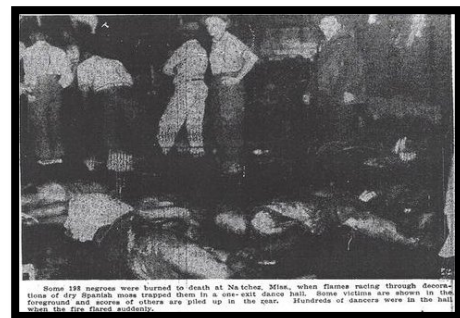
Many of those who were pushed away cowered near the stage at the front of the club, hoping that they could somehow avoid being burned to death. Unfortunately, an exhaust fan near the front of the club pulled the smoke and fire in the direction of the bandstand.



It was there that Walter Barnes, and some of the members of the orchestra, was trapped. Two members of the band, plus Alton Barnes, the bandleader's brother and the band's manager, had escaped from the club. Walter was not so lucky, but in the aftermath of the fire, he was hailed as a hero. When the fire first broke out, he tried to calm the crowd while he and the band continued to play the song "Marie." His body was later found, among dozens of others, at the front of the building. The inferno was out within 10 minutes. It had reduced the club to a pile of smoldering ashes. Smoke rolled out from beneath the hot tin roof, which had collapsed onto the grisly scene.

White men came running to the scene from the nearby business district and aided the blacks and the police in taking the injured to one of the nearby Negro hospitals. Men and women were found wandering in the street, practically naked and in a daze. Their clothing had been either burned off or torn off in the fight at the door.

Officials believed that about 150 people escaped from the club and that between 50 and 100 of them were injured. The hospitals were soon filled to overflowing. The Rhythm Club turned out to be a fiery deathtrap for scores of people who gathered there. The bodies of the dead that could be easily reached were taken to the three Negro undertakers in the district, where police officers began counting them and laying them out for identification. The coroner suggested a plan of embalming the bodies and putting them on display so that friends and relatives could identify them later. The grim task continued for weeks after the fire. The initial estimates of more than 150 dead were quickly upgraded. By the following day, many of the burned victims had died in the hospital, raising the death toll to 212. More would be added before it was all over.



Coroner R.E. Smith visited the scene the next morning and blamed most of the deaths on the fact that the building only had one door, as well as the fact that the windows had been boarded over to keep people from sneaking into the shows. He described the horribly gruesome scene to the newspapers. The bodies were piled up like cordwood. The skin was peeling from faces, blood oozed from mouths and flesh was broken.



From my examination, it appeared that most of the people died from suffocation. A majority of the victims were 15 to 16 years old. There were about as many youths as girl victims. The bodies were piled up in funeral parlors and no identifications have been made yet. The undertakers told me that they would embalm the bodies and line them up and let relatives file by to identify kinsmen. Coroner Smith, who was also the managing editor of the Natchez Democrat, said that the paper's janitor, Julius Hawkins, had been at the show that night, and had been standing near the rear. Hawkins had escaped but didn't know what had started the blaze. Smith quoted him as saying, "All I thought about was getting away from there." V.H. Jeffries, a photographer who reached the scene a short time after the disaster, pointed out that the club had been completely gutted.

He also spoke to reporters about what he saw: Great quantities of dry moss had been hung on the walls for decoration. This caught fire in some way and the intense heat and fumes probably suffocated the victims. Men and women were sprawled grotesquely about on the floor like dead chickens, their clothing burned away and their flesh seared.

The fire started near the entrance and it seemed that the crowd fled to the rear, where they could not escape. By the following afternoon, the rest of the city was feeling the shock of what had occurred. It was estimated that very few of the African-American families in Natchez were unaffected by the fire. At that time, the population of the city was nearly 18,000 people – 60 percent of them were black. Angry white voices began to be heard in city government, incensed that the club had been allowed to operate with only one exit door. **They demanded a city ordinance requiring dance venues to have at least two exits**, which would effectively put most Negro clubs in the city out of business. This didn't seem to bother anyone, especially after news spread that the police had arrested several black men who had been recruited to pull bodies out of the ruins of the club. They were allegedly stealing from the dead, or so sheriff's deputies claimed.



Instead of bringing the city's residents together, the fire had served to drive whites and blacks even farther apart. It would be decades before Mississippi ended segregation, and it was just as long before safety measures began to be required in what were referred to as "Negro dance halls.

”Not surprisingly, with attention fading quickly about the tragedy, the Rhythm Nightclub Fire was soon forgotten by the press, Natchez officials, and by history. But the families of the victims didn’t forget, nor did the generations of blues singers who told the story of the fire in their songs, or the group of aging women who make up the Watkins Street Cemetery’s preservation society.



They care for the mass grave where the fire victims were buried. When the number of bodies overwhelmed city authorities, they buried them in trenches in the Watkins Street Cemetery. There was no way to identify many of them. A few markers have been placed over the years, but mostly, it’s just a large grave where the bodies have been placed side-by-side. Their names have been forgotten, as have their lives. In 2010, a small museum was erected in honor of the Rhythm Club Fire, and according to the stories, strange occurrences have been happening there “almost daily” ever since. Voices have been heard, as well as music, and the sounds of doors opening and closing. Photographs that are displayed on the walls

sometimes fly off and can be found in odd positions across the room.



The museum was set up on the concrete slab that once marked the foundation of the Rhythm Club. The rest of the slab serves as the museum’s parking lot. To this day, stories persist of strange voices, cries for help and the wailing moans of people still heard around the site of the deadly fire. It continues to be considered one of the most haunted places in Natchez – a very haunted city in its own right.

The story of the Rhythm Nightclub Fire may be only a footnote in American history, but to the people of Natchez and those directly affected by this horrendous event, its legacy lives on. It is a story worth telling – and remembering – and maybe someday the victims of the fire will finally rest in peace.

Thanks to Troy Taylor for the insight.

*Chief John Reed,
IBPFF, Inc. Chair
Fallen Fire Fighters*



Southeast Regional Legends

Celebrating the Southeast Regional Legends who have dedicated their time and talents to the Southeast Region and the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters. These Legends of the Southeast Region have displayed such characteristic as compassion and patience. Their generosity and dedication has not gone unnoticed. The IABPFF salutes you and your family for time served. On your shoulders we stand!



Leroy Norwood - As the Southeast Region Director, his leadership was by example and no “one” member was bigger than the organization. He wanted the members to leave their footprint on the fire service and in the communities we serve. His wisdom played a large role in assisting members to achieve their goals and rise throughout the rank in fire departments across the country. “Leroy always said he wasn’t a Chief but a Chief maker.”



Theodore Holmes - The leadership of Ted Holmes took the Southeast Region to the door steps of Capitol Hill. His networking with State Representatives, Congressman, and Senators served as a platform for the IABPFF and enabled our voices to be heard. Once becoming the President of the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters, his local and regional relationships became beneficial to the organization.

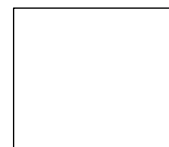


Romeo Spaulding was and is a living landmark not only in Washington D.C. but in the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters as well. He took the fight for the rights of black firefighters to the courthouse and the White House. Serving eight years as the President of the IABPFF he reached across all regions to unite this organization. He was also a founding member of the Executive Development Institute (EDI). Under his leadership we developed a community footprint with fire and life safety education in churches, daycares, and civic organizations.



Nathan Queen -is living legend who took to Capitol Hill with the wisdom of his mentors Ted Holmes, Leroy Norwood and Romeo Spaulding. He remain committed to ensuring that legislation is enacted to address conditions that adversely affect firefighters. The International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters made its mark on “The Day on the Hill” because of Nathan’s work to ensure that our voices were heard by those elected to serve. The Political Action Committee remain an integral part of the IABPFF.

Submitted by Bro. Freddie Brooks



Headstone is documented to have read as follows:



**IN MEMORY OF MARY WILLIAMS
WIFE OF PETER WILLIAMS, SEN,
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON
THE 29TH DAY OF APRIL,
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1821,
AGED SEVENTY-FOUR YEARS**

On April 29, 2021 I boarded an Amtrak train at Baltimore's Penn Station headed to New York's Penn Station in Manhattan. Very reluctant to travel during the pandemic, I had to make this pilgrimage to pay homage to Mrs. Mary Molly Williams, who is noted to be the First Woman fire fighter in the history of the United States of America. Met by Past President John Coombs of the Vulcan Society FDNY, we were on our way to Cypress Hill Cemetery in Brooklyn to place flowers on her grave to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of her date of death. The African American Fire Fighters Historical Society in fulfilling our mission to collect and preserve history, has found the following information. Research has revealed that the woman known as Molly Williams was not a slave, but an indentured servant, and the dates of the fire call referred to in so many writings still needs to be confirmed. When public institutions are fully open, we will resume our investigation.

Submitted George Collins, President
African American Fire Fighters Historical Society



FYI there Are No Confirmed Photos of Mrs. Williams at this time.

CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT



PROGRESSIVE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION (PFA) CHARITIES, INC.

Each year the Progressive Firefighter Association Charities, Inc make a huge effort to teach hundreds of children how to swim. Led by President Keith Bell, PFA Charities, Inc. partnered with the Miami Dolphins, Solomon Kindley to help spread their Water Safety Education initiative. Kindley and the Dolphins teamed up with firefighters, dispatchers and ocean rescue members to help kickoff a “Learn-To-Swim” Program alongside the ‘Progressive Firefighter’s Association’ in Miami Dade.



“I am honored and privileged to serve in the role as President of the Progressive Firefighters Association Charities. Just as the old African proverb says “It takes a village to raise a child.” As President of PFAC, I truly believe it takes the collaborative efforts of the entire organization and outside partnerships to help build strong communities and to model the type of leadership required of our profession. We must continue to exemplify resilient leadership and positive role models for our kids so they can believe that they too can achieve greater.”



For more information, check out:

[@MiamiDolphins](#) Solomon Kindley takes the BIG PLUNGE for the kids at the [@Pfacharities](#) 2021 Learn to Swim Kickoff in partnership with [@childrentrust](#) [@miamiparks](#) [@MiamiDolphins](#) [@freezfranemedia](#) pic.twitter.com/G71us4pSDp



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 11, 2021

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



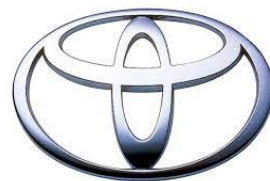
Cleveland, Ohio June 11, 2021 – The International Association of Black Professional Firefighters (IABPFF) announces its' new Executive Director, Freddie L. Brooks. The IABPFF works to improve the economic development and employment opportunities for minorities. As Black firefighters, it is our challenge to make the fire services more relevant to the needs and aspirations of minority citizens and communities across the world.

Freddie joined the Chattanooga Fire Department in July 1987 as a firefighter in a class of 20 recruits the first class with 10 African Americans in the department's history. His career spans over 28 years in the fire service which started as a firefighter working in fire suppression, and community involvement. Freddie retired from the Chattanooga Fire Department in 2015. Freddie attended the Carl Holmes Executive Development Institute at Dillard University graduating in 2000 as class President.

Freddie has been a member of the IABPFF since 1987 and served as President of his local chapter (Brothers United in Chattanooga, TN) and 2nd Vice Director of the Southeast Region. Freddie is also a founding member of the 100 Black Men of Chattanooga. He is a member of the National Fire Academy Alumna Association, the IAFF (retirees) and other organizations within his community. Freddie has served the IABPFF as Community Outreach Chair for over 10 years. Freddie is also active with The Orchard Park SDA Church.

"I am excited to serve the IABPFF in this capacity!" stated Freddie. "As Executive Director, I will work hard to organize initiatives that will impact IABPFF chapters and communities around the world."

To learn more about IABPFF, please visit www.iabpf.org



CHIEF JOSEPH L. JONES SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIANT

CHRISTOPHER JONES

CONGRATULATIONS TO PROGRESSIVE FIREFIGHTERS OF FAIRFAX COUNTY MEMBER CHRISTOPHER JONES FOR WINNING THE 2021 CHIEF JOSEPH L. JONES MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP. THIS SCHOLARSHIP IS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE IABPFF, INC., COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND WALDORF COLLEGE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, LOGON TO WWW.IABPF.ORG.

IABPFF, INC. AND TOYOTA

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN SCHOLARSHIPS

JOHNATHAN BROOKE

CONGRATULATIONS TO JOHNATHAN BOOKE OF THE NORTH EAST REGION RECIPIENT OF THE IABPFF/TOYOTA EMT SCHOLARSHIP. THIS SCHOLARSHIP IS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE IABPFF, INC. AND TOYOTA. THIS SCHOLARSHIP IS FOR NON-FIREFIGHTING PERSONELL IN NEIGHBORHOODS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. FOR MORE INFORMATION, LOGON TO WWW.IABPF.ORG.

Member Spotlight

New Haven Firefighter Lt. Rankins



New Haven Firefighter Lieutenant Samod Rankins was released from Bridgeport Hospital after being in the Burn Unit for over a week after recovering from serious injuries sustained in the New Haven fire on Valley Street that killed FF Ricardo Torres Jr.

Lt. Rankins was celebrated while walking out of the hospital with his family by his side, community members, his fellow brothers and sisters from the New Haven Fire Department and the family of Firefighter Torres. Other fellow New Haven firefighters attending in solidarity with Lt. Rankins and his family. Two other firefighters were also injured in that fire.

Thank you Lt. Rankins for your dedication and service!



IABPFF, Inc

Black Chief Officers Committee (BCOC) Annual Training Symposium 2021

The Westin Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort

321 North Fort Lauderdale Beach Boulevard Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33304



“MANAGING CRITICAL ISSUES FACING TODAY’S FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES”

****Transportation for all Off-site and Spouse/Guest activities will be sponsored by Siddons-Martin Emergency Group****

Day 1: Monday - July 12, 2021

7:30 AM - Opening Ceremonies

Tony Russell, Center for Domestic Preparedness
Director

Eriks Gabliks, National Fire Academy
Superintendent

8:30AM – (8 hours) – Field Force Command:
Executive is an 8-hour course that prepares the
management-level responder to serve as a member
of an incident management team during a civil
action or disorder. The course provides instruction
on incident management, incorporating planning
considerations and other responsibilities of
management-level responders during such an event.
The course also provides responders with the ability
to develop a local Incident Action Plan (IAP) for a
civil action or disorder and implement response
actions from the management level. - (CDP/FEMA
Instructor)

*****A SEPERATE REGISTRATION LINK WILL
BE SENT TO ALL WHO REGISTER FOR THE
EDUCATIONAL SYMPOSIUM. YOU WILL
NEED YOUR SID# TO REGISTER FOR ALL
CDP/FEMA COURSES*****

Day 2: Tuesday - July 13, 2021

8:00 AM (1.15 hrs) “Not Just A Fire Department.
A look beneath the surface. Focus: Disasters and
Declarations, Demand and Diplomacy” - Chief
William Swann, Nashville Fire Dept. (TN)

9:15 AM (1.5 hrs) “Challenges facing African
American Women in the Fire Service” A Panel
Discussion Chief Tiffany Green moderated by
Chief Jonathan Bolden

11:00 AM (1 hr) SPONSOR PRESENTATION
(FIRST NET)

12:00PM – 1:00PM PM LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

1:00 PM (1 hr) AWR-933-V8 The Effective Use of
Social and Traditional Media during Emergencies
(CDP/FEMA Instructors)

2:00PM (1 hr) MPIV4 MGT-902-V4 Media
Relations and Press Conferences - (CDP/FEMA
Instructors)

3:00PM (1 hr) 21NV-1017 MPIV9 Legal Issues in
Public Information - (CDP/FEMA Instructors)

4:00PM (1.5 hr) OLS-V14 AWR-933-V14 Lone
Wolf Threat in Every Town USA - (CDP/FEMA
Instructors)

Day 3: Wednesday - JULY 14, 2021

8:00AM (1.15 hours) “Emotional Intelligence and Cultural Intelligence: Creating an Inclusive Workplace that Values Differences - Freddie Broome, Director of Equity & Inclusion, Georgia Municipal Association

9:30AM (1.5 HOUR) “Black Fire Chiefs: A Path to Equity and Inclusion - Dr. Nicole Mootoo Ph.D. Associate Vice President, Resource Management and Community Development, Student Success, University of South Florida

11:00AM – 12:00PM (1 hr) Chief and Fire Officer Designations - Center for Public Safety Excellence Chief Rick Mason, CPC Program Manager / Chief Derek Bergsten, CPC Commission Chair

Chief Reggie Freeman-Oakland Fire Dept. (CA) / Chief Toni Washington, Decatur Fire Dept. (GA)

12:00PM – 1:00PM LUNCH AND LEARN
SPONSORED BY THE REV GROUP

1:15PM (1hr) Executive Leadership - Chief John Alston, New Haven Fire Department (CT)

2:15PM (1hr) Community Resource Paramedicine – Chief Joseph Dixon, Gainesville Fire Department (FL)

3:15PM (1hr) Human Trafficking for First Responders presentation – Chief Rodney Daniels (Ret.)

6:30 SOUL FOOD NIGHT SPONSORED BY
FIRST NET– LOCATION TBA

Day 4: Thursday - July 15, 2021 – Sponsored by 3m-Scott Fire & Safety

0800 AM (1.15 hours) Finance and Your Future: What they Don’t Tell You – Robert Henderson, Certified Financial Planner, The Henderson Group

9:15 - 10:30PM (1.15 hours) Strategies for Leading Diversity in the Fire Service - Dr. Kwame Cooper, Asst. Fire Chief, L.A. County Fire, Retired (CA)

10:30- 11:00 National Fallen Firefighters Foundation – Captain Moses Jeffries, Nashville Fire Dept. (TN)

11:00 – 0230 (1.5 hours) SPONSOR
PRESENTATION & SPONSOR AWARDS
LUNCHEON

3:00 – 4:30 COLLABORATION IN THE CLOUD (MS-365) – Pamela Evans, AAA PCITS LLC

DAY 5: Friday - July 16, 2021

0800AM CONFERENCE OPENING
CEREMONIES

930-1130 “Black Fire Chiefs: A Path to Equity and Inclusion” - Dr. Nicole Mootoo Ph.D. Associate Vice President, Resource Management and Community Development, Student Success, University of South Florida

1130- 1245 Lunch on your own

1:00PM – 4:00PM BCOC Board Meeting

6:30PM FISH FRY HOSTED BY ATLANTIC
EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS

LOCATION TBA

***ORATORICAL CONTEST – Sponsored by
3M-Scott Safety***

Day 6: Saturday - July 17, 2021

730AM Memorial Service and Recognition
Ceremony

830AM Breakfast – Sponsored by Pierce

10:00AM BCOC Board Meeting

For more information visit <https://www.bcoc.us/my-symposium>



The Carl Holmes Executive Development Institute

9449 S. Kedzie Avenue #549

Evergreen Park, IL 60805

<https://edionline.net>

Message from the President and CEO Chief Dave Washington,

Our plans are to be in New Orleans in June 2022 like we normally are. It seems as though the pandemic is releasing its grip and things are starting to normalize. It is still a waiting game however, we will keep you updated as we receive more information.

We are also cognizant that many departments may still impose restrictions for travel by its members. As soon as we get viable information that would allow us to move forward, will be presenting our plan for the future.

Registration for EDI 2022 will begin in October. To extend our growth remotely, we are offering online classes free of charge for current students. EDI is offering a second round of webinars June 29th through August 24th. Additionally, we are working on virtual and hybrid classes.

Finally, we are conducting a “Call for Papers” which is essentially a recruitment for instructors. We are interested in trending topics and instructors with experience utilizing virtual platforms. All interested may apply online at www.edionline.net.

We look forward to continuing the mission EDI’s founder Carl Holmes, to develop the management skills and leadership potential of African American Firefighters, preparing them for attainment of higher ranks.

**THE CARL HOLMES
EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE**

ALL I AM I OWE... I LIVE ETERNALLY IN THE RED



EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE



IABPFF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE (ITC)

The I.T.C. oversees the IABPFF's website development, communication tools which include the Drum, email accounts and listserv, presentation set-up at conventions, registration support, assists the Corresponding Secretary with online communication efforts, and general business operations.



Darren Hyson
ITC Chair



Robert Pearson
Assistant ITC Chair



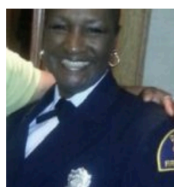
Tracy Lewis
ITC Rep NER



Arthur Battles
ITC Rep SER



Johnny Brewington
ITC Rep NCR



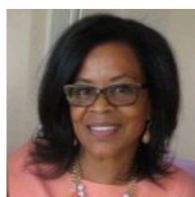
Jacquelyn Webb
ITC Rep SCR



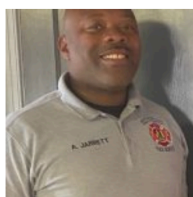
Glyn Allyne
ITC Rep CAR



Reginald Ball
ITC Rep NWR



Teresa Reed
ITC Rep SWR



Al Jarrett
Videography

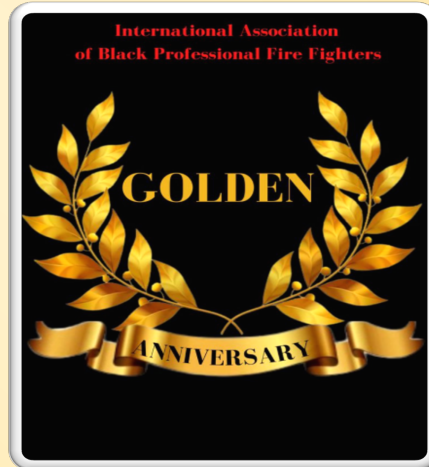
Bro. Darren Hyson, Chair and Bro. Robert Pearson, Co-Chair

Thank you for being one of the hardest working committees of the IABPFF!
We appreciate this team of IT professionals and the quality of work and dedication they continue to provide to our organization.

The Executive Board and Executive Team
"All that I am....I owe!"



International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters, Inc.



Biennial Convention & Training Conference

Hilton Hartford Hotel

315 Trumbell St., Hartford, CN 06103, Phone: 860-728-5151

July 24-29, 2022

Login at www.iabpf.org more information.

Hosted by The Phoenix Society Hartford
Supported by: The IABPFF, Inc. North East Region
Director Frank Tidwell
President Carrie Edwards-Clemons

To submit an article or purchased an ad in the IABPFF, Inc. "SMOKE" Newsletter, contact Executive Assistant Deyhana Thompson at yhanabella@gmail.com / dtompson@iabpf.org and IABPFF, Inc. Treasurer Gwen Sistare at msdcfd@aol.com / gsistare@iabpf.org.

For more information, visit our website at www.iabpf.org.