

Daisy Mountain fire chief had passion for fire service

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Firefighters from across the state mourned the loss last week of Daisy Mountain Fire Chief Tom Healy, who died in his Peoria home Aug. 6 at age 67 of lung cancer.

After a remembrance service for Healy held at the Renaissance Glendale Hotel Aug. 11, he was laid to rest at Resthaven Cemetery in Glendale.

"Tom Healy was never the type of leader that wanted to be in the limelight," said Daisy Mountain Fire Department Division Chief Danny Johnson. "He was very humble and never wanted credit for what he did. Although Chief Healy has developed many health and safety programs that are used nationally for the safety of firefighters he took the most pride in developing people. He always had time for you. Chief Healy was very slow to anger and cared about the people that were a part of his life."

Glendale Police Chief Mark Burdick, who was proud to call Healy his friend, said that first and foremost, Healy loved his family.

"He also loved the fire service and the Daisy Mountain Fire Department," Burdick said. "His commitment to all three will leave a lasting impression on countless people. He was a great mentor and incredible friend. He was a genuinely kind person who thought of others until the day of his passing. We lost a true friend."

In 2009, Healy received the Arizona Fire Chief's Lifetime Achievement Award at their annual Fire Service Leadership Conference.

In his letter of nomination of Healy for the award, Burdick said, "Tom has had a long, successful, productive career in the fire service. Tom's passion to improve the fire service is never ending. With his participation, creativity and innovation, the future of our firefighters looks very bright."

Healy was born in Long Beach, Calif. in 1943 and his 40-year career in the fire service began in 1970 as a firefighter for the Phoenix Fire Department and he became a graduate of the first paramedic class in Phoenix.

He moved up the ranks in Phoenix to the rank of deputy chief. During his career in Phoenix, he was in charge of health maintenance and was responsible for the implementation of what became the Phoenix Fire Health Center, which has served as a model Health Center for the entire Valley.

He retired from the Phoenix Fire Department in 1994 to become the fire chief of Monroe Fire District No. 3 in Monroe, Wash., where he spent two years before returning to Arizona to serve as the Fire Chief of Laveen.

Healy was hired as the Daisy Mountain fire chief in 1999.

In 2003, he was appointed to serve on the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Committee on Fire Service Occupational Safety and Health where he helped draft many safety and health related guidelines.

Outside of the fire service, Healy was a contractor who built and remodeled many homes and was most proud of building the four fire stations for the Daisy Mountain Fire Department.

Healy was also an automobile enthusiast who loved Nascar and drag racing.

He also had a great love for football and played semi-pro football in California.

His favorite mode of transportation was his Harley Davidson, which he rode all season long, rain, snow or 120-degree weather.

Daisy Mountain Fire Capt. Dave Wilson said Chief Healy will be greatly missed by all.

"His fire department family will always remember him as a casual, humble man whose love for the fire service will never be matched," Wilson said. "He has been an inspiration to many and leaves behind a legacy that will last a lifetime."